



WASHTENAW COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

WORKING SESSION

October 21, 2004

The meeting was called to order by Chair Irwin at 6:30 p.m. in the Board Room, Administration Building, 220 North Main Street, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Comms. Armentrout, Bergman, Brackenbury, Gunn, Irwin, Kern, Peterson, Prater, Sizemore.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Comms. Solowczuk, Yekulis.

OTHERS PRESENT: Bob Guenzel, County Administrator; Frank Cambria, Deputy Administrator; Kerry Sheldon, Scott Patton, Fran Alexander, Administration; David Behen. Ken Schrader, ITS; Gordon Burger, Finance; Greg Dill, Facilities; Lt. Gary Greenfield, Kirk Filsinger, Sheriff's Office; Donna Sabourin, CSTS; James D. Higginbottom, Deputy Clerk; various citizens; and members of the press.

Roll Call

Citizen Participation

None.

Commissioner Follow-Up to Citizen Participation

None.

Discussion Items:

Jail Update

Bob Guenzel presented the Washtenaw County Administrator's Draft Recommendations on Public Safety.

- Introduction
- Washtenaw County Correctional Facility
- Probation Residential
- Jail Mental Health Diversion
- Financing Solutions
- Appendices

Comm. Brackenbury asked if there is a fall back plan should the state stop funding. Bob Guenzel responded that the ballot proposal would be inclusive and permit the county to use those funds should it be necessary, though other cuts would need to be made at that time.

Comm. Brackenbury asked what would be done to insure damages were not done by individuals in the Probation Residential Center while held there. Bob Guenzel responded that the Judges would screen the individuals and it would be a controlled and regulated environment. Comm. Bergman noted that it is not intended to be a night jail, though the individuals would be screened on a daily basis.

Comm. Kern asked if the construction costs included the new court building. Bob Guenzel responded that it included all items within the millage. She also asked what would occur should the millage not be levied in a particular year. Mr. Guenzel said that he would need to speak to Corporation Counsel to find the answer for her.

Comm. Armentrout asked if future boards could delay the development phases. Bob Guenzel responded that phases could be adjusted by different boards each year.

Comm. Bergman thanked Scott Patton for all of his work. She suggested that a distinction be made between prisons and jails. She also wanted to enter the option of tethering into the document, and remove the target arrests. She said that location is also a factor.

Comm. Gunn thanked Bob Guenzel, Scott Patton and others for all of their work. She asked that info on what is currently done for probation residential be included in the document.

Comm. Prater asked if other jurisdictions will be having similar ballot proposals and should the proposal fail, what other options would be available. Mr. Guenzel responded that they knew of no other proposals and there are fall back options, but none are long term answers.

Comm. Sizemore said he hoped as much work as possible would be offered to local business. Mr. Guenzel responded that the bids would recognize local trades.

Comm. Peterson asked what the millage would specifically cover. Bob Guenzel responded that it would cover the building, and as years go by it would cover operational costs. Comm. Peterson expressed his concern that the current jail was the most up-to-date when it was constructed and is now outdated. He hoped that this new jail would not become outdated too quickly.

Comm. Bergman said that the board would be able to use the money as they see fit.

Comm. Gunn said that 64% of the inmates in the jail are violent offenders. She also asked that information on the county's previous efforts to build a jail be provided. Bob Guenzel responded that the county was forced to build a jail in the 1970's due to a lawsuit.

Comm. Armentrout asked if bonds would be floated once or several times. Bob Guenzel responded that it would be done in at least two phases.

Comm. Irwin said that it is a good start and he thinks more information should be provided, such as the cost to send inmates to other counties. He also requested that a hard number of beds be provided to the public. He also was interested in the cost difference for the high versus the low number of beds. Bob Guenzel said that the flexibility is there to allow the county to adjust to the demands in the future. Comm. Irwin said he thought .75 was too great of a millage to get the needed public support.

Comm. Brackenbury asked who the county housed in Genesee County. Bob Guenzel responded that the probation residential inmates are currently held in Genesee County.

Comm. Gunn agreed with Comm. Irwin that a solid number is needed to convince the public to support it.

Comm. Sizemore asked to see budget information from other counties who are also building jails. Greg Dill said he would address the issue. Comm. Sizemore also asked what efforts the Sheriff's Office has made to support the jail construction.

Comm. Irwin asked how much it would cost to maintain the old building. Bob Guenzel and Greg Dill said the goal is to take down the building as soon as possible because it would be costly to maintain the building.

Comm. Prater asked for reasons why the building is being removed.

Comm. Gunn suggested that the public be permitted to take tours of the jail. Kirk Filsinger offered tours if people made appointments.

Comm. Armentrout asked for more details on the district court and how it may effect the ballot proposal.

CJCC Update

Bob Guenzel said the County is limited in ways it can support the millage and introduced Fran Alexander who would be working with the County in supporting the millage. Fran Alexander said she would work in fact sheets that would be geared toward the community. She said they would be documenting frequently asked questions and would work with the Ann Arbor News. Tours of the jail would be promoted and she encouraged Commissioners to bring people considered influential in the County on tours of the jail. She also would be looking for advocate groups to support the millage.

Both Comms. Bergman and Peterson said that local Cities and Townships should be included in the efforts to support the millage.

Comm. Peterson asked when the ballot language must be submitted, and hoped it would not conflict with the holidays. Bob Guenzel said that the ballot language must be submitted by mid December.

Comm. Sizemore asked who he should contact if he has questions. Bob Guenzel encouraged him to contact either Kerry Sheldon or himself.

Commissioner Items

None.

County Administrator Report

None.

Items for Current/Future Discussion

Comm. Sizemore requested a working session to look at the use of county vehicles, and review if they are needed.

Comm. Peterson wanted to take time in the future to discuss the juvenile court and commend the court for bringing it to the front.

Pending

None.

Status of Annual Activities/Goals

None.

Citizen Participation

Penny Ryder, of Ann Arbor, said she was a prisoner rights advocate and she thought more could be done for prisoners in Washtenaw County.

Commissioners Follow-up to Citizen Participation

Comm. Bergman invited Ms. Ryder to come and address the Board in the future.

Adjournment

Comm. Peterson seconded by Comm. Prater moved that the meeting be adjourned until November 4, 2004, at 6:30 p.m. in the Board Room, Washtenaw County Administration Building. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 8:07 p.m.

Jeff Irwin, Chair

Peggy M. Haines, Clerk/Register

By: James D. Higginbottom, Deputy Clerk

APPROVED: 11/3/04