

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF YPSILANTI  
MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 16, 2022 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 Brenda Stumbo, Clerk Heather Jarrell Roe and Treasurer Stan Eldridge  
Trustees: John Newman II, Gloria Peterson, and Debbie Swanson and Jimmie Wilson Jr.

**Members Absent: None**

**Legal Counsel:** Wm. Douglas Winters

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments given.

**AGENDA**

- 1. AUDITED FINANCIAL REPORT.....RANA EMMONS**
- 2. LICENSE PLATE READERS.....WASHTENAW COUNTY SHERIFF**
- 3. YCUA WATER AND SEWER RATE CHANGES.....LUTHER BLACKBURN**
- 4. AGENDA REVIEW.....SUPERVISOR STUMBO**
- 5. OTHER DISCUSSION.....BOARD MEMBERS**

**AUDITED FINANCIAL REPORT.....RANA EMMONS**

Rana Emmons gives the following report on the audited financial statement “Tonight we are reviewing the audited financial statement for the Charter Township of Ypsilanti as of December 31 2021. It is an unmodified opinion, which is the highest level of audit opinion possible. So in layman's terms, a clean audit opinion, no disclaimers, exceptions.” She

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continues that there is nothing bad to report this evening and will just give a few highlights. Starting off property tax or taxable values this year were up 3.8%, it's very similar to the year before and very consistent. The state shared revenue went up this year significantly, almost 13% and that, of course is from the sales tax and income tax that the state collects. The funds are then distributed down to the local units, such as the township. The state did the 2020 census adjustment, that's part of the whole formula on state shared revenue. So you will see a slight bump next year. The general fund ending fund balance is 7,976,000. The building department saw an increase in revenue this year from the prior year. That just kind of gives you an indicator of how much activity is going on building wise in within the township from year to year. That went up about 16% over the prior year and that indicates a lot of activity in fiscal year 2021. New this year in the financial statements is the American Rescue Plan Act funds. We received the first installment of two in fiscal year 2021, the Township will receive the second one in fiscal year 2022. We have recorded it in a separate fund. So it'll be easy to see the funds and track the activity of how that's spent in the township. General Fund did come in under budget this year at \$945,000 under expenditures. The fire department added \$566,000 to their fund balance, but also of note is that now there's a separate fire capital fund for your fire capital millage. The township paid down \$790,000 in debt this year. That's principal paid and no new debt this year. Lastly, the pension funds, the net pension liability decreased \$916,000 this year, and the township had strong net investment income in the pension plan this year. Rana concludes the synopsis and asks if there are any questions.

Trustee Newman thanks Rana Emmons and Accounting Director Javonna Neel for their time and attention to his previous inquiries.

**LICENSE PLATE READERS.....WASHTENAW COUNTY SHERIFF**

Derrick Jackson from Washtenaw County Sheriff's Office (WCSO) explains Chief Clayton's memo regarding License Plate Readers (LPR). He begins by explaining that he is here today to add a little context, some clarity, to speak to some of the facts around how the WCSO would or would not use a technology should the township choose to move forward with the project. He described that he would also be talking about the values that really drove that decision. He continued by saying that he "wanted to state something that I think is pretty obvious, hopefully to most people, is that license plate readers alone by themselves, or police, for that matter, are not the answer to the root cause of violence in our streets. I think that we all know that. But it's important that we

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talk about that, that we understand that there are long term investments in community that need to be made, that there are community driven strategies that have to really attack this issue. That is crime or violence in our neighborhood. The sheriff often says that crime is not a police problem, right? We're one of the tools that helps to deal with crime. But it's not a police problem. It's a community problem. And so it's important that we have that context." Derrick goes on to explain the community engagement that was done, acknowledging that it sometimes seems like it takes too long and that it may seem really difficult to engage the community in conversations, however, it makes a lot of sense for the WCSO because it's all about principle based decisions. It comes back to the principles that the sheriff set out in his original community educational series several weeks ago. LPRs were brought up by the sheriff and the idea or the notion of using LPR's to him had some strategic advantages. The technology can be used to do some good things around solving crimes faster, potentially getting criminals off the street, and lowering the potential rate of retaliation. Just in the time that the WCSO started these conversations around LPR's and the LPR community engagement strategies, the sheriff's office found there were four very serious crimes in our community that were solved, thanks to LPR's being used by some of the communities around us. There was a murder in the community where everyone watched a man die on social media, but what they don't know is that part of what allowed law enforcement to arrest the person responsible was license plate readers down in Georgia. That helped bring him back to Michigan and he is now sitting in the Washtenaw County Jail. Additionally there was a carjacking, and there was another attempted murder. Lastly a home invasion that happened where the three teenagers broke into the lady's house when she was asleep, stole the car and lots of people know because it burst into flames at the end of that situation. The part that a lot of people don't know is that as deputies saw that stolen vehicle, and initiated a traffic stop, the teenagers fled, and the police began to pursue. Then when the vehicle fled towards Van Buren Township, which has license plate readers, the police officers were able to call off the pursuit because the deputy knew that technology was next door. There was no need to continue to pursue all they did was call over to Van Buren give the license plate number and the technology did its work. Van Buren was able to identify where the vehicle was.

