



WASHTENAW COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

WORKING SESSION

March 5, 2009

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

MEMBERS PRESENT: Comms. Gunn, Irwin, Judge, Ouimet, Ping, Prater, Schwartz, Sizemore, and Smith

MEMBERS ABSENT: Comms. Bergman and Peterson

OTHERS PRESENT:: Bob Guenzel, County Administrator; Verna McDaniel and David Behen, Deputy County Administrators; Curt Hedger, Corporation Counsel; Jerry Clayton, County Sheriff; Janis Bobrin, Water Resources Commissioner; Brian Mackie, Prosecuting Attorney; Jennifer Watson, Andy Brush, Jim Zwolensky, Support Services; Greg Dill, Sheriff's Department; Nancy Thelen, EMU Extension; Bob Tetens, Parks and Recreation; Anthony VanDerworp, Ken Schrader, ITS; Joanna Bidlack, Scott Patton, 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

Construction Update:

Jim Zwolensky gave the construction update.

Comm. Sizemore asked how things are on the contingency money. Zwolensky reported that it is much lower than it needs to be at this point. He added that he is working with Administration and Budget. Comm. Sizemore stated that he feels Zwolensky is doing a good job and added that he is willing to work with Zwolensky.

Comm. Prater asked about how far the project is behind schedule. Zwolensky reported that they are three months behind where they were as of last June.

Comm. Schwartz stated that he feels an excellent job has been done so far. He added that he does not think it is unreasonable that there may be some unanticipated costs.

Comm. Ouimet asked how smaller change orders are not catching up with the County and asked how many change orders there have been so far. Zwolensky reported that there have been 35 and that 19 have been approved.

Comm. Ouimet asked if any of the work has been done on unsigned change orders. Zwolensky reported that work has been done on water lines but very little work has been done so far. He added that PS&J meets once a month and change orders are signed at those meetings. Zwolensky reported on change orders that will not be ready to signature at the next PS&J meeting.

Discussion Items:

Presentation on Mandated versus Discretionary Inventory

The Mandated versus Discretionary Services Inventory was given by Bob Guenzel, Scott Patton, Behen, McDaniel, and Hedger (on file in County Clerk's office).

Comm. Judge asked if the Cost Allocation Plan will be included in the March 19th presentation. Jennifer Watson reported that it will be included. Comm. Judge asked is Maximus could present to the Working Session about their methodologies. Comm. Judge asked what is considered a serviceable level. Hedger stated that looking at extremes may make this more cut and dry. He stated that there has to be a bare minimum of the service provided.

Comm. Prater asked if there was information about the level of funding for the jail in Wayne County. Hedger stated that there was a dispute from the Executive and the Sheriff because cuts did not come through the Board of Commissioners. Guenzel reported that he does not want to get to litigation.

Comm. Ouimet asked if there is a way to pull information from other counties on how they are doing on mandated services. Scott Patton stated that this can be done and added that he has already looked at other counties. He reported that a difficulty with the data is how services are organized. Comm. Ouimet asked if it would be possible to obtain best practices and pit falls.

Comm. Gunn thanked all who had a part in this document. She stated that the level of support will have to be looked at and added that the values and priorities of this County are reflected in the budget. She stated that some programs may drop from world class service to serviceability for a while.

Comm. Schwartz stated that this document can now be used as a basis for making some decisions. He stated that some departments have some overlapping functions and added that reorganization may eliminate some of this overlap.

Comm. Judge stated that her intention is not just to eliminate non mandated services. She stated that she will be looking at level of service on life or death or basic needs compared to paperwork. Comm. Judge stated that it will be important for her to make sure that everything possible has been taken out before jobs are cut.

Comm. Smith stated that her priority is maintenance of jobs. He asked how the Board wants to use this document in the budget process. Guenzel stated that Administration is thinking that the Board gives feedback about what they are hearing.

Comm. Ping stated that it would be best to go back and revisit information before Administration comes back with recommendations.

Comm. Judge stated that she see this document being used once priorities have been decided. She stated that she feels that the retreat is important because priorities can be discussed along with a vision statement that matches principles.

Comm. Ouimet stated that resources have to be aligned to the vision. He added that there needs to be room for a lot of conversation around this document.

Comm. Schwartz stated that the overarching issue is that the economy is deteriorating quickly. He added that something radical is going to have to be done to make this work. He added that he does not feel that Administration has all of the resources that they need.

Comm. Prater stated that the Board is not alone in this process. He stated that there are other elected officials along with judges. He stated that it will take cooperation up and down the organization.

Comm. Gunn stated that the Board has to do the voting in the end. Guenzel stated that Administration is currently doing fine with resources but stated that the Board should keep patience in mind. He added that there is a method to what is being done. Guenzel reported that some time is needed on work with departments.

Comm. Schwartz stated that assumptions could be wrong by a large degree and added that he wants to keep a sense of patient urgency. He stated that if help is needed on pulling together scenarios to keep the Board updated.

Comm. Ping stated that this will take a lot of cooperation between all parties. She asked that departments review their portion of the mandated versus non mandated services.

County Administrator's Report

None

Items for Current/Future Discussion

Comm. Prater stated that he has been contacted by a veterans group about a bell that came from a warship. Mark Lindke stated that it is stored in the warehouse. He added that he would like to see it restored and find a decent place to display it. He reported that pictures are being taken in order to get an idea about restoration.

Comm. Ouimet stated that there is a sense from the bond attorney that there may be an opportunity to move 75% of VEBA bonds to certificates. He added that he feels John Axe should come back to the Board to get an idea of the next steps. Guenzel stated that Administration has tentatively asked Axe to come back April 1.

Comm. Schwartz asked if there is a sense about whether there could be a rate of return at this point.

Comm. Ouimet stated that it is getting closer. Comm. Ouimet stated that he hopes Axe can identify a market at this point. He stated that managing the balance sheet is as important as managing the income statement.

Comm. Judge stated that she attended the Success by Six meeting and stated that early childhood education impacts economic development.

Comm. Prater stated that he is not so sure that with the market the way it is that things will settle down. He stated that the first two years are the most critical time in his opinion.

Pending

None

Citizen Participation

None

Commissioners Follow-up to Citizen Participation

None

Adjournment

Comm. Irwin seconded by Comm. Sizemore moved to adjourn until Thursday, March 19th, 2009, at 6:30 p.m. in the Board Room, Washtenaw County Administration Building. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 8:21 p.m.

Jessica Ping, Chair

Lawrence Kestenbaum, Clerk/Register

By: Jason Brooks, Deputy Clerk

APPROVED: 3/18/09