COUNTY

WASHTENAW COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE

April 18, 2012

Comm. Sizemore called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. in the Board Room, Administration Building, 220 North Main Street, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Comms. Bergman, Brabec, Gunn, Peterson, Ping, Prater, Rabhi, Sizemore, Conan

Smith, Dan Smith and Turner

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: County Administrator, Verna McDaniel; Interim Corporation Counsel Stefani Carter; Andy

Brush, ITS; Raman Patel, Equalization; Diane Heidt, HR; Greg Dill, Facilities; Bob Tetens, Parks and Recreation; Ken Schrader, ITS; Jason Brooks, County Administration;

Peter Simms, Clerk's Office; various citizens; and members of the press.

Roll Call

Citizen Participation

Thomas Partridge, Washtenaw County and City of Ann Arbor resident, called on the Board to be aware that it is time to nominate President Barack Obama for a second term as president. He urged the board to give priority to "people" issues and preserve the needs of the most vulnerable citizens. He reminded the board that there is a need for affordable housing. He stated that the affordable housing issue should be one of the board's top priorities. He added that everyone needs access to public transportation and affordable housing. He finished by saying that endorsing the reelection of President Barack Obama would inspire people.

Commissioner Follow-Up to Citizens' Participation

None

Special Order of Business

Comm. Turner reported that the Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee is made up of a joint education process between the National IBEW and the National Electrical Contractors Association. He noted that electrical professionals come to these training seminars to educate themselves on their professions. He added that for 19 years the training was held in Knoxville, TN. He reported that there had been discussion about continuing to hold the training there since only a small portion of the local electrical work went to union members. He stated that when the training first came to Ann Arbor a few years ago it was clear immediately that Ann Arbor was the perfect place for the training. He noted that the training will bring in 3,000-5,000 people from around the country to Ann Arbor. He added that the national joint apprenticeship is looking forward to a long term relationship with Washtenaw County. Comm. Conan Smith read the resolution welcoming the National Joint Apprenticeship and proclaiming the week of July 28-August 3, 2012 to be NTI week.

Raman Patel, Equalization Director, gave a presentation on the 2012 Equalization Report which is on file at the Clerk's Office.

Comm. Rabhi thanked Raman Patel for his presentation and service to the county. He went on to thank the Equalization team. He stated that he was glad to see the information prepared on the Personal Property Tax. He reported that the projected impact made it clear that the board needs to advocate against the repeal of PPT in Lansing. He thanked Gretchen Driskell for her work in Lansing advocating against the repeal. He encouraged the community to contact their State Representatives and Senators about the issue.

Comm. Prater asked Raman to review the Board of Review piece of the presentation. He asked how many of the denied repeals went on to the State Board of Review. Raman Patel stated that he did not know because they had until June to go before the State Board. He added that he would see the final decision of the Review Board on the 2013 Equalization Report. Comm. Prater asked if there were more or less appeals this year than last. Raman Patel stated that he felt the number of appeals has stabilized. He noted that most appeals were of a commercial nature. Raman Patel stated that money needed to be left in the budget to account for the decision of the Michigan Tax Tribunal. Comm. Prater thanked Raman for his work.

Comm. Bergman thanked Raman Patel for his kindness to her constituents. She added that she has many constituents who are locked into homes that have increasing property taxes and stable pensions. She stated that she supports the idea of a progressive income tax in this state.

Comm. Dan Smith thanked Raman Patel for his report and added that it was always interesting to hear from him. He went on to thank the Equalization staff for their work. He referred to page 3 of the report and asked for an explanation of the agricultural and industrial figures. Laurie stated that the developmental parcels have been decreasing in a declining market because there has not been much development. She added that assesors have been moving parcels out of that class and moving them into agricultural classes. Comm. Dan Smith stated that there had not been an increase in farming but rather in increase in the number of parcels classified as agricultural. Raman Patel stated that often developers who have property whose development has been delayed they will change the class to reduce the value and save money. Comm. Dan smith asked about industrial parcel. Raman Patel stated that there had been losses. Comm. Dan Smith stated then that these numbers were aberrations. Raman Patel stated that for the last 5 years, since Pfizer, General Motors and Ford Motor Company left, the market of Washtenaw County has been able to absorb those losses. He added that there is no big thing that can destabilize the county. Comm. Dan Smith asked about the number of parcels whose values are equal to each other. He asked what the trend was in regards to the value of those parcels. Raman noted that taxable value is only a calculation. He added that market value is what the property will bring on the market. Raman reported that the State dictates how the taxable value is calculated. He went on to say that it is important to understand how taxable and market value affect each other when preparing a budget. He added that part of the problem with preparing a two-year budget is that it prevented the finance team from knowing how much money will be brought in by tax. Comm. Dan Smith thanked Raman for his analysis of how the repeal of personal property tax will affect the county.

