

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF YPSILANTI
MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 16, 2021 WORK SESSION**

Supervisor Stumbo called the meeting to order at approximately 5:04PM. in the Ypsilanti Township Civic Center Board Room, 7200 S. Huron River Drive, Ypsilanti Township.

Members Present: Supervisor Stumbo, Clerk Heather Jarrell Roe, and Treasurer Eldridge
Trustees: Gloria Peterson, Debbie Swanson, Jimmie Wilson, John Newman

Members Absent: none

Legal Counsel: Wm. Douglas Winters - Absent

**1. WASHTENAW AVE. PHASE II AND REIMAGINE WASHTENAW
.....NATHAN VOGHT
WASHTENAW COUNTY**

Nathan Voght, Washtenaw County Office of Community and Economic Development explained the Reimagine Washtenaw Project. He said they will connect the community with sidewalks and bike lanes along Washtenaw Avenue connecting Ypsilanti Township with Ann Arbor and Pittsfield Township. He said last year they completed Phase I. Mr. Voght stated they would be happy and available to manage Phase II if the Township requests them to do so. He said in Phase II Ypsilanti would be mostly finished by bringing some of the existing sidewalk up to code and filling in the gaps that still do not have sidewalks in the Township. He said the next phase would need about \$70,000.00 for the engineering design. He said they would require about a year to get the easements from the property owners for phase II. He said they estimate construction in 2024-25 which the cost is estimated to be about \$700,000.00 to \$900,000.00. He said there would be additional cost for construction engineering at about \$135,000.00 to \$170,000.00. He said the total cost would be about \$920,000.00 to \$1.2 million. He said Ypsilanti Township receives approximately \$175,000.00 per year in CDBG funding. He said this would cover the design but in the next couple of years only using CDBG funds there would be a funding gap of \$500,000.00 to \$750,000.00 to complete Phase II. Mr. Voght stated this project could be broken up into more phases but costs would be higher. He also stated that there are possible grants that could be on the horizon but that is something he will keep the board apprised of.

Nathan Voght stated on another issue they have had a couple meetings with Representative Peterson and said MDOT is applying, through the Governors' Office for Covid Funding to do a re-construct of Washtenaw Ave. from Carpenter Road to the Water Tower. He said that would only be the roadway. He said that this would only include the roadway and not sidewalks or bike paths. He stated that it may be prudent to wait to see what happens with that funding before proceeding.

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**2. AAATA PRESENTATION.....MATT CARPENTER
AAATA**

Ryan Hunter, Ypsilanti Township Representative on the AAATA Board stated they will be discussing proposed long range planning for Washtenaw County through 2045. He said the future belongs to those who prepare for it now.

Matt Carpenter, AAATA CEO, stated The Ride is working on long range planning and he will be explaining four proposed scenarios for the future for Washtenaw County. He said there will be no decisions made tonight but they are asking the board their input on these scenarios, which was detailed with a slide presentation. He said when they look at the community they serve, Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti, and Ypsilanti Township many of the residents have the same concerns for the future. He said these concerns were climate change, affordable housing, social equity, how to get people to jobs, and tax rates. He said they drive their transit goals for 2045 from the input they receive from municipalities. He said these scenarios show how transit can evolve over the next 25 years. He said these scenarios represent examples of service that could be provided with increasing the investment with each one.

Mr. Carpenter explained scenario one which is a baseline option. He said this represents what we could expect in the future if we do nothing. He said they judge their success by ridership. He said this option would have no increase to the millage rate and our services may get a little bit better. He said population growth will outpace the ability of the system to attract more riders. He said the population will grow 1%-2% a year which will be more than our system can accommodate. He said 63% of the population of our area would be within walking distance to high frequency service.

Mr. Carpenter explained scenario two has a small increase in services and in our local millage. He said you would see new express services which would move people more quickly. He said 77% of the population would be within walking distance to high frequency service. He said this would include ways to move the transit quicker through traffic by adjusting traffic signals or bus lanes.

