



WASHTENAW COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

WORKING SESSION

October 7, 2010

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Schwartz 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, Prater, Schwartz, and Smith

MEMBERS ABSENT: Comms. Peterson, Ping, and Sizemore

OTHERS PRESENT: Verna McDaniel, County Administrator; William Reynolds, Deputy County Administrator; Mary Jo Callan, Community Development; Andy Brush, Support Services; Bob Tetens, Parks and Recreation; Ken Schrader, ITS; Joanna Bidlack, County Administration; Jason Brooks, Clerk's Office; various citizens; and members of the press.

Roll Call

Citizen Participation

Lily Au, Ann Arbor, stated that coordinated funding may affect many small non-profits. She stated that United Way and the Ann Arbor Community Foundation are being brought together. She added that such large organizations may not reach smaller organizations. Au stated that too much money goes to administrative purposes. She asked if it saves money, how many people supervise the fund, and whether there will be confusion over public and private money being mixed together. She stated that she would like more people to join the Urban County to make decisions fair. Au reported that she is from a small non-profit and serves many functions.

Commissioner Follow-Up to Citizen Participation

Comm. Gunn stated that participants in the Urban County do so under federal rules and is audited by the government.

Comm. Irwin stated that the coordinated funding model has been talked about for many years. He added that this is geared toward lessening the burden of the administrative costs. Comm. Irwin stated that the larger groups often win funding requests in these types of models and added that this deserves a further look. Comm. Irwin added that hybridization should be investigated.

Discussion Items:

Coordinated Funding – Community Development Director Mary Jo Callan

(on file in County Clerk's office)

Comm. Gunn stated that she was impressed by the combination of public and private interests involved. She added that the program takes sustainability in small non-profits. She stated that she would like the Board consider this as it will save time and make non-profits more accountable.

Comm. Bergman asked what Callan meant by someone getting hurt in this process. Callan reported that there are going to be people that are dissatisfied because everything cannot be funded. She added that the goal when coming up with this model was thinking about people. Comm. Bergman stated that services and not agencies are being funded. She stated that the Health Improvement Plan may ask for funding and asked if they would be included in looking at what is ideal and what is fundable. Callan stated that they should be at the table and added that she would need to look at the application part of the question more in depth.

Comm. Bergman stated that she hopes metrics will be sought on cooperative projects. She added that she would be curious on the development of metrics and added that she supports coordinated funding.

Comm. Irwin asked for a characterization of 800 saved hours as presented. He added that there is a tremendous amount of paperwork that goes along with these grants and stated that staff time and paperwork savings would lead to money savings. Callan reported that there were three bodies allocating funds using their own process. She described the process the County typically goes through and stated that the entire process needs to be multiplied by three. Comm. Irwin asked how government groups stay involved in the planning work with the money coming from the AAACF and the United Way. Callan reported that the United Way is involved in all three steps. She stated that the formal structure can be looked at further. Comm. Irwin stated that fundraising is a key part of capacity building that deserves to be mentioned. He asked if there is scoring for a groups use of funding on overhead administration. Callan reported that she does not believe a score is put to this item. She added that leveraging is looked at. Comm. Irwin stated that he believes overhead should be factored in. Callan added that she agrees that administrative overhead is very important.

Comm. Ouimet stated that he also agrees that a weighted number should be given when looking at administrative costs. He added that coordinated funding gives other organizations an opportunity to join in and added that he commends Callan because there can now be a focus on benchmarking and outcomes.

Comm. Judge stated that she would like to thank Callan. She asked what happens if Washtenaw County decides not to move forward with funding. Callan reported that there are built in exits. She stated that any funder can let the others know that they want out with 180 days notice. Callan added that all of this is contingent on funding. Comm. Judge stated that it is wonderful for non-profit organizations to be able to work through one channel. Callan stated that capacity building is now tied in and added that she feels that there is a better chance of funding for capacity building for small non-profits. Comm. Judge stated that the Plan to End Homelessness needs to be a larger part of the picture. She asked where the authority comes from if there are concerns. Callan reported that this model allows for more feedback to the Housing Alliance.

