



WASHTENAW COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

WORKING SESSION

November 19, 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. Bergman, Gunn, Irwin, Judge, Ouimet, Ping, Prater, Schwartz, Sizemore, and Smith

MEMBERS ABSENT: Comm. Peterson

OTHERS PRESENT:: Bob Guenzel, County Administrator, Verna McDaniel, Deputy County Administrator; Catherine McClary, County Treasurer; Curtis Hedger, Corporation Counsel; Bob Tetens, Parks and Recreation; Brett Lenart, Tony VanDerworp, Strategic Planning; Ben Toole, ITS; 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:

County's Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Strategy – Brett Lenart

Presentation is on file in the County Clerk's office.

Comm. Gunn asked why the proposed partnership does not include the City of Ypsilanti. Lenart stated that the intent of the revolving loan fund is to spread the money to areas not originally included.

Comm. Judge asked how other districts can become partners in the grant. Lenart stated that the biggest thing was a successful revolving loan program. Lenart added that this allows the opportunity to provide education from a regional energy office. He stated that more success will come from communication with the community.

Comm. Irwin stated that he is excited about the revolving loan fund. He added that \$270,000 from the federal government will not go very far. Comm. Irwin added that it will be important to be successful in clean energy legislation. Comm. Irwin stated that the money that could be saved through insulation and weatherization in the County is astronomical and added that private resources need to be brought to the table. Comm. Irwin stated that he would like to capture energy savings for a specific fund because there will be more juice in the tank to invest in future projects and because tracking success will become possible.

Comm. Bergman asked if there is a way to work with Ann Arbor to get efficient lighting into streets. She stated that she has strong feelings about the general fund being general.

Comm. Schwartz asked if technology has improved to the point that solar energy can be efficient in Michigan year round. Lenart reported that the technology is still evolving. He added that these grant dollars will be used to get some attention for the market. He stated that this is more of a demonstration and education project. Comm. Schwartz asked if there was any data available from the demonstration done out on Zeeb Road. Lenart stated that only a small amount of energy was provided to the building and added that this is a demonstration and education project. Comm. Schwartz stated that solar lighting in neighborhoods may have a positive impact.

Comm. Smith stated that there is enormous opportunity right now. He stated that expertise can be tapped into and added that there are also opportunities through federal bonds. Comm. Smith stated that millions could be obtained in bonds with payments coming from energy savings. He added that he is looking forward to seeing an aggressive plan moving forward.

Comm. Ouimet asked if there is an update on wind testing in the Chrysler Proving Grounds. VanDerworp reported that there would be a report coming forward in the next two weeks.

Comm. Irwin stated that there are companies in Michigan that are building facilities in Michigan that work especially well in overcast situations. He stated that the Germans are buying up these solar panels and added that this is an opportunity to support the local Michigan economy.

Comm. Ping asked how the dollar amount is allocated. Lenart reported that there are formulas in place for populations but stated that he would like to follow up. Comm. Ping asked how other municipalities are allocating their funding. Lenart reported that Ann Arbor is putting some funds into the southeast Michigan office. He added that the City is also putting more funds into the revolving loan program.

Comm. Smith reported that the County will appoint a representative to the regional board that will be making the decisions. Comm. Ping stated that she would like the regional center located in Washtenaw County.

Update on the Land Bank Authority – Catherine McClary

The Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, and Draft Policies presented at the meeting are on file in the County Clerk's office.

Comm. Ouimet asked who houses fiduciary responsibility. McClary reported that the Land Bank Authority is a separate public corporation. She reported that the Land Bank Authority Board cannot use full faith and credit of the Board of Commissioners.

Comm. Sizemore asked why there is a break up in term lengths. McClary stated that the purpose is to stagger terms. Comm. Sizemore asked how much staff will be brought in. McClary reported that she is investigating staff sharing between County offices.

Comm. Gunn asked about the authority of the Board of Commissioners. McClary reported that land banks were created for foreclosing governmental units. McClary reported that in Ingham County, property is being bought, rehabbed and resold. She added that the Authority has been looking at creating good policy so far. McClary stated that the Treasurer chairs the body due to the responsibility for tax foreclosed properties. McClary added that the Board of Commissioners passed a resolution asking that the bylaws be brought back for further approval.

