



WASHTENAW COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

WORKING SESSION

July 21, 2011

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

MEMBERS PRESENT: Comms. Gunn, Peterson, Ping, Prater, Rabhi, Dan Smith, and Turner

MEMBERS ABSENT: Comms. Bergman, Judge, Sizemore, and Conan Smith

OTHERS PRESENT: Verna McDaniel, County Administrator; Kelly Belknap, Interim Deputy County Administrator; Brian Mackie, Prosecuting Attorney; Tina Gavalier, Finance; Ken Schrader, ITS; Cheryl Perry, 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:

Budget Discussion – Head Start, Interim Deputy Administrator, Kelly Belknap

Kelly Belknap gave the presentation (on file in County Clerk's office).

Comm. Peterson stated that some of the programs surrounding children have been abandoned in this County. He added that County money is important when families and children reach the last resort and stated that this Board has made services to children a high priority. Comm. Peterson asked when other items around the budget that are non-mandated and are funded by the general fund will be discussed. He added that he would like to see experts from Head Start coming forward. Comm. Peterson stated that more money is spent on cars in this County than on Head Start. He added that school districts have deficits and stated that this transfer would have an impact on the children. Comm. Peterson asked if other models for reorganization and outsourcing for other departments are scheduled to be coming over. He added that he would be supporting the establishment of a Budget and Finance Committee of the Board of Commissioners.

Comm. Rabhi stated that a meeting took place a month ago kicking off the budget process. He added that a slide was presented listing the items that would be discussed. McDaniel reported that the schedule was brought forward on June 16th and included many of the topics that would be coming forward. She added that this is the planned forum to involve the Board. McDaniel reported that the Board asked for an analysis of programs that the County should be in the business of funding. McDaniel stated that she is not talking about the elimination of the program but whether the County is the best grantee. McDaniel reported that the three department reorganization came forward and added that consolidated dispatch, and IT/Technology would also be coming forward.

Comm. Prater asked for the history of the student population in Head Start. McDaniel reported that this can be provided. Comm. Prater stated that he feels this program has strong support of the Board. He added that he would like to know what will happen to the program if another grantee is not found. Belknap reported that if there is not another grantee found, then the federal government sets up a CDI that would be in place until another grantee is found. Comm. Prater asked how many school districts have Head Start programs. McGee reported that there are seven that participate. McGee reported that not all districts have delegate sites. She added that Ypsilanti Schools also serves Lincoln for example. Comm. Prater stated that he would like to see this information in writing. He added that it seems to him that funding from the federal government will not increase and added that it may be a benefit for another qualified grantee to take over this service.

Comm. Dan Smith stated that he saw three different County contribution numbers in the presentation and added that he is trying to rectify them. He stated that that this brings the total number to the neighborhood of \$900,000 annually. Belknap reported that this is in the ballpark. Comm. Dan Smith asked if the ISD would qualify as a grantee. Belknap reported that they could. Comm. Dan Smith asked what their current fund balance is after the use of \$130,000 this year. Belknap reported that this will pretty much pull down the full fund balance. Comm. Dan Smith stated that education is not a core County function and added that the County is not a school district. Belknap reported that the use of fund balance is a budgeted part of fund balance and added that negotiations could bring down that number if there are concessions.

Comm. Ping asked what the in kind contributions consist of. Belknap reported that this is mostly volunteer time (delegate in kind) or provision of space transportation. She stated that if another competent grantee than that would be great. Comm. Ping added that she would like to see the entire picture without asking the Board to see the entire picture and the complete breakdown. Belknap reported that this will be a part of the 2012/13 budget coming forward in September.

Comm. Gunn stated that she started on the Head Start program the first year she became a commissioner. She reported that Pat Horne-McGee has made this program a program of excellence. Comm. Gunn stated that nearly \$1 million of general fund money is being used to subsidize this program. She added that the Board did not cut Children's Services and actually added and maintained this commitment to non-profit agencies. Comm. Gunn stated that the Juvenile Court was not worth renovating and has moved downtown. She added that this Board decided that police services was a large priority and stated that everyone knows her feelings. Comm. Gunn stated that this is a discretionary and non-mandated service and stated that another grantee will be found.

