



WASHTENAW COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE

January 4, 2006

Chair Irwin called the meeting to order at 6:58 p.m. in the Board Room, Administration Building, 220 North Main Street, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Comms. Brackenbury, Bergman, Gunn, Irwin, Kern, Ouimet, Peterson, Prater, Sizemore, Smith, Solowczuk.

MEMBERS ABSENT: None.

OTHERS PRESENT: Bob Guenzel, County Administrator; Frank Cambria, Deputy County Administrator; Curtis Hedger, Corporation Counsel; Lawrence Kestenbaum, County Clerk; Dan Minzey, Sheriff; David Behen, Dale Vanderford, Ken Schrader, ITS; Peter Ballios, Gordon Burger, Finance; Diane Heidt, Human Resources; Alan Israel, Prosecuting Attorney; Mary Udoji, Mary O'Hare, Library; Kerry Sheldon, Administration; Stephen Kirschner, Clerk's Office; various citizens; and members of the press.

Roll Call

Citizen Participation

Brenda Stumbo stated that Ypsilanti Township makes significant financial contributions to the county and should not have their police services cut. She asked the board not to take public safety away from the citizens.

Doug Winters stated that he is not intimidated by the threats, and when he goes under oath he will have more than five minutes to speak.

Karen Lovejoy Roe stated that the Board of Commissioners should be leaders in the county. She stated that she is embarrassed to be a Democrat.

Sherry Hawkins stated the Washtenaw County Sheriffs department deserves and needs more support.

Linda Hamilton stated that Salem Township has lost Sheriff's deputies because of BOC action. She stated that the board decided to build a jail against the wishes of the public and is cutting public safety to do it.

Ruth Ann Jamnick said that the many people that have addressed the board over the last year have been passionate, committed people who care about the county. She expressed strong concern that Washtenaw County will set state wide precedent in their police services decisions.

Ken Schwartz stated that he believes someone on the board has the intelligence and fortitude to create a resolution that can solve the current police service problems.

William McFarlane stated that the MDEQ informed Superior Township that the proposed sewer permit for rock Financial was denied. He continued that the Hyundai is adding jobs to Superior Township. He added that the steering committee is making progress and he does not want to see his township friends losing police services.

Commissioner Follow-Up to Citizens' Participation

None.

New Business:

Administrator – Police Services:

Comm. Bergman seconded by Comm. Gunn moved to recommend that the Board of Commissioners approve the resolution offering a four-month bridge contract for police services to Ypsilanti, Salem and Augusta Townships covering January 1 through April 30, 2006 at the full cost of providing such police services to the county, and rejecting earlier counter-proposals from these townships for a two-year police services contract.

Roll call vote: YEAS: 8. NAYS: 3. [Comms. Peterson, Prater and Sizemore] ABSENT: 0. Motion carried.

Curt Hedger summarized the resolution and its objectives. Bob Guenzel said that this has been reviewed by the steering committee.

Comm. Prater stated that the Steering Committee is very close to bringing something to the townships for discussion purposes and he has hope that these issues will be worked out in a short period of time.

Comm. Kern stated that the bridge resolution offers a solution to several problems and she plans to vote yes.

Comm. Smith moved to amend the resolution by adding to the end of the first sentence in subsection six of the last whereas the language "recognizing that the current six month opt out clause shall not apply to these contracts."

Comm. Solowczuk made a point of order asking for corrected memo's to be distributed to the audience.

Comm. Peterson made point of order to have the amendment clarified for the public in attendance.

Comm. Irwin stated that he would restate the amendment before the vote.

Comm. Solowczuk asked the Chair for a 10 minute recess for the public in attendance to read the resolution.

Comm. Irwin stated that the amendment had to be discussed prior to a recess.

Comm. Smith withdrew his amendment.

Comm. Solowczuk seconded by Comm. Kern moved to have a 10 minute recess.

Roll call vote: YEAS: 6. NAYS: 5. [Comms. Bergman, Gunn, Irwin, Prater and Smith] ABSENT: 0. Motion carried.

There was a 10 minute recess beginning at 7:44pm.

Comm. Ouimet stated that the length of the contract is not as important as the cost of the contract. He said that this is the issue the steering committee is addressing. He added that the Sheriff's department deserves a great deal of gratitude. He stated that as the process continues the board should focus on cost and expectation of service.