Comm. Brabec stated that Raman and his staff did amazing work. She added that the depth and breadth of the work done by him and his staff was hard to fathom. She stated that her constituents want to know what is happening with home values. She asked if he had any insight for her constituents. Raman stated that he would be happy to provide the commissioners with that information for their constituents but that he would need a little time to prepare those reports.

Comm. Conan Smith thanked the Equalization staff for their report. He asked Raman to explain the impact of real and personal property tax laws on urban areas. He stated that cities have high concentration of personal property and so he imagined they would be hardest hit. Raman confirmed the commissioner's analysis and added that the closing of industrial facilities was another huge factor. Comm. Conan Smith asked for an analysis of residential property values in Ypsilanti and Ypsilanti Township. Raman stated that Ypsilanti city had seen declines. Comm. Conan Smith stated that Ypsilanti city was seen declines across all sectors at a faster rate than the county. He added that there had been losses in the commercial sector which was causing losses in the personal property sector. Raman stated that Ypsilanti Township was experiencing loss as well.

Comm. Turner stated that he was honored to have Raman share his knowledge on the topic. He thanked him for his hard work. He added that he was stunned by the number of parcels that the equalization team works on. He asked if the equalization staff had begun work on projections. Raman stated that he had the ability to provide very generalized analysis but did not have more specific projections yet. Comm. Turner thanked Raman for his work.

Comm. Prater stated that he had known Raman for almost 40 years and he was yet to hear him make a projection. He asked if it was correct to look at assed value as market value. Raman responded that assessed value was 50% of market value.

New Business:

A. Economic Development

1. Office of Community and Economic Development:

a. Workforce Investment Act Statewide Activities Funding for Jobs, Education and Training Program:

Comm. Rabhi seconded by Comm. Gunn moved that the Board of Commissioners approve the budget to the Workforce Development Agency, State of Michigan (WDASOM) for Appropriation Year (AY) 2011 Workforce Investment Act Statewide Activities (WIA/SWA) Funding for the Jobs, Education, and Training (JET) Program for the period of October 1, 2011 through September 30, 2012 in the amount of \$61,026.

Roll call vote: YEAS: 11 NAYS: 0 ABSENT: 0 Motion carried.

b. The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP):

Comm. Rabhi seconded by Comm. Gunn moved that the Board of Commissioners ratify the signature of the County Administrator on the OCED agreement for The Emergency Food Assistance Program with the Michigan Department of Education for the period of October 1, 2011 through September 30, 2012 in the amount of \$51,383.

Roll call vote: YEAS: 11 NAYS: 0 ABSENT: 0 Motion carried.

B. Civic Infrastructure:

1. Equalization:

a. Equalization Report:

Comm. Rabhi seconded by Comm. Gunn moved that the Board of Commissioners approve the 2012 Washtenaw County Equalization Report.

Roll call vote: YEAS: 11 NAYS: 0 ABSENT: 0 Motion carried.

Report of the Administrator:

None

Report of the Chair of the Board

Comm. Conan Smith stated that the Board would reconvene at 8:40 pm.

Items for Current/Future Discussion

Comm. Bergman asked that someone from DTE come and explain their clean energy program and the aggressive marketing campaign behind it

Pending

None

Adjournment

Comm. Prater seconded by Comm. Ping moved that the meeting be adjourned until May 2th, 2012 at 6:30 p.m. Motion carried

The meeting adjourned at 8:27 p.m.		
	Rolland Sizemore, Chair	
Lawrence Kestenbaum, Clerk/Register By: Peter Simms, Deputy Clerk		

APPROVED: May 2, 2012