

MINUTES

KALAMAZOO COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

LEGISLATORS MEETING

June 7, 2013

PLACE: Room 207A, County Administration Building

TIME: 7:39 a.m. – 8:56 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Commissioners Carolyn Alford, Dave Buskirk, Brandt Iden, Jeff Heppler, Dave Maturen, Julie Rogers, and John Taylor

MEMBERS ABSENT: Commissioners Phil Stinchcomb, Mike Seals, Roger Tuinier and John Zull

OTHERS PRESENT: Peter Battani, John Faul, Dina Sutton, Thom Canny, Drain Commissioner Pat Crowley, Treasurer Mary Balkema, Senator Tonya Schuitmaker, State Representative Margaret O'Brien, State Representative Sean McCann, State Representative Aric Nesbitt and Lynn Turner.

1. Welcome and Call Meeting to Order

Chair Maturen called the meeting to order at 7:39 a.m. He welcomed and thanked all in attendance.

2. Issues/Updates

Chairman Maturen stated there were several issues to discuss, as listed below.

➤ State Budget/Revenue Sharing

Senator Schuitmaker stated the economy was improving in Michigan, and stated there was an increased funding of \$46.6 million in Revenue Sharing. Senator Schuitmaker indicated the transportation budget increased by \$351 million from 2012-2013.

Representative O'Brien stated the legislators had made an effort to put funds in a rainy day fund and paying additional funds on liabilities. Increased savings account to \$583 million and stated it was important to grow this fund.

Representative Nesbitt stated there were three issues that needed to be worked on: Transportation, Medicaid, and Low Income Heating Assistance.

Representative McCann stated he was hopeful that Medicaid expansion could still be worked into the budget. He also stated the school funding was not adequate. He indicated the School Aide Funding was being violated and was used in other parts of the budget. He stated the General Fund was based on tax increases.

➤ Transportation Infrastructure Funding

Senator Schuitmaker stated the Governor had proposed a tax increase on gas and a registration fee; which she did not feel there was support for this. She indicated she would support a 1% sales tax on the.

Representative O'Brien stated she sat on the transportation committee and said there had been a lot of discussion concerning gas prices and road conditions. She stated there were concerns with registration fees. She stated there was discussion on taxing the gallon vs. wholesale level.

Representative Nesbitt stated rate of inflation should cover the expenses. He stated it was his hope the conversations continued and a solution would be found.

Representative McCann stated if there hadn't been a surplus of funds, the State would not have been able to participate in the Federal match. He said the Federal match was \$130 million, bringing the total to \$260 million. He stated there needed to be a fair and equitable solution.

Ms. Turner indicated Congressman Upton's office had also been receiving phone calls concerning the higher gas prices.

Ms. Joanna Johnson, Kalamazoo County Road Commissioner (KCRC), stated of the \$350 million budget, \$115 million may be potentially seen at the local level for priority roads in Kalamazoo County. The KCRC Board, 11 of 15 Townships had passed a resolution noting the need for transportation funding.

Commissioner Heppler stated he had asked for this item to be on the agenda, he stated transportation funding was vital to the economy of Michigan, particularly as a tourist state.

Representative O'Brien stated the 1% proposal was going to take bipartisan support.

Mr. Moyle, KCRC stated there had not been an increase since 1997; however, the costs have risen. He stated there were not enough funds to maintain the roads.

Senator Schuitmaker asked if everyone would support a 1% sales tax increase dedicated to roads infrastructure.

Commissioner Rogers stated she too had received calls from her constituents concerning the increased gas prices.

Mr. Peter Battani, County Administrator inquired what the 1% sales tax would generate and it was noted it would generate about a billion dollars.

Vice Chairman Buskirk stated the 1% would be a savings account for roads. He also stated the trucks needed to pay more, possibly by toll roads.

Representative O'Brien stated there had been discussion on toll roads.

Discussion ensued.

Commissioner Alford inquired of the Legislators if they had considered attending town hall meetings to discuss the 1% sales tax increase with the citizens. She stated she had issues with the trucks traveling on the neighborhood roads.

Discussion ensued.

➤ Indigent Defense Statewide

Senator Schuitmaker stated the State would establish a Michigan Indigent Commission to oversee Indigent Defense services, as well as coming up with some additional funding and should be done by September/October.

Representative Nesbitt stated he felt it was necessary to have minimum standards throughout the state.

Commissioner Alford stated she felt it was vital that citizens have the right to counsel representation.

Discussion ensued.

➤ Mental Health

- Funding/Medicaid Expansion

Representative O'Brien stated discussions were happening. She stated Judge Bridenstine and Prosecuting Attorney Getting both testified in hearings.

Senator Schuitmaker indicated she introduced mental health diversion bills.

- Possible Mental Health Code Amendment

Chairman Maturen inquired about the personal property tax and Representative Nesbit provided information on personal property tax reform plan.

➤ Additional Updates by Legislators

Representative O'Brien stated HB 4704 was re-introduced.

Senator Schuitmaker stated she introduced a bill allowing DNA samples to be taken upon arrests.

Representative O'Brien introduced a bill on sentencing of juvenile lifers and this bill would not allow this to happen and would set guidelines for future.

Representative McCann stated he was hopeful for further discussions on Medicaid expansion.

3. Citizens Time

There were no citizens.

4. Any other items

There were no other items.

5. Adjournment

There being no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 8:56 a.m.

David C. Maturen, Chair
Kalamazoo County Board of Commissioners