

**WASHTENAW URBAN COUNTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**Wednesday, May 1, 2019 - 2:00pm - 3:30pm**  
**Washtenaw County Learning Resource Center (LRC), Huron Room**

**I. Members in Attendance:** Christine Green (Scio Township); Councilperson Elizabeth Nelson (City of Ann Arbor); Joe Meyers (City of Ypsilanti); Clerk Karen Lovejoy-Roe (Ypsilanti Township); Supervisor Ken Schwartz (Superior Township); Councilperson Linda Terhaar (City of Saline); Supervisor Marlene Chockley (Northfield Township); Michael Moran (Ann Arbor Township); Michelle Aniol (City of Dexter)

**Communities Absent:** Augusta Township; Bridgewater Township; Dexter Township; Lima Township; Manchester Township; Pittsfield Township; Salem Township; Saline Township; Sylvan Township; Webster Township; York Township

**Chairperson:** Commissioner Jason Morgan (Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners)

**OCED Staff Present:** Mirada Jenkins, Tara Cohen

**Guests:** Chris Brown (Habitat for Humanity Huron Valley); Marta Larson (Whitmore Lake resident); Nick Rinehart (Habitat for Humanity Huron Valley); Wendy Carty-Saxon (Avalon Housing).

Meeting called to order: 2:08pm

**I. Public Comment** - Marta Larson, resident of Northfield Township, expressed her thanks to the Board for awarding funds to the Northfield Township Community Center project.

**II. Announcements**

- Introductions were made around the table.

**III. Minutes - Approval of 4-3-19 Meeting Minutes (ACTION)**

*Moved by Chockley. Supported by Green.*

*Motion passed.*

**IV. General Administration**

**A. Updates on FY2019-20 Annual Action Plan**

- 1) HUD allocations – Cohen stated that OCED just received the allocation announcement from HUD this week. She directed attendees to the table included in their meeting packet showing the year over year comparison between this year and next year’s allocations broken out by specific grant program (CDBG, HOME, ESG) and the total HUD funding awarded to the Urban County. Cohen noted that CDBG and ESG are increasing modestly, while HOME and the total HUD funding are decreasing, however it is important to remember that last year was an anomalous increase for CDBG and HOME compared to several years prior – so the 2019 allocation levels being this close to 2018 is good news.



2) High-level overview of content revision since March 4<sup>th</sup> draft – Cohen explained that the majority of changes to the Draft Action Plan were to the Planned Activities Summary and references throughout the Plan to specific allocation amounts or categories that combine the funding of several activities. She explained that, similar to previous years, the Committee will be asked today to adopt the Draft Action Plan with the caveat that staff will be permitted to make additional updates for the Final version that goes before the Board of Commissioners for approval on June 5<sup>th</sup>. Cohen noted that all the allocations written in the Draft presented today are final, with an exception being the percent of the ESG grant allocated to ESG Admin; she explained that the Human Services Manager will make a determination prior to finalizing may increase up to 7.5% per the maximum allowed.

3) Review of Planned Activities – Cohen briefly walked Committee members through updates to the Summary of Planned Activities table (more details can be found in the [May 1, 2019 Agenda Packet.](#))

Morgan asked if the full allocation for Single Family Rehab (SFR) program is exhausted each year. Jenkins explained that OCED only recently exhausted the 2017 SFR funds and is now beginning to use the 2018 allocation, but that due to the high demand for the SFR programs demonstrated by wait lists, it is important to stay ahead on funds rather than spending it all in the same year received.

Aniol asked whether eligibility for the SFR program is based on the Low-Mod Income maps. Cohen responded that, no, the LMI maps are only used for local projects qualifying under HUD's "Low Mod Area Benefit" eligibility criteria for CDBG. The SFR program bases eligibility on the household income for the homeowner applying for services on their home.

Additionally, Jenkins explained that she was just informed by HUD that OCED is required to expend all current HOME program income as part of the 2019 Action Plan, and as such, staff will be updating the Plan (and Summary table) to show \$12,042.70 in HOME program income allocated to Habitat for Humanity's ADR project to offset their regular 2019 HOME allocation, with zero net change to the total award amount.

4) Timeline – Cohen stated that a final version of the 2019 Action Plan will be voted on by the Board of Commissioners at their regular June 5<sup>th</sup> meeting, and OCED will be submitting the adopted Plan to HUD by no later than 60 days from the date of HUD's allocation announcement that was sent to the County Administrator's office.

Mike Moran arrived at 2:20pm.

## **B. Adoption of 2019 Action Plan (ACTION)**

After the above discussion, Lovejoy Roe moved:

*The Urban County Executive Committee approves the 2019 Annual Action Plan as presented – with ability for staff make final adjustments as needed - and recommends that the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners adopts the final version of said Plan at their meeting on June 5, 2019.*

*Supported by Schwartz.*



Friendly Amendment by Aniol for motion language to include a more specific reference to the Action Plan version and date, i.e. – The 2019 Annual Action Plan, Version 2, April 26, 2019 as presented.

Motion passed.

C. CDBG Priority Project Subcommittee – Cohen stated that, based on discussions at the UCEC over the past 3-4 months, a suggestion was made that the Committee consider forming an ad hoc subcommittee to improve upon the policy, process, and forms utilized for making decisions on the 10% optional set-aside “priority project” funding from the Urban County’s CDBG award. She noted that Morgan had brought this idea back to the table at the April meeting, and had asked that staff bring a motion for the Committee to consider. Cohen said that, to that end, she has included some recommended motion language in the agenda summary but members can discuss and decide how they want to proceed at this time.

Lovejoy Roe mentioned that, with the Road Commission provide less and less support each year, road projects are always a good way to utilize CDBG funds. Aniol raised the issue of timing as a factor that concerns her, in that members have to apply for priority funds *before* knowing what their regular allocation will be. She said that, while she understands the reason for this sequence of events, she would not want to go through the effort of improving the priority project processes unless the timing factor were to be changed (i.e. award priority projects after local allocations/projects are defined).

Morgan asked about the origin of the priority project set-aside. Jenkins responded that, while she was not directly involved, she thinks she remembers the idea coming into play around the time the Amtrak platform was being considered in Ypsilanti/Depot Town, and that this body decided to continue the practice in subsequent years.

Meyers stated that while he acknowledges that the timing is awkward, he also wanted to speak in defense of the priority project given the fact that the Riverside Park Playground is the best project he’s ever overseen, and a \$165,000 playground would not have been financially possible for Ypsilanti without the priority funds they were awarded. He also noted that – because Ypsi has benefited so greatly from Priority funds in the past – they would probably not apply for a few more cycles so that other communities could have an opportunity to benefit also.

Moran expressed his concern that a subcommittee would involve an enormous amount of staff time for little gain, and said that the discussions about priority projects have put the Committee in an adversarial position rather than working together, which is why the Washtenaw Urban County was formed in the first place – to be able to pool federal funds. He shared that he would be voting against continuing with an annual set-aside for priority projects.

Terhaar commented that, if they were to form a subcommittee or task force, she would first want that group to consider the “yes/no” question of whether to keep the priority project process in place at all.

Nelson asked how many years since the priority projects began. Cohen responded that she is fairly certain it started in 2014, but that it has not been acted on each year, with a total of around 3 projects funded prior to the recently decided 2019 awards. Nelson continued to say that she can see why the City of Ypsilanti would speak in favor of keeping the priority project in place and volunteer not to compete for that pot of funds in the future. She wondered if instead of an annual competition between proposals, could there be a rule that the same community who received priority funds cannot apply for



another X number of years. Meyers clarified that he had not meant that Ypsi would *never* apply for these funds again, but that maybe they would wait a few years before doing so again.

Chockley interjected that Northfield Township would never be able to afford the parking lot expansion at the Community Center if not for the priority funds being awarded.

Lovejoy Roe said that she never felt that communities were competing against each other, since it was for projects that were regional.

Aniol asked if the 10% CDBG set-aside could potentially be rolled over to the next fiscal year. Jenkins replied that, yes, it is possible to roll over funds, but that in general, Urban County has been carrying over funds from too many years back which makes budgeting very difficult. Jenkins said that she'd like to go on record saying that UCEC should consider issues such as regional transportation, and that with regard to carrying over allocations, she wants to look at creating a new policy to limit carrying forward to the 3 year period to align with HUD's 3-year timeframe for Urban County authorization.

Morgan suggested taking an informal poll today just to gauge the level of interest among members in moving forward with priority projects overall. Schwartz responded that he would be in favor of taking an informal vote to gauge interest, and suggested tabling the motion to form a subcommittee until next month. Schwartz suggested that the motion for the June meeting include a decision to abolish or keep priority projects, and if the motion passes to keep priority projects, he suggested a second motion to form a subcommittee to work on improvements to the process.

Green reiterated others' sentiments that, if the decision is to keep priority projects, the UCEC will have to have clear rules on how the projects are determined.

Morgan suggested that the UCEC consider making the priority project an exception each year rather than an expectation, but a subcommittee could look at this more closely.

Schwartz moved to: ***Defer action on the motion below as printed in the agenda packet, and request staff to bring an alternative motion to the next UCEC meeting (June 5, 2019).***

Supported by Lovejoy Roe.

Motion passed.

**Recommended motion in Agenda packet:** The Urban County Executive Committee approves the staff recommendation to form an ad hoc subcommittee – to consist of members and staff – to refine the criteria for eligible priority projects and to develop process improvements for consideration by the full UCEC.

Members specified that they want to see a motion that would determine whether to continue or eliminate priority projects. Moran stated that he'd like staff to also bring a motion in June that recommends a new policy or process for localities rolling over their annual CDBG allocations.

Schwartz suggested that staff give all UCEC members notice to show up for the June meeting, since the Committee will be making a decision about priority projects that could affect their communities.

#### D. Designee Form for FY19-20

Cohen explained that UC members - which is the highest elected official for each City or Township – need to submit their FY2019-20 UCEC Designee Form by June 5<sup>th</sup>, but only if they are making a change to their Fiscal Year 2018-19 designee(s). For those who plan to continue with their current designee(s),



they are to send an email to [cohent@washtenaw.org](mailto:cohent@washtenaw.org) stating as much. Cohen told members they could fill out the form included in their packet and turn it in at today's meeting, or email it in as a scanned attachment. She also said she'd send out the fillable PDF form again by end of this week to all UCEC members with the instructions and deadline.

## E. General Updates

### 1) Local Project updates – Cohen noted the following progress on CDBG-funded projects:

- Ann Arbor Housing Commission – Swift Lane: Demolition is scheduled for mid-May; the larger project will ultimately result in new affordable housing units in Ann Arbor.
- Ypsilanti Township:
  - Washtenaw Avenue Sidewalk/Reimagine Washtenaw: Final engineering underway and it is hopeful that construction will be done this year.
  - Schooner Cove Bus Shelter: Final engineering plans are in the works, to be bid out once the environmental review is complete, with the hope of completing construction this year.
  - Foley Avenue HMA road improvements: WC Road Commission will have bid opening mid-May, with the project to be done by end of this summer.
  - Community Center flooring: Township is preparing to conduct a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment, along with radon/asbestos/lead testing, required before OCED can complete an environmental review.
- Pittsfield Township – Packard Rd Midblock crossing: preliminary engineering designs are complete
- Northfield Township - Community Center: Township is preparing to conduct a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment, along with radon testing, required for this property before OCED can complete an environmental review.
- City of Ypsilanti – Demolition of 448 S. Huron (condemned home): asbestos testing was recently conducted, as required for OCED to conduct the environmental review.

Cohen explained that both Northfield and Ypsilanti Township have applied to the Brownfield Redevelopment Authority (BRA) for reimbursement on the costs for their Phase I ESA's, as well as for the cost of hazardous material testing. She mentioned that radon testing is not eligible for reimbursement, nor is any abatement. Cohen noted that she will be inviting her colleague, Nathan Voght, to a future UCEC meeting to present on the resources available to local communities through the BRA.

### 2) Community Announcements/updates

- Cohen announced that she would be sending out the updated Low-Mod Income maps to each member community by end of the week.
- Green shared that Scio Township had a productive meeting recently with Mirada Jenkins and Teresa Gillotti of OCED to discuss ideas on how to make Scio a friendlier place for individuals with low and moderate incomes, and that she and/or Township staff will next be bringing these ideas to Scio's Planning Commission. Green also explained that Scio is home to the largest mobile home park in the entire state, with between 900 and 1000 homes in Scio Farms; Scio leadership is currently trying to identify the right person or group at Scio Farms to gauge specific needs of the residents in the park.
- Morgan announced that the Board of Commissioners has reestablished the Broadband subcommittee, with a goal of applying for federal funds for next year's deadline. He noted that broadband is one of the Board's top priorities for this year, and the need for broadband



improvements was illustrated by the fact that some of the Clerks in parts of Washtenaw County don't have fast enough internet speeds to carry out some of the election reforms.

- Morgan also shared that Community Mental Health (CMH) has just allocated all of the County's 2018 surplus funds to make up for CMH's 7 million dollar deficit, which is a structural deficit, based in part on the fact that millages cannot be used to supplant Medicaid funding. He went on to explain that CMH is in an awkward situation where the agency is in the position to provide new services (to make use of millage funds) while having to make cuts to existing services. Morgan offered to send out a link to the 1.5 hour presentation that CMH made to the Board on these issues.

## V. **Adjournment**

*Lovejoy Roe moved to adjourn, Aniol supported.*

Motion passed.

Adjourned: 3:14pm

