



WASHTENAW COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE

September 5, 2012

Comm. Rolland 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, Ping, Prater, Rabhi, Sizemore, Conan Smith, Dan Smith and Turner

MEMBERS ABSENT: Comm. Peterson

OTHERS PRESENT: County Administrator, Verna McDaniel; Curt Hedger, Corporate Counsel; Greg Dill, Facilities; Kelly Belknap, Finance; Andy Brush, ITS; Bob Tetens, Parks & Recreation; Tina Gavalier, Finance; Dick Steffens, Equalization; Tony Vanderworp, OCED; Mike Smith, Veterans Affairs; Ken Schrader, ITS; Elaine Holleran, County Administration; Lisa Moutinho, County Administration; Peter Simms, Clerk's Office; various citizens; and members of the press.

Roll Call

Citizen Participation

Thomas Partridge, resident of both Washtenaw County and the City of Ann Arbor, stated that he was there to address the commissioners on the eve of President Barack Obama being chosen as the Democratic nominee for President. He urged the board to develop a plan to put services for people first on their agendas. He said that money issues should not be put before the people of this nation. He stated that there needs to be a commitment to ending homelessness in Washtenaw County and the State of Michigan. He added that he would like to see truly affordable housing in this country.

Commissioner Follow-Up to Citizens' Participation

None

New Business:

A. Economic Development

1. Office of Community and Economic Development:

a. Michigan Works! Service Center Operations:

Comm. Rabhi seconded by Comm. Gunn moved that the Board of Commissioners ratify the signature of the Chair of the Board on the Program Year (PY) 2012 Michigan Works! Service Center Operations plan in the amount of \$71,962 for the period of July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2013.

Roll call vote: YEAS: 10 NAYS: 0 ABSENT: 1 Motion carried.

B. Land Use & Environment

1. Public Works:

a. Multi Lakes Phase 2 Bond Redemption

Comm. Rabhi seconded by Comm. Gunn moved that the Board of Commissioners approve redemption of part of the callable outstanding bonds for the construction of the Multi Lakes Phase 2 sewer system.

Roll call vote: YEAS: 10 NAYS: 0 ABSENT: 1 Motion carried.

2. Parks & Recreation:

a. Proposed Amendment: Natural Areas Preservation Program – Ordinance No. 128

Comm. Rabhi seconded by Comm. Gunn moved that the Board of Commissioners amend the Washtenaw County Natural Areas Preservation Program Ordinance No. 128 (SECTION 8) to allow a portion of annual millage revenues to be used for stewardship of lands purchased under this Ordinance.

Comm. Rabhi seconded by Comm. Bergman proposed that an amendment be made mandating that 25% of revenues generated by this ordinance be dedicated to stewardship. After some discussion, which is provided below the question on his amendment was called by Comm. Ping seconded by Comm. Turner. The call to question was approved by voice vote of the board.

Comm. Conan Smith said that he was supportive of the Parks & Recreation amendment to the Ordinance. He said that he would like to have a discussion on removing the 75/25 split. He noted that some properties will have significantly lower maintenance costs because they are farmed. He said that a removal of the 75/25 split would give Parks more flexibility.

Comm. Rabhi said he was supportive of this. He said he had reservations on removing the 75/25 he said that it is important to maintain a budget for land-purchasing but that having checks and balance was a good thing. He asked Bob Tetens for a list of the maintenance activities performed. Bob Tetens said that it varied by preserve but that the removal of invasive species was a part of it. Comm. Rabhi said he believed it was part of Parks mission to increase the health of the ecosystem and he would like to see how that happens. Bob Tetens stated that the bulk of the maintenance that Parks does is centered on that goal. Comm. Rabhi said he was concerned about the way the resolution was written. He asked why the language concerning ratios had been removed. Bob Tetens said that the intent was to adjust the ratio so that there is enough money for stewardship efforts. Bob Tetens added that he did not want the choice in 2020 to be between renewing the millage or rolling back the program. Comm. Rabhi said that in his opinion there needs to be a minimum in place for how much is spent on stewardship. He stated that in his experience stewardship is highly important. Comm. Gunn said that Parks should be allowed to do what they do best.

Comm. Dan Smith stated that the amendment put forward by Comm. Rabhi was making this more complicated. He noted that the intent of amending the ordinance had been to make the process simpler. He reported that he appreciated Comm. Conan Smith's suggestion of removing percentages and leaving it to the discretion of Parks & Recreation. He said that he would not be in favor of this amendment.

Comm. Prater asked if this was in the budget for 2012. Bob Tetens responded that it was already in the budget. He explained that this discussion was about how Park & Recreation's funds were used.

Comm. Sizemore explained that this item was before the board as a courtesy to the BOC but that Bob Tetens who does excellent work and does not need instruction on how the funds are used. Bob Tetens explained that an amendment to the ordinance could be done only by the Board of Commissioners which is why the item is on the agenda.

Comm. Bergman stated that there needs to be language which outlines the spirit of how the funds should be used. Bob Tetens said that as the program evolves and grows you will see that the amount of money dedicated to stewardship will grow. He noted that the current amount of 7% is not enough anymore.

Comm. Brabec asked Bob Tetens to explain the impact of having hard ratios set in the ordinance. Bob Tetens said that the number was sort of arbitrary. He stated that now 25% would be way too much but in several years it may not be enough.

Comm. Conan Smith said that he believed Comm. Rabhi's intention was spot on. He stated that when assets are purchased it needs to be insured that those assets will be cared for. He agreed with Comm. Dan Smith who had set that hard numbers would only limit the Parks Department. He suggested that Comm. Rabhi meet with Bob Tetens to have guidance language placed in the ordinance.

Comm. Gunn said that there needs to be trust placed in the people the board appoints to the boards which oversee the Parks Department.

Roll call vote on Comm. Rabhi's amendment: YEAS: 1 NAYS: 9 (Comms. Bergman, Brabec, Gunn, Ping, Prater, Sizemore, Conan Smith, Dan Smith and Turner) ABSENT: 1 Motion failed.

Roll call vote on the agenda item: YEAS: 10 NAYS: 0 ABSENT: 1 Motion carried.

C. Health

1. Public Health:

a. 2012/13 Comprehensive Planning, Budgeting and Contracting (CPBC) Agreement, 2012/13 Budget, Position Eliminations & Reclassifications

Comm. Rabhi seconded by Comm. Gunn moved that the Board of Commissioners authorize the signature of the County Administrator on the 2012/2013 Comprehensive Planning, Budgeting and Contracting (CPBC) agreement, approve the 2012/13 Public Health Budget, authorize the County Administrator to sign delegate contracts, approve service fees, and approve position eliminations/reclassifications.

Comm. Brabec asked Dick Fleece to explain the impact of State cuts to the Public Health budget. Dick Fleece said that the State is waiting for decisions from the Federal Government. He added that there was additional uncertainty because the department was waiting on decisions from several grants which they had applied for. Comm. Brabec asked how programmatic cuts would impact the residents. Dick Fleece said that those decisions would be made once the funding situation became clear.

Comm. Prater said that when he examined the reclassifications it seemed to him that each position received a grade bump. He asked for an explanation of that shift. Dick Fleece said that a couple of these positions were receiving bumps because they were taking on new and additional duties. He said that Public Health Nurses are not increases. He said that "Service Coordinator" is a new position which identifies that there is a staff member who writes press releases and applies for grants. He added that there is a huge increase in the current duties of this position. He said that two "Environmental Health Supervisors" is a reflection of the fact that he is spread very thin. He noted that they would be acting as program administrators.

Comm. Bergman thanked Dick Fleece for his work. She said that since he is partially funded by Medicaid he would be leaving money on the table by not improving services. She added that this county has been hemorrhaging qualified staff. She said that she was excited about the prospect of retaining more people by improving the quality of the jobs.

Comm. Rabhi stated that there were no eliminations only reclassifying. Dick Fleece confirmed that analysis.

Comm. Dan Smith said that he would be voting against this because the board would be wrestling with a budget shortfall in a matter of months.

Comm. Sizemore asked if this would cost the county money. Dick Fleece stated that it would not impact the county's general fund.

Roll call vote: YEAS: 8 NAYS: 2 (Comms. Ping, Dan Smith) ABSENT: 1 Motion carried.

2. Community Support & Treatment Services:

a. 2012/13 Budget

This item was pulled from the agenda and there was no vote on it.

E. County Administration

a. Insurance Renewals

Comm. Rabhi seconded by Comm. Gunn moved that the Board of Commissioners accept a quote for insurance coverages for the period of October 1, 2012 to October 1, 2013 for (1) property and boiler and machinery, (2) general liability, law enforcement liability, public officials liability, and auto liability, (3) liquor liability, (4) crime, (5) fiduciary liability, (6) lawyers professional, (7) judicial liability and (8) medical professional.

Roll call vote: YEAS: 10 NAYS: 0 ABSENT: 1 Motion carried.

b. Veterans Relief Millage

Comm. Rabhi seconded by Comm. Gunn moved that the Board of Commissioners approve an Indigent Veterans' Relief Millage of 1/35th of a mill to be levied in December, 2012, for use during calendar year 2013, with the proceeds of such millage to be placed into the County's Veterans' Relief Fund.

Comm. Sizemore asked why an increase was needed on the Veteran Relief Millage. Mike Smith stated that the Veterans Affairs Committee met and examined claims put in since the fund was established. Mike Smith explained that there is an increased demand for services by indigent veterans. He stated that not only was there an increase of claims but there was also an increase of costs outlined in those claims. He stated that \$300 food voucher would not purchase as much this year as it did last. He reported that he was anticipating the release of 300,000 military members. He stated that he did not know what portion of those people would be returning to Washtenaw County. He added that there were increased claims due to the weak economy. He stated that this millage was used to satisfy the mandated burial requirements. He said if a government marker is called for in a cemetery his department has a statutory requirement to place it there.

