

WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE MEETING

FRIDAY, APRIL 25, 2025

9:00 A.M.

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairperson Brian Droscha, Brandon Haskell, Jeanne Pearl-Wright, Mark Mudry, and Keith Barber.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Commissioner Frank Holmes.

ALSO PRESENT: Commissioners Jim Mott, Scott Hansen, Jane Whitacre, and Nicole Christensen; Connie Sobie, Ben Dawson, Melissa Ballard, Eric Daley, Chad Powers, Rhonda Schopper, Jeff Christensen, Bruce Barland, Chris Kuhlman, Tom Reich, Diana Bosworth, and Dairus Reynnet.

The April 25, 2025 meeting of the Ways and Means Committee was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Chairperson Droscha.

The Pledge of Allegiance was given by all.

Commissioner Barber moved to approve the agenda as presented. Commissioner Haskell seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Limited public comment. Rhonda Schopper spoke regarding the Sheriff's Department's changeover of service weapons and voiced concerns regarding the malfunction rates of the new weapons; Jeff Christensen spoke regarding social media posts related to the Public Safety Millage as well as following proper procedures for filing grievances against committee members; Bruce Barland (sp) spoke regarding possible funding cuts to EATRAN as a possible budgetary savings; Chris Kuhlman thanked all of the deputies and command staff for their hard work and dedication even in the face of public criticism.

Controller/Administrator Connie Sobie presented the Capital Improvements Program for Fiscal Year 2024/25 through Fiscal Year 2029/30. The amounts presented are based on current estimates and known issues. As such, these estimates are subject to inflationary pressures and market fluctuations as well as the potential for high-priority needs that could occur without warning.

Facilities Director Chad Powers discussed the building infrastructure repairs and maintenance that will be necessary over the next several years. Based on the current building needs, the County will need to invest approximately \$16.2 million over the next six (6) years.

Technology Services Director Eric Daley discussed the technology infrastructure investments that will be necessary over the next several years. Based on the current technology usage, the County will need to invest approximately \$12.0 million over the next six (6) years.

Committee members discussed the possible cost savings that may occur if a major reduction in staffing were to occur. Both Mr. Powers and Mr. Daley indicated that changes in staffing will not reduce costs in the short-term, but will reduce overall costs in the long-term. Mr. Powers discussed the average age of County buildings and indicated that unless entire buildings were closed or sold, many maintenance and infrastructure costs would remain. Mr. Daley indicated that he and his staff have worked diligently to procure contracts to guarantee favorable rates from vendors. Many of these contracts will exist regardless of the number of staff employed by the County. However, if the County were to eliminate services provided, this may result in budgetary savings.

Chairperson Droscha called for a brief recess at 11:08 a.m.

Chairperson Droscha reconvened the meeting at 11:20 a.m.

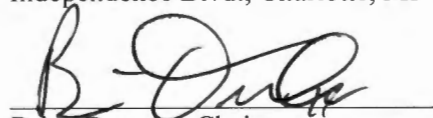
Finance Director Melissa Ballard presented the departmental budgets for Fiscal Year 2025/2026. Ms. Ballard indicated that these projections have received a cursory review, but a more thorough review with individual departments will be necessary. In addition to the reports historically provided, a summary of personnel and ancillary costs by department compared to revenues by source was presented. Discussion held.

Chairperson Droscha invited Sheriff Tom Reich to speak to the committee regarding the constitutional mandates of the office of the Sheriff. Additionally, Chairperson Droscha asked Sheriff Reich what he believed it would take to rebuild services if additional revenues are not secured to maintain road patrol and animal control.

Limited public comment. Chris Kuhlman spoke, thanking committee members and staff for their hard work and dedication and the cost of public transparency. Diana Bosworth spoke in support of Public Safety and thanked Controller Sobie for her leadership. Dairus Reynnet spoke regarding reductions that his staff has suggested and implemented.

Chairperson Droscha adjourned the meeting at 1:20 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Ways and Means Committee will be held on Friday, May 16, 2025, at 9:00 a.m. in the Board of Commissioner Room of the Courthouse located at 1045 Independence Blvd., Charlotte, MI 48813.



Brian Droscha, Chairperson