LAW & COURTS COMMITTEE
April 30, 2020
Minutes

Members Present: Slaughter, Polsdofer, Celentino, Crenshaw, Sebolt (arrived at 6:00 p.m.), Trubac.

Members Absent: Schafer.

Others Present: Teri Morton, Russell Church, Heidi Williams, Elizabeth Noel, and Michael Tanis.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Slaughter at 6:00 p.m. virtually via Zoom in accordance with the Governor’s Executive Order 2020-48 regarding the Open Meetings Act.

Approval of the March 12, 2020 Minutes

Commissioner Sebolt arrived at 6:00 p.m.

MOVED BY COMM. CRENSHAW, SUPPORTED BY COMM. CELENTINO, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MARCH 12, 2020 LAW & COURTS COMMITTEE MEETING.

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY. Absent: Commissioner Schafer

Additions to the Agenda

None.

Limited Public Comment

None.

MOVED BY COMM. CRENSHAW, SUPPORTED BY COMM. CELENTINO, TO APPROVE A CONSENT AGENDA CONSISTING OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:

1. Circuit Court/Family Division – Resolution Authorizing Board Chairperson to Sign Necessary Documents Related to 2017 Dodge Caravan Insurance Claim

2. Animal Control – Resolution to Honor Roxann Wilkinson, Volunteer at the Ingham County Animal Control & Shelter for Her Outstanding Contribution to Animal Fostering

3. Public Defenders Office – Resolution to Convert a Senior Assistant Public Defender to a Deputy Chief Public Defender

(1)
4. **Controller’s Office**
   a. Resolution Authorizing Adjustments to the 2020 Ingham County Budget

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY. Absent: Commissioner Schafer

THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE ITEMS ON THE CONSENT AGENDA CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY. Absent: Commissioner Schafer

4. **Controller’s Office**
   b. 2021 Update of County Fees (*Discussion*)

Teri Morton, Deputy Controller, stated that for the first round of the fee process, the Controller’s Office wanted to present everything as a discussion item because there was a lot of data involved. She further stated that the more detailed spreadsheet showed the calculations, while the last page showed the fees that were recommended for an increase for 2021.

Ms. Morton stated that there was a memo that explained the variances from the cost calculations. She further stated that there was a formulaic way every year of updating the fees that was sent to Department Heads to see what they had as far as recommendations.

Ms. Morton stated that, in some cases, the Department Heads did not want to see increased fees for whatever reason. She further stated that this was an opportunity for the Commissioners to ask any questions before the item was brought back as an action item.

Commissioner Crenshaw stated that he appreciated the breakdown of the increased fees. He further stated that he saw a majority of the increased fees were from Animal Control. He asked Ms. Morton why the County was raising fees so much for Animal Control.

Ms. Morton stated that these were all fees that fell onto the Law & Courts Committee and it was based on a formula. She further stated that the Controller’s Office looked at the cost and then increased that cost by the inflationary factor being used for this year, which was 1.9 percent, and that calculated the 2021 cost.

Ms. Morton stated that the Board of Commissioner had passed their target percent. She further stated that, for example, dog-licensing fees were not meant to be fully recoupable as it was understood to be a public good, so the County only recouped a percentage of the cost, and then based on that cost, calculate a fee recommendation.

Ms. Morton stated that Animal Control happened to have a lot of fees that fell onto the schedule.

Commissioner Celentino stated that he knew a lot of the countywide elected officials and other Department Heads who decided to keep fees as-is because of the uncertainty around COVID-19 and the County’s financial standing. He asked Ms. Morton if the increased fees fell under statutory requirements or if Heidi Williams, Animal Control Director, supported the increased fees.

Discussion.
Ms. Morton stated that not all fees were recommended for increase. She further stated that, for example, the Animal Control Director did not want increased licensing fees because the cost was higher in Ingham County than compared to the rest of the area.

Commissioner Celentino stated that he saw that some of the increased fees were for a dollar.

Ms. Morton stated that was the point of yearly increased fees because, for example, if the County looked at the fees every few years, it would be a big increase. She further stated that the County did smaller annual incremental fee increases rather than having a big increase all at once.

Discussion.

Commissioner Celentino asked Ms. Williams for her rationale to support the increased fees.

Ms. Williams stated that one of the fees that would have the most dramatic increase was the spay and neuter certificate because the Animal Control’s cost for that certificate had increased. She further stated that the Capital Area Humane Society and Southside Veterinarian Clinic were actually the two companies that provided the spay and neuter surgeries, while the Animal Control sold the vouchers for those companies, and their costs had increased for this year.

Ms. Williams stated that Animal Control had not increased their costs for this program since its inception, or so she had been told, so they felt a small increase of $10 per voucher was reasonable considering the fact that people were getting a really good deal even with that increased fee. She further stated that it allowed the Animal Control to recuperate a small percent of what was being paid out.

Commissioner Crenshaw stated that he saw the $10 increase on the spreadsheet but not what the additional revenue would be.

Ms. Williams stated that it would not be revenue because Animal Control technically lost money on these voucher programs. She further stated that they had a spay and neuter budget, which a lot of it came from shelter funds, which helped to pay for these low-cost spay and neuter certificates, and so the County would be losing a little less money.

Discussion.

Chairperson Slaughter stated that Ms. Morton would bring this back before the Law & Courts Committee as a resolution that would be voted on.

Announcements

Commissioner Crenshaw stated that the next meeting was scheduled for May 14, 2020 and, as the Commissioners were aware, the Governor’s Executive Order on remote meetings ended on May 12, 2020. He further stated that the Governor’s stay-at-home order ended on May 15, 2020, so unless that order was lifted or the Executive Order regarding remote meetings was extended, the Law & Courts Committee might not be having a meeting on May 14, 2020.
Commissioner Celentino asked Commissioner Crenshaw to clarify whether the Law & Courts Committee would not be having a remote meeting or a meeting at all.

Chairperson Slaughter stated that, as Commissioner Crenshaw said, the Governor’s Executive Order allowing local municipalities to conduct remote meetings ended on May 12, 2020, but also the Governor’s stay-at-home order was extended until May 15, 2020. He further stated that the next Law & Courts Committee meeting was May 14, 2020, so the meeting could not be conducted in-person under the stay-at-home order.

Commissioner Celentino stated that he understood.

Ms. Morton stated that, if there was a Law & Courts Committee meeting, it was scheduled for May 13, 2020 because there was an event on May 14, 2020.

Commissioner Celentino stated that Ms. Morton was correct.

Discussion.

Public Comment

None.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

BARB BYRUM, CLERK OF THE BOARD