

ISSUES UPDATE – DECEMBER 2008



The fourth quarter of 2008 presented many challenges and opportunities for Ingham County Government. The need to balance a budget for 2009 that represented a 5.6 million dollar shortfall in revenues was extremely difficult; however, the cooperation of Elected Officials and Department Heads throughout the County greatly assisted the Commissioners. Ingham County continues to provide a high quality of services to its residents. The Board of Commissioners has placed particular importance on providing uninsured residents with access to health care; improving the adult and juvenile justice systems and expanding recreational opportunities.

The fourth quarter of 2008 has seen much activity in areas of importance to the County Board, including the following:

- Labor negotiations remain stable. Numerous contracts with the Labor Units expired in December 2008 and the County Attorneys are actively negotiating new agreements with the Labor Units. Several of the Labor Units are very close to signing new agreements with the County.
- The Board of Commissioners approved the Indigent Veterans Millage as a part of the budget process. With increased caseloads in the Veterans Affairs Office as a result of Iraq and Afghanistan military operations, it was necessary to increase the staff to support the increased case load. The new millage will be used to support the efforts of the Veterans Affairs Office.
- The Community Agency process was changed to have only the Human Services Committee review staff recommendations on the financial support to the community agencies. The criteria for the Community Agency process were also reviewed by staff and funding for the agencies was recommended through the use of the new criteria, with a focus on meeting “Basic Needs”.
- Through the budget process, additional funds were dedicated to the Ingham Health Plan as part of the five-year plan that began in 2006 to fully fund coverage for Ingham County's uninsured. This recognizes one of the major goals of the Commissioners by “Assuring Accessible Health Care”.

- The Board of Commissioners passed a resolution to improve the air quality in bars, restaurants and other food service establishments, in order to minimize exposure of nonsmokers to secondhand smoke in Ingham County. This resolution amends the Ingham County Clean Air Regulation which was first approved by the Board of Commissioners in 2002.
- The Ingham County Central Dispatch Action Plan has been presented and/or shared with the Ingham County Board of Commissioners, Cities of East Lansing and Lansing, 911 Advisory Committee, 911 Steering Committee and the Ingham County Public Safety Community and their funding units. The effort from Ingham County to consolidate the two current 911 Centers has been very active this past quarter. The 911 Steering Committee and the Subcommittees have been meeting monthly.

The 911 Center Consolidation Facilities Subcommittee and the 911 Steering Committee have recommended that an architectural/engineering firm familiar with 911 Centers and Homeland Security Standards be engaged to assist the Committee and County in making a site selection. Therefore, the Board of Commissioners approved a contract with Landmark, Inc., not to exceed \$8,000, to provide 911 Center Consolidation Site Selection Consultant Services.

Efforts will continue in 2009 to implement the Action Plan. It is anticipated that a recommendation for a site on the new 911 Center will come before the Board of Commissioners during the first quarter of 2009.

- The hiring freeze for 2008 ended at the end of December. Departments will be reminded that beginning in January 2009, the Board of Commissioners instituted a six-week hiring delay, as part of the strategies used to balance the 2009 budget, and should result in a \$500,000 savings for 2009.
- At the end of 2008, Registrar of Deeds, Paula Johnson retired with over 30 years of service to Ingham County. Ingham County voters elected County Commissioner Curtis Hertel as the new Registrar of Deeds.
- The Michigan Department of Natural Resources approved the grant for Ingham County, paving the way for the purchase of 120 acres of land adjacent to Lake Lansing Park-North. With additional funds from Meridian Township Land Preservation and the "Friends of Ingham County Parks", Ingham County will be moving forward during 2009 to finalize the acquisition of the 120 acres, providing recreational opportunities for the citizens of Ingham County.

- The Board of Commissioners approved the expansion of the Ingham County Road Commission from 3 – 5 members. Applicants for the openings were interviewed by the County Services Committee and three new members were selected. It was necessary to select three new members as the term of office for one of the existing members expired at the end of 2008.
- The County Services Committee continued discussions with the Purchasing and Facilities Departments, related to the Purchasing Policy. It is anticipated that the County Services Committee will continue the discussions during the first quarter of 2009.
- The Ingham County Board of Commissioners authorized the termination of the contract between Ingham County and the vendor for Inmate telephone services at the Jail. The Board of Commissioners also authorized the Controller/Administrator to negotiate a new agreement with a different vendor to provide telephone services for inmates at the Jail.

The Ingham County Board of Commissioners authorized a two-year agreement for the period of February 1, 2009 through January 31, 2011, with Evercom, a subsidiary of Securus Technologies, for new equipment and new visitation equipment to provide local and long distance service for all inmate telephones. This agreement replaces the former vendor and contract as they failed to perform satisfactorily. Efforts will continue to recoup all costs owed the County from the previous agreement.

