



## WASHTENAW COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

### WORKING SESSION

January 18, 2007

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

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Comms. Bergman, Grewal, Gunn, Irwin, Ping Mills, Ouimet, Lovejoy Roe, Schwartz, and Smith

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Comm. Sizemore

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Bob Guenzel, County Administrator; David Behen, Verna McDaniel, Deputy County Administrators; Ken Schrader, Information Technology; Ellen Clement, Stan Reedy, Julie Stafford, Public Health; Dick Fleece, Planning and Environment; Gray Reynolds, Public Information; Tammy Richards, Kerry Sheldon; Administration, Jason Brooks, Clerk's Office; various citizens; and members of the press.

#### **Roll Call**

#### **Citizen Participation**

None

#### **Commissioner Follow-Up to Citizen Participation**

None

#### **Discussion Items**

#### **Public Health – Accreditation Part I – Powers and Duties**

A short presentation was made by Ellen Clement of the Public Health Department.

Presentation on file in County Clerk's Office

Comm. Smith stated that he is interested in keeping the Health Dept in working order. He would like more detail on the Public Health Commission, and whether more expert opinions may be needed. Clement responded that the commissioners at the time the public health code was passed did not want to set up a dynamic in which they were being pressured to pass policies from another entities, and that a Board of Public Health may be less practical. Bob Guenzel added that the law no longer required a separate Board of Health. The Board wanted the Head of Public Health Board to report directly.

Comm. Smith asked if the current system has worked since 1978. Clement responded that it has worked as far as she knows, and stated that the Board has been very open to new suggestions.

He asked if Clement was getting appropriate feedback in the program. Clement responded that she thinks the program is getting adequate feedback.

Comm. Grewal thanked Clement for the presentation and asked if other Counties joined their health programs due to population. Clement responded that this was the case most of the time.

Comm. Grewal asked about targeting populations using measures other than socioeconomics. Clement used the examples of STD's and stated that things such as Syphilis, and Chlamydia are looked at for trends. Resources are then earmarked toward the appropriate places. Analysis also takes place to identify trends. Also if new strategies become know, the possibility of adoption is looked at.

Comm. Grewal asked if there is a good data set to use at the County level. She followed by asking if customers are screened, and if criteria are used to disqualify people. Clement stated that screenings are free, and in WIC, certain income guidelines are evaluated. She added that in the program, they try to stretch resources as much as possible.

Comm. Gunn thanked Clement, and stated that she is always impressed by the work of the Health Department. She added that regulations about septic systems and wells are in place and work. In addition, indoor air quality is another area of strength in the Department. Comm. Gunn commented that she appreciates the efforts of the Department.

Clement added that many people have been protected from the dangers of second hand smoke.

Comm. Ping Mills stated that the presentation was great and asked who could make the County a smoke free environment. Clement stated that the power of the public health code is used. She added that currently the Commission is on record as supporting limiting smoking in bars/restaurants.

Comm. Ping Mills asked how schools are determined for vision/hearing tests. Clement responded that all schools are tested.

Comm. Ping Mills asked how low income is determined. Clement responded that almost all programs have an income screen, and that usually the federal guidelines are used. It is the identical scale as seen in head start and in other programs.

Comm. Bergman asked about the Health Emergency Response Coalition, and whether this is a regional organization. Clement stated that this organization is involved in some regional emergency planning tasks.

Comm. Bergman stated that coordination is taking place on a small regional scale. Comm. Bergman asked about fees for inoculations. Clement responded that they are following Medicaid rules in order to bill Medicaid. Clement stated that the County is still one of the lowest cost providers of flu shots.

Comm. Peterson stated that he regretted the disbanding of Public Health. He stated that he wanted to search for solutions in all fields of health care. He added that integrating Human Services is a promising direction in the future. He stated that he feels that these two boards are the two strongest advocates for the public. Comm. Peterson commented that health advocates could be recruited to serve on this body because of our key location close to universities. He stated that the Commissioners should be making a strong commitment to public health. He added that the staff of the Health Department has always been very professional, and that he is proud of the work they are doing. He hopes that during budget talks, some advocacy will exist as public health issues are examined. He stated that he questions how data regarding the health care of children of women currently looking for work can be kept.. Clement responded that children of women affected by gaps in delivery of service delivery often still have coverage for their children.