Comm. Schwartz stated that he feels that this is a long term enterprise. He added that when the Authority is finally terminated, the undertaking will be massive.

Comm. Ouimet asked how expertise for the purchase of property will be built in. McClary stated that the Authority Board has recommended bringing in community involvement. She stated that she would also like to see expert staff from local governments also contribute. Comm. Ouimet stated that he would strongly urge the Authority Board to look at people who have had success in the past.

Comm. Smith stated that he is supportive of the Treasurer chairing the Board due to concerns about staff. He added that he feels that this is a tool that the Treasurer is inviting the Board to take part in. Comm. Smith stated that he is grateful for the opportunity. He added that the land use aspect needs to be taken into account.

Comm. Sizemore asked what the cost in taxes for a piece of property is when that property comes off the tax rolls. McClary reported on the program in Genesee County and the TURBO program through the Wayne County Land Bank Authority.

Comm. Smith asked if it is fair to state that ideally this tool would no longer be necessary. McClary stated that this is the ideal situation and added that she would prefer mortgage foreclosure prevention. Comm. Smith stated that the idea is not to create another institution causing issues with staffing and governance.

Comm. Prater stated that the Board should compare policies of other Land Bank Authorities in the state. He added that he feels a later date is necessary.

Comm. Judge stated that she would like to have the seventh person in place before moving forward.

Comm. Sizemore stated that he will be recommending Pat Kelly and added that he would like to appoint another commissioner if the Sheriff comes off of the Authority Board.

Comm. Gunn asked if resolutions could be prepared to push back approval of the articles, bylaws, and polices and the structure of the Authority. Hedger reported that this could be done.

Presentation on Alliance Cost Management – Fred Manuel

Presentation is on file in the County Clerk's office.

Comm. Gunn asked what percentage of percentage is charged and how it is calculated. Manuel reported that savings are calculated based on invoices. He stated that the County keeps 55% and the firm takes 45%.

Comm. Bergman stated that it is her belief that a decision needs to be made by a majority of the Board that a service is needed. She stated that if there is a need work should be done by Purchasing then recommendations can be made. Comm. Bergman stated that a policy is needed. Comm. Ping stated that she feels that commissioners did feel that this was a need.

Comm. Sizemore asked if personnel is provided by the County and stated that it is an additional cost. Manuel reported that Alliance Cost Containment brings in personnel.

Comm. Irwin asked how the process with other public agencies has worked in the past. Manuel stated that there is not much experience in the government sector. He stated that they have not gone through the RFP process and added that he knows of at least one other group in Michigan that does this type of work. Comm. Irwin asked if there is any part of the business model that derives revenue from corporate clients. Manuel reported that there is not.

Comm. Judge stated that she feels it is the fiduciary responsibility of the Board to look at these types of things. She added that she feels it would be helpful to put people that may be helpful in touch with staff. She stated that totally prohibiting contact with the Board would be foolish. Comm. Judge stated that she thought that the Chair could be contacted to set up a presentation. She added that she would prepare a policy if necessary.

Comm. Ping stated that she feels it is important to look into advantages that this could have to the County.

Comm. Judge asked if there was any talk about an RFP process. Manuel reported that he would be willing to participate in a process.

Comm. Bergman stated that she will be putting a policy forward for putting people on the RFP, RFQ, RFI list.

County Administrator's Report

Bob Guenzel reported on the letter received by Ypsilanti Township regarding contract deputies. He added that the Briefing is Tuesday at 5 p.m.

Comm. Prater asked if the Sheriff is at full staff. Guenzel reported that they are more than full staff which offers the opportunity for Scio Township depending on what the Sheriff wants to do.

Comm. Sizemore stated that he does not want to negotiate with municipalities currently that are involved in lawsuits with the County.

Comm. Irwin stated that the letter addresses having a mutually agreed upon change. He added that this letter does not seem to meet the six month opt out.

Items for Current/Future Discussion

None

Pending

None

Citizen Participation

None

Commissioners Follow-up to Citizen Participation

None

Adjournment

Comm. Prater seconded by Comm. Sizemore moved that the meeting be adjourned until January 21st, 2010 at 6:30 p.m. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 8:34 p.m.

Jessica Ping, Chair

Lawrence Kestenbaum, Clerk/Register

By: Jason Brooks, Deputy Clerk

APPROVED: 12/02/09