Comm. Turner stated that he has dealt with this program on the school board level. He added that he feels that heads need to be pulled together to discuss this program. He stated that he feels the ISD may be able to look at taking on this program. Comm. Turner stated that he would not want this program to be turned over to the federal government. He added that a lot of legwork needs to be done. Comm. Gunn stated that this is a federal program that is monitored by the federal government every few years. She added that the federal government chooses the grantee if the County no longer administers this program.

Comm. Peterson stated that these are Washtenaw County children and added that the County takes pride in providing quality service. Comm. Peterson stated that a detention facility was built and not a court facility. He added that he would not brag about integrating children into an adult court. Comm. Peterson stated that grants to agencies increased but service internally decreased. He added that this is not a discussion of the financial people in the County and stated that he would like to hear from people involved in the programming. Comm. Peterson stated that subsidies are given for road patrol and added that there are many other non-mandated services. He added that he is troubled that there is not enough consideration for poor families in the County. Comm. Peterson stated that he would like to see this room full of parents and children. He added that he would like to have experts to guide him. Comm. Peterson added that he hopes that the County does not turn their backs on little children.

Comm. Turner stated that the federal government will ultimately make the decision if a change is made. He added that the federal or state government will be happy to take a different grantee into consideration. Comm. Turner stated that an ISD would make this a stronger and more utilized program.

Comm. Gunn stated that there are children and families with needs in every district. She added that children are separated in the Circuit Court and that Urban County funding is federal and that the program has been successful. Comm. Peterson stated that he feels that he feels sorry for children going through the same door in the courthouse as everyone else. He reported that he is interested in the program piece.

Comm. Peterson stated that everyone has children in their district enrolled in Head Start. He added that many programs run in the past have not been run well. Comm. Peterson added that a budget and finance committee needs to be established.

Comm. Rabhi thanked all for their thoughts and concerns. He stated that one common thing he heard is that this decision needs to be what is best for the children.

County Administrator's Report

None

Items for Current/Future Discussion

Comm. Ping asked what the cooling stations are in the County. Heidt reported that three conference calls have taken place with the EOC. She added that the Shelter is a cooling stations along with 200 N. Main and at 555 Towner, Rm. 107 on the main floor.

Pending

None

Citizen Participation

Shirley Beckley, 3912 Sparrow Wood, Pittsfield Township, stated that she went through the school system and is proud of Ann Arbor. She added that she is a little disappointing that the Board may want to shift this program because we are talking about children. Beckley stated that she worries about disruption in the program if another agency takes over. She stated that children are taken care of, fed and monitored. Beckley added that she was disappointed that her children/grandchildren had to go to the court downtown. She added that she feels Head Start prevents children from being locked up later in life. Beckley stated that she heard nothing but good things about the Washtenaw program at the national conference. She stated that she would hate to see things get shuffled and lost because of this decision.

Pat Horne-McGee, 925 Frederick, Ypsilanti City, stated that she has served as Head Start Director for the last twelve years. She added that the definition of the Head Start Program is a comprehensive child development program and not just an education program. She added that she had recently left Wayne County RESA before coming to Washtenaw County. McGee stated that three Superintendents who value the program the way it is have sent letters expressing support as well as a letter of support from Eastern Michigan University. She added that RESA was one of two ISD's to have a Head Start program when she was with them. She added that they were no longer able to do it because of feelings that the mandate is K-12. McGee stated that the federal/local partnership has gone on over the years to ensure that there is a local input. She reported that this aspect has been imbedded in the Washtenaw system over the years. McGee distributed a document to the Board of Commissioners (on file in County Clerk's office).

Commissioners Follow-up to Citizen Participation

Comm. Gunn stated that she served on the Head Start Policy Council and added that all is needed is money. She added that Head Start is in place to break the cycle of poverty.

Comm. Peterson asked that the next time this comes before the Board he would like to see the Executive Director of Head Start on the program.

Comm. Turner stated that he would have enjoyed to have the Department Head more involved in the presentation. He added that he feels it is fortunate that the State is looking beyond K-12.

Comm. Rabhi stated that it was not his intention to shut out Head Start folks from the presentation. Comm. Peterson stated that he will talk about the quality of service no matter where the program goes.

Comm. Prater stated that there is an Administrator under contract to present the budget. He added that the Board needs to let the Administrator do his or her job until the Board gets the budget.

Adjournment

Comm. Peterson seconded by Comm. Prater moved that the meeting be adjourned until August 4th, 2011 at 6:30 p.m. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

Yousef Rabhi, Chair

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

APPROVED: August 3, 2011