Comm. Peterson stated that he would like to discuss a fully integrated data system during the budget process to retain information of customers. He asked what happens to welfare to work participants after a year passes by, and asked what the best practices were in the system. He added that we can do better than the current numbers.

Comm. Schwartz appreciated the information provided. He asked to what degree the department might be dialoguing for private sewage treatment plants. Clement reported that this is a large topic of conversation in regular meetings. She added that establishment of local standards are necessary and that more information is likely to come soon.

Comm. Schwartz asked how public health is affected when a developer is attempting to process a permit for this type of discharge. Clement responded that maintenance, and ensuring that the septic system functions in the way that it is intended to function are very important.

Comm. Lovejoy Roe asked if coordination takes place or if standards currently exist. She thanked Clement. Staff of public health commented that waste systems are currently under the purview of environmental quality.

Dick Fleece responded to Comm. Lovejoy Roe by stating that typically the dept. can go out on a site to inspect a system (up to 30 homes) and added that up to 30,000 gallons of waste a day. The County has an agreement with DEQ that if a certain type of standard system is proposed the County can take the lead, but if there is deviance from the normal system, DEQ has determined that the County is not equipped to take the lead on the project. Dick Fleece stated that his department has sent correspondence questioning the DEQ evaluation. He added that he proposes are regulation that the dept could have issue permits and determine site suitability for systems with a capacity of up to 60 homes. He added that in all systems the dept would like to see funding available for monitoring and maintenance of the system. He stated that the problem was very much on their mind, and that various state committees have been looking at this issue. He referred to a court case that prevents the DEQ from requiring local units of government from signing off on responsibility for these systems. Fleece stated that he hopes to bring a proposal forward in the near future, and that the ball is rolling on this issue.

Comm. Lovejoy Roe asked if the largest systems would fall squarely on the shoulders of MDEQ. Fleece stated that the preliminary review would be conducted by Environmental Health. He added that a number of Commissions are involved with this oversight. He stated that he does not want multiple people doing the same job or review.

Comm. Lovejoy Roe stated that there is a requirement that if sewer is available, individual systems are not allowed. She asked how far away the sewer had to be to the development in order to bring in an individual system. Comm. Lovejoy Roe discussed the impact of connecting to sewers from long distances, and asked how far from the sewer the development had to be to go individual. Fleece stated that it was up to individual communities.

Comm. Lovejoy Roe stated that often smaller governments do not have the resources to come up with these standards. He wanted the BOC to take a strong, assertive role in this issue.

Comm. Bergman stated that there is a great amount of evaluation going on in the area of public health, and that commissions are made up of a broad set of people in the community. She stated that the Community Collaboration Council talks about health codes and the evaluation process that plays a role. She added that it is very important to her to do a great deal of evaluation, and that the County is working very hard to improve. The WCHO or Mental Health Board has 6 members of the University serving, and subcommittees are formed to give feedback on problems such as substance abuse. She would like to make it very clear publicly and indicated that best practices are exercised by the Board.

Comm. Schwartz stated that this would be a burning issue for years to come and that he looks forward to the Committee assisting local forms of government. He added that some things are swinging toward areas of evaluation for the Health Dept.

Comm. Peterson stated that he hears about the statistical infant mortality rate, and about nutrition program. He stated that the Commission does not spend the necessary hours to stay on top of health programs. He stressed that Washtenaw County has resources in place unlike that of any other county. He added that we should be able to do this at the County level. He stated that the Commission knew people were going to be in trouble and questioned whether all the steps would be taken to serve people in need. He stated that children with no benefits need to be addressed. He turned to the Board of Public Health should address some of these issues. He stated that successful tracking of the people entering the system needed to be conducted. He added that the BOC has the responsibility of the health of members of the community. He stated that improvement could be made in tracking of people that receive services provided by the County.