Comm. Sizemore asked why there had been locked doors at Veterans Affairs. Mike Smith noted that his department experienced two unexpected retirements. He stated that there was only one accredited service officer and his self. He noted that the department was taking walk-ins during the morning but appointments only in the afternoon. He added that his building is not as secure as others in the county campuses. He added that he helps a population of people who may be experiencing post traumatic stress. He said that no one has ever been turned away. He reported that another person has been hired. He said that their accreditations are being waited on. Comm. Sizemore said that if there were security concerns then they would need to look into moving them to another facility.

Comm. Rabhi stated that he was supportive of this item.

Comm. Ping asked Mike Smith to explain how this worked. Mike Smith that the State enacted a law that allows counties to levy up to 1/10 of a mill in order to provide care for indigent veterans. He said that the millage is mandated. He said that 1/10 of a mill would currently net about 1.6 million dollars which is not really necessary for their needs. Comm. Ping said that it was obvious in many county departments that no more can be done with less. She congratulated him on his work.

Comm. Turner said that declining property values have eroded his budget and that the current action would bring funding levels up to where they have been in the past. He said that this was the least that could be done by the county. He commended Mike Smith for his phenomenal work.

Comm. Prater said that he did not have an idea about how many people the Veterans Department services. He asked if there were some numbers available laying out service levels. He did say that veterans who arrive at that facility should be able to receive assistance and he did not want to hear that people had to wait outside. Mike Smith said that now that staff was up to sufficient levels to allow one person to maintain the front desk his goal was to return to a walk-in service. He noted that in 2011 the department had been able to help veterans and their dependants secure approximately \$45,000,000 in direct aid.

Comm. Bergman thanked Mike Smith for his work.

Roll call vote: YEAS: 10 NAYS: 0 ABSENT: 1 Motion carried.

c. Agriculture and Economic Development Millage

Comm. Rabhi seconded by Comm. Gunn moved that the Board of Commissioners approve an agricultural and economic development millage of 0.050 mills to be levied in December, 2012, for use during calendar year 2013, with the proceeds of such millage to be placed into the County's Economic Development and Agriculture Millage Fund.

Comm. Conan Smith said that he wanted to raise two points about the Act 88 millage. He noted that the average household income in Washtenaw County was increasing steadily. He added that due to larger economic pressures, home values and thus taxable dollars were decreasing. He said he would like to look at incrementally increasing the Act 88 millage from 05/100 to 06/100. He stated that it would be an increase per household of approximately \$.80. He said that this increase would allow for increased economic development activities. He said that ensuring the new OCED office would be able to maximize investments was of huge importance. He said that the allocation should be made to OCED so that that office could track the investments and their effectiveness so that they can provide a report to the board each year. He said he would bring language to the board in the future.

Comm. Gunn said she would support such language.

Comm. Prater said he was not sure about the performance of the investments into previous economic development investments. Verna McDaniel stated that information could be provided.

Comm. Sizemore asked why this information had not been provided to the board already. Verna McDaniel stated that a lot of the information is available and posted but she would like to provide a comprehensive report for the board.

Comm. Prater asked what had been accomplished by the Eastern Leaders Group. Tony Vanderworp said that there was a brief summary report in the agenda. He added that he would be happy to provide additional information not laid out in that report.

Comm. Sizemore thanked Bob Tetens for working with the ELG. He said his view that jobs need to filter up rather than down. He noted that he was most worried about the people trying to make \$10-15 an hour.

Comm. Rabhi stated that he was planning a working session for the middle of the fall. He said it would be a good opportunity to have some of the other economic development groups come in and explain their work.

Comm. Conan Smith said one of the reasons he was interested in OCED taking a management role was so that they could more closely track the performance of the money being invested in these nine economic development organizations.

Roll call vote: YEAS: 7 NAYS: 3 (Comms. Ping, Prater, Dan Smith) ABSENT: 1 Motion carried.

Report of the Administrator:

None

Report of the Chair of the Board

Comm. Conan Smith said that the Board of Commissioners meeting would begin at five minutes after eight o' clock.

Items for Current/Future Discussion

Comm. Rabhi said that he does not mistrust the staff or the Parks Commission but he wanted to clarify that his intent was to ensure that maintenance is adequately funded.

Comm. Ping asked that the person who votes first on agenda items be rotated.

Pending

None

Adjournment

Comm. Prater seconded by Comm. Rabhi moved that the meeting be adjourned until September 19th, 2012 at 6:30 p.m. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 7:56 p.m.

Rolland Sizemore, Chair

Lawrence Kestenbaum, Clerk/Register

By: Peter Simms, Deputy Clerk

APPROVED: September 19, 2012