- The Board of Commissioners authorized entering into a contract with Image Soft imaging system for the Ingham County Prosecuting Attorney's Office. This application will also be the backbone for a county-wide document imaging system to be used by all County Departments for this purpose.
- The Law Enforcement Committee has continued to discuss options for long-term funding for Road Patrol and Law Enforcement Services. Special millages, special assessment districts, and contracts with the Sheriff's Office/Ingham County are all options that have been discussed in an effort to provide law enforcement services.
- The Board of Commissioners passed a resolution amending the County's Cell Phone Usage and Reimbursement Policy.
- The Board of Commissioners passed a resolution authorizing a contract extension with Sheridan Land Consulting to provide technical assistance to the Ingham County Agricultural Preservation Board. The Board of Commissioners also authorized an agreement to provide office space for the Agricultural Preservation Board.

- The Board of Commissioners passed a resolution authorizing a professional services agreement between the Lansing School District and Ingham County MSU Extension to support an ongoing after-school and summer program to be completed by June 2009. The programs will be conducted at Dwight Rich Middle School and Eastern, Everett and Sexton High Schools.
- The Ingham County Board of Commissioners approved the acceptance of a \$13,520.00 grant from PetSmart Charities to be used by the Animal Control Department toward the cost of providing free and low-cost vaccinations for assistance to spay or neuter cats. The Ingham County Board of Commissioners thanks PetSmart Charities, Inc. for their generous contribution that will assist towards the Ingham County goal of responsible pet ownership.
- The Ingham County Board of Commissioners authorized entering into a contract with Sentinel Offender Services for electronic monitoring program services. This program was recommended by the Jail Utilization Coordinating Committee (JUCC) to use electronic monitoring (EM) as a means to improve jail utilization by utilizing an EM program by the Sheriff's Office, for appropriate jail inmates released early to EM and by Pretrial Services for appropriate defendants on pre-trial status.

These EM services will be made available through a completely offender-funded client fee structure that will allow electronic monitoring to be available to the largest possible number of clients, with varying financial capabilities, including provisions for indigent offenders. The contract with Sentinel will stipulate that a target minimum number of seventy-five (75) active program participants be maintained. The County Controller/Administrator will present a modification of the agreement with Evercom, at new rates, in January to the Board of Commissioners.

- The Ingham County Board of Commissioners authorized a contract with M/A-COM, Inc. for the new MSU WKAR Tower Site Transition Project for the Ingham County Public Safety Wireless Voice Communication, as recommended by the Ingham County 911 Advisory Committee, for a cost not to exceed \$46,000. This is necessary as MSU is building a new WKAR Tower, and the County will be responsible to take our communications equipment off of the existing tower and move it to the new Tower to be erected adjacent to it.
- The Ingham County Board of Commissioners approved entering into a contract with a bridge appropriation for \$25,000 from the Juvenile Justice Millage Fund, with Child and Family Services for the Angel House Program, for new Residential Services to Pregnant and Parenting Adolescents Program and Children's Assessment Center

(CAC) Program. It is anticipated that this bridge funding will help Angel House transition to this new program and help the organization remain solvent to maintain its long-term service to our community.

- The Ingham County Board of Commissioners accepted a three-year grant on behalf of the Ingham County Friend of the Court, from the Office on Violence Against Women, U. S. Department of Justice, for the purposes of providing supervised visitation and safe visitation exchange services to families with a history of domestic violence, child abuse, sexual assault, teen dating violence and stalking, with a total project cost of \$427,426, including a grant in the amount of \$350,745.20 and in-kind costs of \$76,681.
- The Ingham County Board of Commissioners approved accepting a grant in the amount of \$5,178 from the Capital Region Community Foundation for the *Ingham Change Initiative: Improving Opportunities for Young Men of Color*. This program, as recommended by the Community Coalition for Youth, will support the launch of an initiative to reduce the disparities in outcomes for young men of color as evidenced by data collected from Ingham County.
- The Ingham County Board of Commissioners authorized an upgrade to the Ingham County Family Center surveillance system, by adding ten interior surveillance cameras and two exterior surveillance cameras, at a cost not to exceed \$34,085, from the Juvenile Justice Millage Fund. These additional video surveillance cameras at the Ingham County Family Center should improve security on behalf of the students and employees.
- The Ingham County Medical Care Facility recently received the highest ranking possible in the government's first ranking of U.S. nursing homes. The new system, released by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, assigns homes one to five stars for their quality, staffing and health inspections, plus an overall score. The Ingham County Medical Care Facility received the five star ranking overall. The Ingham County Department of Human Services Board, the Director Susan O'Shea, and all the Medical Care Facility staff are to be commended for this impressive accomplishment.

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