Comm. Smith asked what the relationship between the selected outcomes and metrics work for the grant program and for the superagency providing the funding. Callan reported that program level and community level outcomes have been worked on. Comm. Smith asked how broad the reach of the conversation is on metrics development. Callan reported that there is alignment between some agencies and added that staff have begun looking at County organizations as a whole. She stated that this has begun happening organically but stated that nothing is concrete yet. Comm. Smith asked how evaluation is being handled as part of the process. Callan stated that the United Way and Community Development have made strides in the training and technical assistance piece with funded non-profits. She added that a local non-profit must be able to make a care to more than one place. Comm. Smith stated that he would like to ensure that required evaluation is in place. He added that resources for this process are important. Callan stated that this may be built in as a part of capacity building.

Comm. Prater stated that he feels that the elimination of duplication of process is a key to success. He stated that agreements need to be flexible enough so organizations can work with current resources.

Comm. Bergman asked if there is a place at the table for people from governmental entities at meetings of coordinated committees. Callan reported that the County is well represented in many of the coordinated committees already. She added that the Housing Alliance has done a good job of reaching out to the County. Comm. Bergman added that she would like a significant amount of employee presence at these meetings. She stated that evaluation must be paid for along with training.

Transparency Initiative – Information Technology Webmaster, Andy Brush
(on file in County Clerk's office)

Comm. Smith asked if there is a calculation of staff hours that have gone into this project. He added that he would like staff time spent on answering questions tracked in the future.

Comm. Smith stated that he would also like the number of hits compared to eWashtenaw.org. He added that the provision of data does not really provide a better process. Comm. Smith stated that staff are pinched and added that layering in this type of work deserves attention.

Comm. Judge stated that she disagrees and stated that staff are excited. She stated that the amount of time spent on FOIA in an election season is high. She added that there is a directive from the President to get this done. Comm. Judge stated that she sees no downside to the project.

Comm. Bergman stated that there is no narrative around the charges. She added that direct contact with departments is another way to get information rather than FOIA requests. Comm. Bergman added that she is curious at how this would be received.

Comm. Prater stated that commissioners should go to some other websites presented. He added that these are tax dollars and times are tough. He stated that an internal audit will be done on departments and information will be revealed.

Comm. Smith stated that it is important to study new programs. He added that there should be attention to the webpage.

Comm. Judge stated that meetings will end and the number of hours spent on FOIA. She stated that she feels that spending will be done in a better way.

Comm. Schwartz asked the page will be linked on the homepage. He stated that it would and that there will be a separate URL. Comm. Schwartz added that there is more drive toward open government. He stated that he feels that there will need to be context added at some point.

Comm. Smith stated that he is not talking about data but about trust and engagement. He added that it is not essential to being an organization that creates impact which is valuable to the community.

Comm. Prater stated that there is no way to tell what has been spent based at looking at a budget. He added that the current budget is the first one that complied with the Uniform Budget and Accounting Act.

County Administrator's Report

None

Items for Current/Future Discussion

Comm. Prater asked if Administration has put together a schedule for an internal audit. McDaniel reported that next year is currently being looked at. Comm. Prater stated that he feels it is important to get this done. He added that he feels that the boat is being missed if this is not done.

Comm. Bergman stated that there may need to be consensus to fund that Coordinated Funding.

Comm. Smith stated that Comm. Prater brings up a good point. He stated that the product and the usefulness of the product needs to be evaluated. Comm. Prater stated that completing the audit will take time.

Comm. Ouimet stated that a discussion needs to take place on the scope of what is being dealt with and the people providing the information.

Pending

None

Citizen Participation

Lily Au, Ann Arbor, stated that she appreciates the hard work of the Board. She stated that small non-profits that work well need to be safeguarded in the move to coordinated funding. She asked how many times the Office of Community Development has contacted small non-profits. Au asked how much will actually be going to small non-profits. She asked if an attorney could make a case against using funds in this way. She asked who is going to supervise money that comes in. Au stated that the United Way will have to hire staff and contractors to deal with funds coming in.

Commissioners Follow-up to Citizen Participation

None

Adjournment

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:42 p.m.

Ken Schwartz, Vice Chair

Lawrence Kestenbaum, Clerk/Register

By: Jason Brooks, Deputy Clerk

APPROVED: October 20, 2010