Comm. Peterson asked about the cost of the four month proposal. Bob Guenzel replied that the cost is \$100 per hour per PSU. He stated that figure was determined by calculating the cost of a deputy per year divided by 1800 hours. Comm. Peterson asked what the difference in cost would be if the existing contracts were simply extended. Bob Guenzel stated that the current price per PSU is around \$54-\$55. Gordon Burger stated that the difference would be about \$45 per hour. Comm. Peterson asked for the actual cost of the difference between the long contract and the four month contract. Gordon Burger replied about \$300,000 a month. Comm. Peterson asked if the subsidy is being withdrawn. Bob Guenzel replied yes. Comm. Peterson asked why the contract is four months when an agreement is close to being reached. Bob Guenzel replied that he thought the premium is appropriate. Comm. Peterson asked when the deadline for the actual costs in 08-09 would arrive. Bob Guenzel replied the deadline is by the end of April. Comm. Peterson asked if the dollars for the sheriff funding have already been budgeted. He stated that the county is set to make money by extending the contract longer than it needs to be, simply as an incentive to get entities to sign. He suggested passing a resolution to extend the negotiating period to the first of April. He stated that county has already budgeted for the police services, so it should continue its services.

Comm. Sizemore stated it appears that the steering committee will reach a conclusion within 60-90 days. He continued saying that he does not want to pay attorney fees when it is not necessary. He added that he would rather wait another 90 days if it meant maintaining better relationships with the community.

Comm. Gunn stated that about 50% of general fund money goes to public safety and justice. She said that the county has tried repeatedly to have productive talks. She added that it would be grossly unfair to townships that have signed contracts to not support this resolution.

Comm. Bergman asked how many people have been laid off in past two years. Bob Guenzel said about 132 positions have been eliminated. Comm. Bergman asked if the layoffs have been across the board among the departments. Bob Guenzel said affirmatively. Comm. Bergman stated that she supports the resolution and that

money lost through previous budget cuts could be restore through the savings accomplished through the new methodology.

Comm. Kern asked, if in the event a township chose to sign a four year contract before April 30th, would they go immediately into the four year contract. Bob Guenzel said from his point of view, this would be acceptable. Comm. Kern asked if this is spelled out in the resolution. Bob Guenzel stated that the four year contract would supersede the four month. Comm. Kern stated that she feels that the Board of Commissioners made an act of trust to the townships that sign before December 31, and she supports the resolution.

Comm. Peterson stated that there is a significant cost difference between the charges to the jurisdictions that have signed and those that have not. He stated that he wished that the numbers of these costs were available. He stated that as a board, they have to be briefed as to what happens if no one signs the contract. He asked who will provide back-up to his jurisdiction if services are cut. Comm. Peterson asked what would happen to the jurisdictions that do not sign any contract.

Comm. Irwin stated that this is the crisis that the BOC faces. He stated that costs for the last two years of the contract are affected by whether Ypsilanti Township contracts with the Sheriff's Department.

Comm. Peterson stated that his constituency relies on the Washtenaw County Sheriff's Department and they cannot afford to pay for overtime. He stated that he believes that Ypsilanti Township would take an extension if offered. He stated that the Board of Commissioners needs patience on this issue.

Comm. Gunn supported by Comm. Smith called the question. Roll call vote: YEAS: 8. NAYS: 3 [Comms. Peterson, Prater and Sizemore]. ABSENT: 0. Motion carried.

Comm. Gunn supported by Comm. Smith moved to carry the resolution on to the January 4, Board of Commissioners meeting.

Report of the Administrator:

None.

Report of the Chair of the Board

Comm. Prater stated that the Board of Commissioners meeting would reconvene after the Ways and Means Committee adjourned.

Items for Current/Future Discussion

Comm. Brackenbury seconded by Comm. Prater moved that Washtenaw County pay the sum of \$50,000 a month to Pittsfield Charter Township commencing January 1, 2006, such funds are to be dedicated to public safety services within Pittsfield Township at the direction of the Pittsfield Township Board of Trustees.

Comm. Brackenbury stated that the intent of his motion is to allow for the Pittsfield Township public safety department, which Pittsfield residents pay for large without county subsidies, to improve itself, operate more effectively and to make service better for its citizens. He added that Pittsfield public safety officials are some of the lowest paid in the county.