Mr. Jackson continues to explain that it's also really important to point out that the sheriff was just as clear on the constitutional considerations of how technology like this could be used in a very negative way. To focus disproportionately on communities of color, to focus on poor neighborhoods to focus on a specific neighborhood, in a particular part of the township. That license plate readers and our research, I think what a lot of people know, in patrol cars can be just damaging to communities. Some types of LPR's that are within the patrol cars have been known to become what some people will call as a poor tax by way of using it to ticket and fine people in lower income areas of the community.

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That is not what is being talked about or considered here today. The things that we are talking about is something very different.

Mr. Jackson continues by explaining that the Sheriff and Supervisor Stumbo agreed that before any decisions were made, that community engagement needed to be done. Those events were not about us convincing the community that this technology was good or bad. Through the engagement a lot was learned. The WCSO heard the community loud and clear when they said they did not want license plate readers to be used for minor traffic citations and so the policy is reflective of that. We heard people loud and clear when they expressed that they didn't want license plate readers to be used for immigration enforcement, for minor crimes, or for traffic citations. It was also heard very loud and clear though, that people are really concerned about the rise of violence in our community and that people want things done. Yes, the community needs long term solutions so that people don't feel like they need to pick up a weapon or to carjack someone or robbed them or break into their home, but they also expressed that they want immediate solutions. WCSO heard the community say they do not want specific neighborhoods targeted and the WCSO agrees 100%, the technology would not be used to target specific neighborhoods or geographic areas of the township. The engagement sessions also heard a lot of people talking about if the private companies can share information and your data with non-law enforcement related activities and the WCSO won't do that. It is an important thing to point out. The WCSO understands that for some people, regardless of what is said, regardless of what the policy is, trust is a major issue. For those who don't know, for over a decade now, the sheriff's office here in partnership with the township has used video camera technology spread across the township in a very similar way. Different technology, but still camera technology. In using a video camera technology, there would not be a deputy watching those cameras 24/7. It would also only be used for major crimes. If the township was to install the LPR system in alignment with these values, and this limited scope, the sheriff would allow deputies to utilize the technology, if you follow these values of the draft policy that people have seen. There is a community engagement report that was developed for the sheriff that will be available and public in a few days. Mr. Jackson asks if there are any questions.

Trustee Newman asked if there would be a monthly report available.

Mr. Jackson responded by explaining that there would be regularly occurring public reports.

Trustee Peterson asked about how many people attended the neighborhood watch meetings that the WCSO presented at. Mr. Jackson responded that it was hard to say but that they were well attended. Beyond that, the office also had lots of calls and individual conversations.

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Trustee Peterson followed up with a question about the 30-day data capture, and how that capture could continue to 90 days if needed.

Mr. Jackson begins by explaining the context of the question, so people know what is being talked about. The license plate readers only capture the license plate that is put in there. Therefore, the license plates are active at all times. However, the officers have to put a specific plate in, and then it starts looking for that specific plate. Therefore, it is not looking for your plate if you are not involved in a crime. From there it has stored in there automatically for 30 days, and then automatically deleted. However, you can imagine that there may be cases that go on for longer than 30 days, just like the video camera system we have now when we need to keep that and retain that evidentiary information for longer. So we can manually go in if needed related to the case and keep that for longer than 30 days if we need to.

Trustee Peterson follows up with asking how we can be assured or see that those 30 day automatic deletions are happening as intended, and if the policy would be available to the public at all times?

Mr. Jackson explained that this would be a particular thing that would have to be discussed with a vendor that was selected, if this moves forward. The policy is currently on the website and will be there for the public at all times.

Trustee Swanson thanked Mr. Jackson for the presentation and then asked if it would be possible to have a community oversight committee, and a question about cooperation between the municipalities and the sheriff's office. For example, if a community did not want LPR's to be used, if the WCSO would work in cooperation with that municipality to ensure that there was cooperation and collaboration about that as well as other policies.

Mr. Jackson agreed that the WCSO current community oversight committee would be a good suggestion. He further explained that if a municipality did not want to use LPR technology to solve crime, which would be their choice, the WCSO would be bound to follow the policy in place for the department.

Trustee Wilson says that most of his questions would be for a potential vendor but also has concerns if the Sheriff was ever not there, if a new Sheriff was elected, what would happen then.

Mr. Jackson explained that the last 14 years of his work and the principle-based policies in place are strong in a way that a new sheriff would not just be able to change them and undo all of that established work overnight.

Clerk Jarrell Roe clarified that these would not be used for minor traffic violations, expired tags, things of that nature. Clerk Jarrell Roe asked about the training for officers and how they would ensure proper education around the policy and technology.

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Mr. Jackson confirmed that they would not be used for minor violations, in line with the policy, and that training would occur for officers.

Supervisor Stumbo asked how the WCSO handles “be on the lookout” calls. At this last week’s police services meeting and was surprised to hear that the current practice includes anything from writing it down on a paper in your pocket or having a piece of paper with the numbers on the dash board to look at while driving. She asked Mr. Jackson if he could explain this, any further.

He explained that current practice varies and that with this type of technology it would streamline that practice as well as actually reduce contact with police officers. They would be able to more accurately locate a care and not rely on their hand written notes, and eyes at nighttime, but rather the technology doing its job and correctly identifying a car.

Supervisor Stumbo continued by asking how they respond currently when another community sends out a message, how is that relayed to the officers on duty?

Mr. Jackson explained that there is a number of ways that the deputy can get it, they can get it at briefing, maybe the shift prior to them arriving on shift has a specific vehicle that was stolen or they are looking for.

Supervisor Stumbo asks when and how the township deputies would be notified of a “be on the lookout?”

Mr. Jackson explains that it depends on what the incident is and where it is going, or potentially headed.

Supervisor Stumbo asked about the shooting that occurred during the day in West Willow, and how they were able to locate the suspect in Georgia.

Mr. Jackson states that because that case is still going on he could not go into much detail but in short, the plate number was put out into a larger network and captured in Georgia.

Supervisor Stumbo asked if the department had looked into other places LPR policies.

Mr. Jackson explained that he did not, but also other police departments may have different values and principles.

Supervisor Stumbo adds that a woman who was killed in Van Buren, the suspect was captured because of their LPR technology. She adds that the 14-Point presentation given at the County Board of Commissioners on how to address the violence, and specifically the shooting, they said that 85% of it is retaliation. She clarifies that she heard this technology could help remove the person sooner, which helps with the retaliation.

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Mr. Jackson confirms that, that could be true and help reduce retaliation and that retaliation is 85% of the gun violence we see in the community.

Supervisor Stumbo asks if the survey taken will be made public and points out that there was no limit, on how many times one person could take the survey, if they were township residents and a few other flaws in the metrics used. Mr. Jackson acknowledges the flaws in the metrics used and states that it will be made public in the next few days.

Treasurer Eldridge adds that there's been a lot of discussion and back and forth about if an LPR system reduces crime and that it is impossible to quantify what didn't happen, because you have a system. He asked if Mr. Jackson was aware, and if he could explain the benefits seen at a large apartment complex on the west side of the township, and how the number of crimes there has significantly reduced since using the LPR technology.

Mr. Jackson explains that he was not the best person to speak on that particular area and the numbers.

Supervisor Stumbo concludes by stating that transparency and accountability is very important in every process that we do and that having correct information is necessary. The township has been waiting for a presentation and to hear more information, and that the discussion was helpful. Supervisor Stumbo opens up questions for the public to Mr. Jackson. There were a number of questions and comments given by area residents, some from the township and some from out of the township. Supervisor Stumbo explained that the board would keep residents informed and come back with answers to any specific questions that were raised.

**YCUA WATER AND SEWER RATE CHANGES.....LUTHER BLACKBURN**

Luther Blackburn, Director of YCUA explains the water and sewer rate proposal, and states that the YCUA board and Ypsilanti City council still needs to meet to approve, as well. Included in the board packet is a breakdown of the details of the increase in the water bill for a township resident it is approximately \$3.81 and that is based upon an average usage of 10 units of water. Mr. Dwayne Harrigan, Finance Director is here as well and is available to answer any questions or details regarding the YCUA budget. The main drivers behind the 4% increase in water and sewer rates is of course a recovery for the water department from COVID. It had a significant impact on water usage within the department. Definitely rising inflation 40 year record highs, impact costs for fuel utilities such as electricity and natural gas for the plant.

Trustee Newman explains that he noticed Ann Arbors rate increase was higher, as well as other communities and thought that the YCUA request was reasonable.

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Clerk Jarrell Roe asks a clarifying question regarding the pass through in our current ordinance that would cover the Great Lakes Water Authority pass through cost, and wanted to understand if this proposal was beyond that amount, and if everyone was aware of that language in the ordinance. Mr. Blackburn states that is correct. The proposal this year for consideration is an increase that is above that increase. Therefore, the increase from Great Lakes a year was 3.1%. We are proposing a 4% water increase. Therefore, nine tenths higher than that of the Great Lakes water increase.

Mr. Blackburn was asked what would happen if the increase was not voted in and he explained that would force us to go back and make some very difficult decisions. These dollars are needed to maintain and provide the level of service that this utility does very well and above and beyond what other utilities do. Our rates especially within the township are extremely competitive. Mr. Blackburn explains that he would really like to avoid making those extremely difficult decisions regarding the levels of service that we provide to the community.

Trustee Peterson, who sits on the YCUA Board on behalf of the township, explains that YCUA has had some very large unexpected projects this past year, that included a large amount of overtime costs and material costs, but the work had to be done. She also explained that the cost of chemicals have gone up significantly. She explains that we always try to keep rates low and have done a good job of that in the past. She asks if our rates are still lower than other communities are. Mr. Blackburn confirms that our rates are very competitive.

Trustee Swanson thanks Mr. Blackburn and Mr. Harrigan for coming to us and giving us information. I know that earlier, you have come to the board and talked about some infrastructure and bonding. Trustee Swanson expressed that she would be interested in learning more about how infrastructures is lumped into this increase. I would be interested in learning more specifically about that, because I know that you have been in front of us before talking about how we were planning for that infrastructure and would like to understand exactly how those different costs sparse out in the increase.

Mr. Blackburn explains that the budget highlight document in the packet is a quick summary of some of the capital projects that YCUA is planning to perform in the next fiscal year. Upgrades to multiple water pump stations, a project at the wastewater treatment plant for the odor control system. The probable cost of those projects are listed in that highlight document that's part of the board packet. And all those projects, I can come back and do a presentation but they're readily available on YCUA's website that are part of what's called our drinking water revolving fund project plan and State Revolving Fund project plan. Typically, for the next three to five years, we submit those to the State of Michigan for consideration and loan forgiveness and low interest loans. It is a component of the reason for the rate increase the rate increase is a portion of the debt payments that we have to pay for the projects that we have performed, and consideration

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of the projects that are coming up in this next fiscal year. It does not cover all the projects that are listed out in the next three to five years.

Mr. Blackburn continues to explain the costs for chemicals typically are centered on sodium hypochlorite. Since the pandemic, the access to raw material chlorine has become extremely difficult. We normally would procure a one-year contract with vendors after a bid process. We are currently unable to even procure a one-year contract. We are currently only working on quarterly prices that they can hold firm. So typically chlorine we are seeing prices 30 40% higher than we have in the past. Other increasing costs, of course, electricity.

Supervisor Stumbo apologizes and explains that we only have a few minutes before the regular meeting starts. She expresses that she has questions and wants to understand how much of the 4% increase is going for the projects. What is specifically going towards the sewer and water rate and has concerns about the ready to service rate because residents can control their budget by how many units they use, but that readiness to serve fee is not something they can control. It is around \$16.80 and \$16.09 every bill regardless of water used.

**The Work Session meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:58pm.**

**Respectfully Submitted,**



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