Mr. Carpenter explained scenario three has a higher increase in services along with a higher increase in the local millage. He said the service and ridership it generates begins to grow faster than the population. He said they can do more benefit for more people even when our communities grow and change. He said we begin to make progress in the increase of ridership, economical mobility, labor mobility, and climate change. He said we see the introduction of bus rapid transit along Washtenaw Ave. He said Bus Rapid Transit is called BRT Light. He said this does not have a dedicated lane. Mr. Carpenter stated 86% of the population is within walking distance to high frequency service. He said BRT is the concept of train on tires. He said the idea is to simulate the kind of rapid transit high frequency service you might get on a subway or a rail line but to do it at a much lower cost using smaller vehicles that are more affordable. These vehicles would run on roads we already own. He said full BRT has a dedicated road and BRT light does not.

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Mr. Carpenter explained scenario four has a much higher increase in services with a much higher increase in the local millage. He said we have a much more aggressive expansion of routes throughout Ann Arbor and routes north and south. He said there is also routes through the City of Ypsilanti around I-94 which will get riders to the west side of Ann Arbor without having to go through downtown. He said this should get people going from the east side of Washtenaw County to the west side more quickly. He said 93% of the population is within walking distance to high frequency service.

Mr. Carpenter stated the early feedback they received about these scenarios was that it didn't focus on the east side of the county. He said they added to each scenario making each a little more focused on Ypsilanti Township.

Trustee Wilson asked about regional transit and asked how involved Mr. Carpenter has been trying to bring that to Washtenaw County. Mr. Carpenter stated Washtenaw County is a member of Regional Transit Authority since it was formed in 2013. He said there are two Washtenaw County Representatives appointed by the County Board of Commissioners. He said they speak to RTA staff on a weekly basis. He said we try and do our best to serve the community we represent. He said some aspects of these scenarios will include park and rides which would be part of regional connections. He said they really want to have a clear idea on really what the residents want.

Trustee Newman stated with Lyft and Uber available, residents would have to be assured that the bus system would be as reliable for them to use it. Mr. Carpenter stated they operate a flex ride service which has been much more successful than he had initially expected. He said Uber and Lyft are for profit and subsidized by venture capitalist. He said if they stop making a profit those services will be stopped without warning. He said AAATA is funded through property taxes and is more stable.

Trustee Swanson stated as a board they have been spending a lot of time thinking about the opportunity index and the data and what that would mean for our citizens. She said looking at the scenarios with the maps you have presented I don't see the strongest path in the areas that need it the most. She said public transportation is a vital part of what our residents need. She said the City of Ypsilanti and Ypsilanti Township are connected but the City is not our community or our residents. She said when she looked at these maps she sees it is centralized on the needs for the City of Ypsilanti but again that is not us. She said she is not saying that it is not a good thing for the city but that is not necessarily good for the township. Trustee Swanson said she is not seeing what Ypsilanti Township residents need especially in the opportunity index. She said when she looks at the regional map it appears there is a great desire to get Ann Arbor wherever they want to go back and forth and a desire to get Ypsilanti to Ann Arbor or to get them to Detroit and get them right back home. She said it doesn't look like the design of this is for our residents to have the dignity of transportation. She said it looks like we're there to serve the purposes of other entities. Trustee Swanson said that feels unfair and it feels that it doesn't necessarily address the equity which was right at

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the front of this presentation. She said it doesn't reach the areas that need the dignity of transportation. She said this isn't about someone wanting to go somewhere and not drive their car it is about whether someone has the ability to get to work because they don't have the transportation. She said even if we were all in for scenario four spending all that money it would not be enough to up lift our residents to the level they need and deserve to be up lifted. She said AAATA was designed to take care of Ann Arbor. She said these scenarios were not designed to take care of Ypsilanti Townships' needs for their residents. Trustee Swanson stated that when we look at what people need we need to overlap that with the opportunity index and we need to understand it is the dignity of transportation and they can't wait too long for a bus to get them to work. She said there is more efficient ways to get to downtown Ann Arbor then going down Washtenaw Ave. if you want a faster route. She said the Board is committed to their residents and being advocates for them in providing the best possible services.