Comm. Peterson supported by Comm. Smith move an amendment to subsidize the City of Ypsilanti with \$50,000 a month because of questionable future back-up services and support services.

Comm. Peterson stated that his jurisdiction needs this kind of county police services grant and he would appreciate the boards vote on this motion.

Comm. Smith supported by Comm. Gunn moved to table the motion. Roll call vote: YEAS: 9. NAYS: 2 [Comms. Brackenbury and Sizemore]. ABSENT: 0. Motion carried.

Comm. Solowczuk asked for both contracting and non-contracting entities to voice their opinion in the upcoming public participation.

Citizen Participation

Kathleen Jackson stated that the drafter of the bridge contract has bumped their head. She expressed surprise that the board did not put public safety first.

Pat Vaillencourt stated that it is time to look at the impact of the decision to cut police services. She stated that as a person who signed the contract she sympathized with the Board of Commissioners but she does not want to see other townships without police services.

Brenda Stumbo stated that no one cares anymore about what they say. She said that she will fight for the sheriffs department any time. She stated that the Board of Commissioners is jeopardizing people's lives. She asked Comm. Prater to voice his opinion about this issue.

Doug Winters stated that the Board of Commissioners is playing games. He added the commissioners would rue the day they tried to divide the county. He stated that the money that comes to the county belongs to the taxpayers. He stated that the county has a pattern of deception that will be exposed.

Harry Valentine stated that he is proud of the men and women serving the Sheriff. He stated that Ypsilanti Township sheriff's back-up deputies all over the county. He stated that the sheriff deputies are survivors, but the impact on the county will be difficult to recover from.

Joe Zurawski spoke about the process by which the costs in the contract are determined. He stated that the four month contract is a stick in the eye to the three non-contracting entities that refuse to sign.

Bill Manty stated that he thinks it is unfair to say that no progress is being made. He stated that people willing to compromise are good people.

Fred Roperti stated that he found it embarrassing that the commissioners would consider not extending police services.

Ken Schwartz stated that the resolution being considered tonight is punitive. He asked the board to set aside their pride and find a compromise.

Sherry Hopkins stated that an emergency room never turns people away, and a citizen should never be denied police services. She stated that she is honored to participate in tonight's proceedings.

Karen Lovejoy Roe stated that the board should work at getting information to the public ahead of time. She stated that the board knew that no one would sign this contract.

Brian McKowski read comments from Bob Guenzel to Wes Prater from 2003. He asked where the fairness is for the 2003 contract signers.

Linda Hamilton stated that Salem Twp. does not receive a fair amount of services. She related a story showing how the county wastes money.

Dan Minzey stated that there is a huge risk to public safety right now. He stated that great things are done when people collaborate. He added that he does not want to lose any more deputies.

Linda Dew related a story of being rescued by the Washtenaw County Sheriff's Department.

Jan Godek asked that the contract be extended for the three non-contracting townships.

James Quigley stated that the county is at the edge of an abyss. He stated that the contract was punitive. He asked that the BOC keep in mind we are all family.

Commissioners Follow-up to Citizen Participation

Comm. Kern asked the commissioners that sit on the steering committee on whether the contract has been presented to the steering committee.

Comm. Solowczuk stated that it was presented to the steering committee. He thanked the responders to his petition for feed back from entities that have signed contracts. He stated that Ypsilanti Township has only threatened to sue, not asked for a compromise.

Comm. Smith asked if the bridge contract was not signed and the original contract remained unsigned, would police services effectively be cut off. Bob Guenzel replied affirmatively. He stated that it sounds like the bridge contract is a compromise.

Comm. Irwin stated that he does not want a crisis and hopes to come to a compromise. He listed many actions the board has made to compromise with the townships. He added that he has seen a lack of willingness to compromise with the county. He stated there are two parties to the lack of a contract and everyone should be looking for ways to resolve the conflict.

Adjournment

Comm. Gunn seconded by Comm. Solowczuk moved that the meeting be adjourned until January 18, 2006.

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Jeff Irwin, Chair

Lawrence Kestenbaum, Clerk/Register
By: Stephen D. Kirschner, Deputy Clerk

APPROVED: