



# WASHTENAW COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

## WORKING SESSION

April 7, 2005

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

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

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** None.

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Bob Guenzel, County Administrator; Lawrence Kestenbaum, Clerk/Register; Stephen Kirschner, Clerk/Register's Office; Kirk Filsinger, Jeff Fulton, Herb Mahoney, Sheriff's Office; David Behen, Ken Schrader, ITS; Kerry Sheldon, Judy Foy, Administration; Gordon Burger, Jennifer Watson, Scott Patton, Budget; Greg Dill, Facilities; Kathy Reynolds, WCHO; James D. Higginbottom, Deputy Clerk; various citizens; and members of the press.

### Roll Call

#### Citizen Participation

Joan Schwarz of Ann Arbor spoke regarding a public health program producing a film regarding hypertension, diabetes, and kidney disease.

#### Commissioner Follow-Up to Citizen Participation

Comm. Bergman encouraged her to make sure Ms. Schwarz became involved with the county Public Health Department.

### Discussion Items

#### Discussion about Public Safety & Justice Needs

Bob Guenzel presented a memorandum with his revised recommendation to meet the needs of the Public Safety and Justice System. He believed it was more important to look at the long term instead of the short term. He presented concept drawings to the board and said that funding options would be addressed at the next working session.

Comm. Irwin said that it appeared to be a reasonable compromise. He asked if the new recommendations have been evaluated to the same degree of the initially proposed plan. Gordon Burger responded that much of the data collected when creating the initial plan was transferred to the new proposal. Comm. Irwin asked how big the juries would be in the new courts. Bob Guenzel said that they would have 12 member juries. Comm. Irwin asked if the improvements in the older buildings could be transferred if newer buildings were built. Greg Dill responded that most of the equipment could be moved. Comm. Irwin also hoped that design elements would be implemented which would lower operation costs. He was concerned that Washtenaw County's operating costs might be higher than other counties.

Comm. Bergman said that the plan was a step in the right direction. She asked if a probation residential system would still be used. She also asked that the plan include measures to prevent recidivism.

Comm. Brackenbury expressed concern over safety for those living near the jail and hoped that corners were not cut regarding security. Gordon Burger said that it was a concern and that amount allocated to security and actually increased since there would not be the same phase progression as the original plan. Comm. Brackenbury asked who would operate the probation residential center. Bob Guenzel stated that certain qualified nonprofit organizations could run the program. Comm. Brackenbury asked for the total bed number once the 96 beds are added. Gordon Burger said that the total would then be an average of 355.

Comm. Ouimet pointed out that the increase in beds would actually be a shifting of current inmates who are housed out of county, or in other locations. The bed increase would not create a surplus. Comm. Ouimet also encouraged them to collect as much employee input as possible.

Comm. Sizemore asked if there is any in house work being done. Greg Dill responded that some of the work would be done in house.

Comm. Prater asked if the new plan was developed from scratch or if it was a modified version of the original plan. Gordon Burger responded that it was a scaled down version of the original plan. He said that the initial plan was good and was designed to be scaled up or down. Comm. Prater asked when the onsite preliminary engineering will be done. Gordon Burger said that much of the work was completed during the initial planning.

Comm. Smith said that he hoped to have a modified more efficient system as opposed to a smaller. He asked if the plan would be open to modification. Bob Guenzel said that once funding is discussed, it will be open to public comment. He said that they already had received a lot of public comment and they would take it all into account. Comm. Smith encouraged anyone to become involved with the new plan. Comm. Smith said that he really hopes to hear from both the Sheriff and Courts. He asked how they would be involved.

Comm. Peterson said that he hoped to have the cost information by this point, and also hoped that they would not settle on a plan until there was more input from the public. Bob Guenzel said that they would take it to the public first, but hoped it would go before the board by June. Bob Guenzel said that they could provide a report on the input from the community. Comm. Peterson asked if there would be many alternatives offered regarding funding. Bob Guenzel responded that there would be. Comm. Peterson asked when concern over the jail may rise again. Bob Guenzel said that it would probably need to be addressed again in three to four years. Comm. Peterson said that the citizens will have to recognize that the issue will need to be addressed again.

Comm. Gunn said that this was the beginning of a solution. She also pointed out that we are not the only county facing this problem. Comm. Gunn said that reducing recidivism is important and efforts should be made to encourage programs that are proven to lower recidivism.

Comm. Solowczuk was concerned that all options considered permit future modifications and expansions.

Comm. Sizemore asked who would be responsible to run the program. Bob Guenzel said that the county would control the entire development process, and the Sheriff's office would assist in design. Operations would be controlled by the Sheriff.

Comm. Irwin asked what percentage of the court costs would be going towards the addition and what percentage would cover remodeling. Gordon Burger said that he would provide that information. Comm. Irwin asked about any analytical data regarding health programs designed to reduce recidivism. He also asked about the costs for additional deputies at the court. Bob Guenzel said that they would be contracting retired Sheriff's Deputies.

Comm. Bergman asked for a flowchart and said that this provides an opportunity for humane treatment of inmates.

Comm. Ouimet supported Comm. Peterson's view that this is a great chance to learn as much as possible, so it will not occur again in the near future.

#### **Commissioner Items**

None.

#### **County Administrator Report**

None.

#### **Items for Current/Future Discussion**

#### **Pending**

Public Safety & Justice Alternatives – April 21<sup>st</sup>

#### **Status of Annual Activities/Goals**

No report.

#### **Citizen Participation**

Under Sheriff Herb Mahoney expressed the concern of the Sheriff's Office about the new plan. He said that the two to three year fix would take over 15 years to pay off. He was also concerned that funding may be taken from the Sheriff's Office.

Michael Moran of Ann Arbor Township questioned the board as to how they could come up with the costs, before it discovered why their operating costs are so much more expensive.

David Nacht, a Scio Township Trustee, expressed concern that the township police services may be affected. He said that additional cuts would hurt relationships with the local communities.

Ruth Ann Jaminick, Supervisor of Ypsilanti Township, said that there is a long standing relationship between the county and townships, and said that the county has passed many resolutions committing to serving the township road patrols, and quoted resolution 00-0118.

Brenda Stumbo, Clerk of Ypsilanti Township, reminded the county of their past commitments made in support of the township road patrols.

Harry Valentine, of the Sheriff's Office pointed out the difficulties faced by the Sheriff's Deputies while juggling their work with the concern of budget cuts.

William McFarlane, Supervisor of Superior Township, said that the townships will have to react to board decisions. He said that he was glad to hear that there were many options, and hoped that the board would take the time to review all of them.

William Selig of Lodi Township said that inflation will affect the costs of operation and therefore productivity needed to be improved as well to save money.

Jeff Wallace, Manchester Village Manager, said that it is important to see why deputy costs are so high. He hoped the Commissioners would look at the problem as a countywide issue and not merely focus on individual districts.

Pat Kelly, Supervisor of Dexter Township, said that jail funding is directly linked to police services and she hoped the board would remember that when making decisions.

#### **Commissioners Follow-up to Citizen Participation**

Comm. Kern said that all should consider a reduced millage proposal.

Comm. Smith thanked everyone for taking the time to voice their opinion and said that this was a starting point. He noted that the county and townships have a shared interest and also a shared burden. He added that many working for the county felt the burden of potential job loss, not only the Sheriff's Office. Comm. Smith hoped that it would go back to the ballot as a millage.

Comm. Bergman said that taxes are the basis of civilization and that people should support raising taxes for the jail.

Comm. Peterson said this is an opportunity to visit with communities and wanted to set a meeting where people could become more involved. He encouraged a healthy dialogue before a decision is made.

#### **Adjournment**

Comm. Prater seconded by Comm. Irwin moved that the meeting be adjourned until April 21, 2005, at 6:30 p.m. in the Board Room, Washtenaw County Administration Building. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 8:21 p.m.

---

Stephen Solowczuk, Chair

---

Lawrence Kestenbaum, Clerk/Register  
By: James D. Higginbottom, Deputy Clerk

APPROVED: 4-20-05