Mr. Carpenter stated he is aware that Ann Arbor residents are not as concerned about their property taxes. He asked if you prefer to keep the millage rate at its' current rate with no room to increase. Clerk Jarrell Roe stated she would need more information about their total budget and if you know what our taxable value is today in Ypsilanti Township. Mr. Carpenter said he did not know but the reason they put the graph together so everyone would know what service they would receive and what it would cost. He said their operation budget currently is \$50 million. He said they run a pretty tight ship by transit industry standards. Mr. Carpenter said the reality is it is a labor intensive service, about 250 staff, its' a capital intensive service every bus cost just over \$1/2 million and has to last 12 years. He said it is not a cheap enterprise for communities to get into.

Trustee Swanson stated that the residents within the high opportunity index also bear a larger tax because of school debt. She explained when Willow Run and Ypsilanti Public merged together the residents who live in the former Willow Run School district still continue to be taxed by the Willow Run debt and then they pay the additional school tax from Ypsilanti Community. She said they are concerned with taxes for all residents of Ypsilanti Township but the area that may have the greatest need for transportation are already paying more taxes than the rest of the community.

Mr. Carpenter stated that when they met earlier with Officials they asked what impact the new Federal Infrastructure Bill would have on this. He said they are not sure but they think it focuses on capital funding such as construction and not on operating. He said it may be possible they would pay for the capital costs.

Supervisor Stumbo stated that increasing taxes alone does affect affordability. She said that is not just residents but also includes businesses. She asked if there was capital cost in any of the 4 scenarios. He said there may be in some of the mixture. Supervisor Stumbo stated that she didn't think Mr. Carpenter had a complete financial picture because there is not an operational increase. Mr. Carpenter said it was there but he could not disaggregate it here. Supervisor Stumbo stated that the millage increase would be for the operating costs. Supervisor Stumbo stated she is

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also worried about RTA because she heard they would be going out for another millage. Mr. Carpenter said if RTA goes for a millage they can only go on even number years and only in November every two year. He said if RTA doesn't get it out in 2022 they will not be able to go out again until 2024. He said AAATA is on a five year cycle. Supervisor Stumbo stated the reason we joined this when we did was because the biggest benefit was that if our seniors lived within a one mile radius of the route The Ride would come and pick up them up and now you don't provide that service. Supervisor Stumbo stated she does not think the increase will service the residents in our community. She said there is over 7,000 people living in 48197 and 48198 that work at UofM. She said she doesn't think any of these scenarios would help our residents get to work because they won't be frequent enough. She said it was a lot of money for the services we would get.

Attorney Winters stated we spent a lot of time negotiating the transportation funding agreement in 2013-14. He said he wondered if the agreement they crafted at that time but is everything in that agreement still in compliance. Mr. Carpenter stated the agreement is still in affect and he believes they are still in compliance.

**3. FINANCIAL POLICY DISCUSSION.....JAVONNA NEEL
ACCOUNTING DIRECTOR**

Javonna Neel, Accounting Director stated she has a draft of the procurement policy. She said the last one they had was called a financial policy and was adopted in 2007. She said that Travis McDugald helped her with this draft. She explained what she put in the policy and asked the board for their input. She said she would need to complete this by the end of year.

Clerk Jarrell Roe explained that she met with Supervisor Stumbo and Treasurer Eldridge and they went through the draft and explained the changes they suggested.

Supervisor Stumbo stated this will come back to the board with changes.

The Work Session meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:55PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

**Heather Jarrell Roe, Clerk
Charter Township of Ypsilanti**