



WASHTENAW COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

WORKING SESSION

August 5, 2010

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: Verna McDaniel, County Administrator; William Reynolds, Deputy County Administrator; Jennifer Watson, Budget; Diane Heidt, Monica Boote, Chyanne Cooper, Human Resources; Dave Shirley, Jason Fee, Support Services; Ken Schrader, ITS; Joanna Bidlack, County 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:

Human Resources/Labor Relations Benefits Overview – *Human Resources Director Diane Heidt* Presented by Diane Heidt and Jennifer Watson

Comm. Gunn stated that the 2010 costs include groups in the County paying a premium. She asked if there will be savings from the Health Care Reform package for employees over 55 years of age. Heidt reported that this includes active employees and retirees. Comm. Gunn asked how much the dependent coverage will cost. Heidt reported that the number of additional dependents will be known coming out of Open Enrollment. Comm. Gunn asked about the premiums for long term care. Heidt stated that very little is known at this time. Comm. Gunn asked if wellness incentives could be realized by employees. Heidt reported that this has nothing to do with payment of premiums.

Comm. Prater asked if there is an employer/employee breakdown of total cost of medical coverage. Watson reported that the majority of it is employer paid. Comm. Prater asked if the latest actuary report has come out and if any report prepared has complied with GAS-B. Boote reported that these reports have complied. Comm. Prater asked if this report can be shared. Comm. Prater asked what the difference is between the PPO10 and PPO1. Heidt reported that she would be happy to provide a chart on the differences. Comm. Prater asked if projections have been done on the health care reform to reach out to 2014. Boote reported that most changes affecting cost will be taking place in the next two years. Comm. Prater asked what will be required for a dependent audit. Cooper reported that a form will be sent out detailing the necessary information for the audit. Comm. Prater stated that he would rather see a complete audit rather than a partial audit.

Comm. Judge stated that she would like HR to help Commissioners connect the dots when more information becomes available. Comm. Judge asked if all new hires come in at a PPO10 level. Heidt reported that they do. Comm. Judge stated that she would like to see more consistency. She stated that NACo is following health care reform and added that this is a valuable resource that can be utilized.

Comm. Judge asked if there has ever been a dependent audit conducted. Boote reported that a paper audit was done in 1998. Comm. Judge stated that the comprehensive report is a great idea going into negotiations. She stated that she would like HR to keep an eye on new reporting requirements.

Comm. Ouimet asked if there is a pinpoint on what the County can afford to pay and set that number. Heidt stated that this has not been looked at yet. She added that HR will take direction from the Board on this issue. Comm. Ouimet stated that he commends the forward thinking approach on this issues.

Comm. Schwartz asked if the audit will be complete by the end of open enrollment. Heidt reported that the result will be known by early November. Comm. Schwartz stated that the excise tax seems counterintuitive.

Comm. Bergman asked if the cost of medical cost will appear on the W2. Heidt reported that the total cost to the employer will appear.

Comm. Ping asked if consideration has been given to increasing the premium sharing. She asked if there is consideration for the addition of a wellness program before 2014. Heidt reported that wellness options have been studied over the last couple of years. She added that Nina Johnson has had meetings to look at some of these possibilities. Comm. Ping asked if other insurers have been looked at other than Unum. Boote reported that an RFP is done every few years.

Comm. Prater stated that the fringe benefit workgroup may provide an opportunity to establish a standard.

Services of Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) – SEMCOG Executive Director Paul E. Tait and SEMCOG Membership Manager Amy Malmer

Paul Tait and Amy Malmer presented a SEMCOG Information Sheet listing member benefits FY 2009-2010 (on file in County Clerk's office).

Tait reported that SEMCOG also provides economic development and air quality services. Malmer added that a member satisfaction survey would also be coming forward this fall.

Comm. Irwin stated that he would like to ask for SEMCOG to reach out to Republicans represented by SEMCOG to promote the bill allowing local governments to issue bonds to help residents and companies pay for energy efficiency improvements. Comm. Irwin asked if there is anything that has been done in terms of ideas or proposals on the Ann Arbor to Detroit Rail Project. Tait reported that every opportunity is still being considered. He added that trains such as a Thanksgiving Day Parade train are being looked at to create a buzz. Comm. Irwin stated that SEMCOG should get the buzz going about the Thanksgiving Day Train. Comm. Irwin asked about the 8 Mile to New Center train downtown. Tait reported that the ultimate goal is to go up to 11 Mile and then Pontiac. Comm. Irwin asked if other aspects of the project can be worked on while the environmental study is taking place over the next 12-18 months. Tait reported that a gas tax increase is needed to provide operating money for these projects. He added that a source of funding will be needed to move forward.

Comm. Gunn stated that the City struggles to find places for the 50,000 cars coming to Ann Arbor every day. She added that she feels someone dropped the ball on this issue.

Comm. Smith stated that he has an abiding respect for the team at SEMCOG. He added that local units of government have struggled over environmental sustainability. Comm. Smith stated that there is a passion for these issues. Tait stated that he wants to take every opportunity to change this culture and added that he feels that there will be a change in attitude. Comm. Smith asked about the direction SEMCOG is going on the sustainability grant. Tait reported that SEMCOG wants to fund implementation. He added that the grant is now more planning as the implementation part of the grant was cut. Comm. Smith stated that transportation authorization is another huge issue lingering at the federal level. He added that there have been several issues around NPO's with regards to government structure.

Comm. Smith asked what Tait sees from reauthorization on the effect of NPO reform. Tait reported that he feels more should be moving in this direction. He added that the region is largely strong elected official form and stated that this needs to change. Tait added that growth will be slow and stated that maintaining needs to be a focus. Comm. Smith asked if there are strategies at the state level for a metropolitan taxation strategy. Tait added that he has been pushing this at the state level. Comm. Smith stated that he is also concerned about communities being able to opt out of public transportation systems.

Comm. Schwartz asked if SEMCOG is involved in the Detroit River International Crossing. Tait reported that SEMCOG has been involved. He added that a strategy is needed that is acceptable to Canada. He stated that the Bridge Company is now suing Windsor and the Mayor. He stated that legislation is needed that would allow a public/private partnership. Comm. Schwartz stated that he feels that it makes more sense to have that crossing downriver. Comm. Schwartz asked if oil pipelines are tracked through GPS. Tait reported that they are not currently tracked.

Comm. Judge asked how many other COG's exist and asked whether they are working together. Malmer reported that there are 14 statewide meetings monthly. Comm. Judge stated that she would like to invite other COG's in once the IT plan has been established. Tait reported that the only concern is capacity of staff in various regions. Comm. Judge stated that she feels that the IT collaboration has the potential to be an example for other services as well.

Comm. Bergman asked if the Canadian government has offered to bond for the crossing. Tait reported that they have offered for the DRIC Bridge and not the second Ambassador Bridge. Comm. Bergman asked what SEMCOG is doing with the State Legislature due to the denial of the offer from the Canadians. Tait reported that labor unions and other groups are in favor of this plan.

Comm. Prater stated that someone should talk to the Speaker of the House. He asked how there will be success without a Constitutional Convention. Tait stated that his personal opinion is mixed on the issue. Comm. Prater stated that he feels that not much will change as long as there is home rule.

Comm. Ouimet asked what activities are the necessary things the SEMCOG does and which ones bring the least value for the energy. Tait reported that work with the NPO and transportation is absolutely critical. He added that spending transportation dollars also needs to be evaluated. Tait reported that the second most critical issue is returning the issue to economic prosperity and developing talent. Tait stated that the third issue is the environment. Comm. Ouimet asked how SEMCOG will be communicating with members when a decision is made to drop something. Tait reported that the member survey will be a part of the strategy. He added that he would also be happy to return to talk about this issue in more detail.

Comm. Ping asked if there are items focused on by other counties that Washtenaw is not necessarily focusing on. Tait reported that he would be willing to send the Governmental Efficiency Group out to discuss this issue with Commissioners and staff. He added that the County is very well run. Comm. Ping stated that she would like to make sure that SEMCOG is taking a proactive approach.

County Administrator's Report **Jail Renovation and 14th District Court Project Update**

Dave Shirley and Jason Fee gave a report on the 14A District Court and the Jail.

Remaining tasks, the schedule, budget update, and timeline were distributed at the meeting (on file in County Clerk's office).

Comm. Bergman asked if there will be more fencing. Fee reported that there is a security fence on the back side that is not seen.

Comm. Judge stated that she would like to hold off on payment of the final \$1 million until the flooding is remedied.

Comm. Schwartz stated that this could be taken up at the next PS&J meeting. Shirley reported that there is an interim solution in place that is being made permanent. Comm. Prater stated that there should be funds withheld until the situation is resolved.

Items for Current/Future Discussion

None

Pending

None

Citizen Participation

None

Commissioners Follow-up to Citizen Participation

None

Adjournment

Comm. Gunn seconded by Comm. Prater moved that the meeting be adjourned until September 2nd, 2010 at 6:30 p.m. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Jessica Ping, Chair

Lawrence Kestenbaum, Clerk/Register

By: Jason Brooks, Deputy Clerk

APPROVED: September 1, 2010