Comm. Smith stated that data collection is important and that analysis is important. He stated that it will be expensive, but feels that it would be an important issue to focus on. He addressed the Administration Department and stated that the system needs to stretch across the entire County. He stated that there are great people in IT and in other areas and would like to see investigation of a tracking system, and added that this is an important thing we could be doing, and if we come up with something great we may make money selling it to other entities.

David Behen stated that system integration has been a goal over the past few years, and will remain a goal. He stated that options would be put together.

#### **Administrator's Office**

Bob Guenzel, David Behen, Verna McDaniel, Tammy Richards, and Kerry Sheldon gave a short presentation on the Administration Department.

Presentation on file in County Clerk's Office

Bob Guenzel stated that he has a successful staff. He added that the interns in the office are a great resource. Guenzel stated that authority is given to his position from the Board of Commissioners.

Comm. Schwartz thanked the Administration staff for being welcomed by the support staff. He added that improving communications both internally and externally is important. He asked why the Sheriff's Dept. wasn't under the responsibility of a Deputy. Guenzel responded that as the Administrator, he has responsibility for the Sheriff's Dept. with assistance from Behen

Comm. Peterson asked if the Board would be participating in developing a strategy in future sessions. Guenzel responded that this would be the case at the Feb. 7 Ways and Means session. He added that he hoped agendas were kept at a length preventing tiredness and allowing for a full deliberate discussion on important issues. He added that the budget is the responsibility of the Commissioners. He stated that we have to get information before addressing the budget cycle. He stated that he is concerned about the County moving forward, and how the Board would move the County forward. He added that sharing views on the budget is important to department heads and staff. He stated that this would have to be a dialogue. He added that if someone chooses not to act, they have cut their own responsibilities short.

Comm. Gunn stated that the budget schedule contains time for public meetings as well as discussion for dept. heads. She added the dept heads work all summer to bring a budget back to the Commissioners. She stated that she has felt well informed in all of the budget processes she has been a part of.

Comm. Smith stated that he feels adequate time is present to learn about the role of depts. and come up with a sensible budget. He added that he may see the possibility as shifting the discussion of evaluating priorities and develop different types of questions. He stated one thing he will ask for is to put less of the Ways and Means time toward presentations, and that time could be split to allow for more time for budget questions/answers. He added he hopes that more systems can be developed without compromising the current process (i.e. undermining staff processes, dept. heads, etc).

Comm. Lovejoy Roe stated that she appreciates the support from Administration and added that Board direction is needed over departments in the budget process. She added that the board meets and sets the priorities, and the staff then goes and works on their budget. She stated that there may need to be a meeting giving departments direction before doing their initial work. She questioned where direction to departments comes from. Guenzel stated that revenue/expenses tables are worked out, and that a lot in this cycle will depend on labor negotiations. He stated that by the time recommendations are prepared, there is a good indication of commissioner priorities. He added that streamlining some of the meeting time may be a valid issue to investigate. He stated that a lot of the process would be dependent on commissioner feelings.

Comm. Lovejoy Roe asked who determines what is put in the budget. Guenzel replied that expenditure recommendations would have to be discussed with commissioners.

Comm. Gunn stated that the sad part of building a budget is that there are not many funds available. She stated that she hopes all can come together.

**County Administrator Report**

None

**Items for Current/Future Discussion**

None

**Pending**

- Feb. 8                      Comprehensive Plan Update
- Feb. 22                     Orientation to County – History & Successes of BIP
- March 8                    Wireless Washtenaw Update
- March 22                  Community Collaborative Update

**Status of Annual Activities/Goals**

No report

**Citizen Participation**

None

**Commissioners Follow-up to Citizen Participation**

None

**Adjournment**

Comm. Irwin seconded by Comm. Gunn moved that the meeting be adjourned at 8:48 p.m. in the Board Room, Washtenaw County Administration Building. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 8:48 p.m.

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Rolland Sizemore, Chair

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Lawrence Kestenbaum, Clerk/Register  
By: Jason Brooks, Deputy Clerk

APPROVED: