

ISSUES UPDATE – APRIL 2007



In spite of challenges associated with a weak economy and declining state tax revenues, Ingham County continues to provide a high quality of services to its 280,000 residents. Health and human services, law enforcement and justice administration, recreation, elections, and record keeping are provided through the various County offices. Over the past several years, the Board of Commissioners has strived to maintain all county services at an acceptable level, but has placed particular importance on providing uninsured residents with access to health care; expanding recreational opportunities; improving the adult and juvenile justice systems; and promoting environmental protection.

The first quarter of 2007 has seen much activity in areas of importance to the County Board, including the following:

- Expanded recreational opportunities have continued with the adoption of the 2007-2011 Ingham County Parks Facility Master Plan. In addition, the 2007 budget includes funding for the second year of a ten-year plan to connect the Ingham County Parks by a series of non-motorized pathways.
- Efforts to expand access to health care for the uninsured have continued with promotion of the Ingham County Advantage program and the reorganization of the Ingham Health Plan Bureau; in addition, the 2007 budget includes funding for the second year of a five-year plan to achieve access for 100% of the County's uninsured residents.
- Efforts to support recreational opportunities and intergovernmental collaboration were conducted on the fast track, in response to Mayor Bernero's request that the County place a countywide millage proposal on the ballot for the Potter Park Zoo, in order to provide a stable long-term funding base for the operation and capital needs of the Zoo. A Zoo Task Force submitted, and the Board of Commissioners adopted a resolution to place a millage question on the November ballot, which would increase the County's millage by up to 0.46 mills, for a period of three (3) years and by up to 0.41 mills for the following two (2) years. This millage will generate approximately \$3.2 million in the first year. A lease and operational agreement have been successfully negotiated between the City of Lansing and the County of Ingham and approved by the Board of Commissioners, whereby once the City signs the document the County would then assume responsibility for the operation and maintenance of both Potter Park and Potter Park Zoo. The funds generated through this millage would provide an increase in the level of service provided by the Zoo beyond what the City of Lansing can currently support

through its budget. The increased level of service will include capital funding and maintenance projects necessary to keep Potter Park Zoo accredited and fully functional, an essential element for the Zoo.

- Efforts to promote environmental protection, smart growth and to support continued use of existing housing continue. Implementation of the Farmland Preservation Ordinance continues with the Agricultural Preservation Board continuing the contract arrangement with Sheridan Land Consulting through December 2007, for technical assistance services to implement the purchase of the Development Rights Ordinance.
- The County Treasurer has continued the role of Foreclosure Agent for tax delinquent properties, and the Land Bank Authority continues to manage foreclosed properties. Continuation funding for 2007 (\$50,000) for the Land Bank has been approved, and a limited tax pledge has been made so that the Land Bank can secure loans to acquire, maintain and rehabilitate property. A strategic partnership with the Ingham County Housing Commission has been maintained to focus on affordable housing.
- Efforts to expand the Capital Region Airport Authority continue.
- Efforts to expand regional cooperation continue, with participation in a region-wide Homeland Security grant this fiscal year. The continuation of the Solution Area Planner position under the Michigan Department of State Police, Emergency Management Division 2006 State Homeland Security Grant/Law Enforcement Terrorism Prevention Program has been approved and the Region One Planning Board, in cooperation with the Ingham County Sheriff's Office, Emergency Operations Division, in cooperation with the Ingham County Local Planning Team are identifying projects for funding through this grant. The City of Lansing is the fiscal agent for this year's funding for the regional State Homeland Security Grant/Law Enforcement Terrorism Prevention Program.
- The County contracted with the Capital Area United Way for the *Central Michigan 2-1-1* Project to provide 211 centralized information and referral services to Ingham County residents effective March 27, 2007. Eaton, Clinton and Jackson Counties are also participating in this system.
- The Ingham County Human Resources Department will provide the Tri-County Office on Aging with Human Resources services.
- The Ingham County Sheriff's Office will participate in the COPS Grant Records Management System (RMS) project component through the Technology Improvement Cooperative (TIC). The City of Lansing's COPS Interoperable Voice and Data Grant is a regional grant program that Ingham County has participated in since 2005. The focus of the grant is to encourage interoperable communications between public safety units on a regional basis.

- Efforts to support economic development continue. Recent activity includes a review of the tax sharing agreement with Lansing Township to ensure that the terms of the agreement are being fulfilled. A determination of the appropriate amount of the township's share of the captured funds to offset the cost of drain projects within the district is being reviewed by interested parties.
- The Continuous Development and Improvement Committee continues efforts to enhance the internal operations of the county's finance and payroll system. The latest update of the MUNIS software is scheduled to be installed in May. The committee is also working to expand services available through the MUNIS Self - Service product by making employee benefit enrollment available on-line.
- Efforts have continued in several other areas. The upgrade of the public safety wireless radio system is complete, with the exception of in-building amplification systems, and consideration is being given to consolidating the two current dispatch centers into one. A report from Plante & Moran has been finalized and presented to the affected parties; a steering committee is reviewing the report to provide recommendations back to the Board of Commissioners on how to accomplish this.
- Processing at the Clerk's Office continues to be enhanced with the approval of the purchase of a major upgrade to the Ingham County Clerk records management software. This software is the vessel that the Clerk and his staff use to store and retrieve vital records including, but not limited to, marriage, birth, death, D.B.A.(Doing Business As), campaign finance, passports, and DD214 (Military Discharge) documents.

Major enhancements offered by this upgrade include; eMarriage and other web-based forms, Eagleweb – allowing the Clerk's staff to securely access applications from any County workstation, disaster recovery services for data and images, and enhance eCommerce for purchasing of services over the web.

- At the Sheriff's Office, the Board of Commissioners authorized the extension of the contract with Canteen Services for inmate commissary services for an additional year (March, 2007 – February, 2008).
- Efforts to provide appropriate treatment and sanctions for at-risk juveniles continue, as an Action Plan for the Continuum of Care for youth is being implemented. The Action Plan as completed by Chinn Planning Inc. and adopted by the Board of Commissioners and the Court include recommendations to develop model programs and facilities for at-risk and adjudicated youth no later than 2007.

The Ingham County Board of Commissioners authorized an appropriation of \$471,920 from the Juvenile Justice Millage Fund to the IMPACT System of Care line item, in the Juvenile Division CCF budget, and approved a budget transfer to

a new Community Programs/Services line item in the DHS budget for the funding of the IMPACT System of Care. This is the first step in funding the Impact/Ingham County System of Care, which will coordinate cross-system funding and create a locus of accountability to shift from residential and inpatient services to home and community-based services for youth.

The Ingham County Board of Commissioners has asked the Community Coalition for Youth to function as a Task Force to help facilitate the planning of the "Continuum of Care" Facility, to work with the Circuit Court and various community partners to identify both the amount of space needed and the details of the programming to be provided by the various community partners at the "Continuum of Care Facility," within the context of the budget limitations of the Juvenile Justice Millage/Child Care Funds available for this purpose. It is expected that this Task Force Report on the "Continuum of Care Facility" should be completed and presented at the April 26, 2007 Judiciary Meeting.

- Adoption of the 2008 budget calendar has been completed and the 2008 Strategic Planning process is under way. Additional funding was provided in the 2007 budget to increase access to health care, improve recreational opportunities; and enhance efforts to manage jail overcrowding.
- Labor negotiations are stable with nearly all employee Collective Bargaining Agreements under contract now that the MAP/LAW ENFORCEMENT CONTRACT has been settled. This contract covering 70 employees expired on December 31, 2002. We concluded 312 Arbitration and the Arbitrator's decision has been rendered. A five-year agreement beginning January 1, 2003 and ending December 31, 2007 has been adopted.
- Many of the activities underway in 2006 have continued in 2007. Multi-year funding efforts to provide access to health care for all of the uninsured in the county and to connect county parks by means of non-motorized pathways can be expected to continue.
- Jail overcrowding, unfortunately, will continue to require the attention of the County Board and the law enforcement community. During the first quarter of 2007, the Law Enforcement Committee held a series of informational meetings on the problems associated with jail overcrowding and invited all representatives from all aspects of the Ingham County criminal justice system including the Courts and Prosecutor's Office, to share their views on the problems that they are experiencing with overcrowding at the Ingham County Jail.

The Law Enforcement Committee heard testimony on how an overcrowded jail frustrates the administration of justice and creates management problems at the jail.

In this frequent state of overcrowding the sentencing expectations for the Courts are not met, and the Sheriff's Office experiences a considerable amount of

additional work/overtime in managing an overcrowded jail and processing jail overcrowding emergencies.

The hearings concluded with many of the recommendations and suggestions being referred to the Jail Utilization Committee (JUCC), the Community Corrections Advisory Board (CCAB), and the Sheriff's Office, for discussion and to develop where appropriate, implementation plans and deadlines in order to consider any cost implications during the 2008 budget process.

- County finances will be challenged in the face of continuing reductions in state and federal funding and escalating health care costs.
- The County sold a parcel of real property located at 2200 S. Washington.
- The 2007 Ingham County Cultural Diversity Committee's 8th Annual Cultural Diversity Luncheon was held on February 22, 2007, at the Ingham County Human Services Building in Lansing. Performing for the luncheon event this year was the newly organized Ingham County Choir. This event was well attended, with excellent ethnic food served, and the program featured entertainment and speakers to celebrate this year's theme, "Bridging the Gap".
- Several new Board of Commissioner appointments were made upon the conclusion of employee search processes: Dr. Dean Sienko, M.D., M.S., was appointed as a Medical Health Officer for the Ingham County Health Department and Thomas Edman was appointed as Manager of the Ingham County Fair.

Finally, the Board of Commissioners selected previous Under Sheriff Dr. Matthew Myers, Ph.D., as County Controller/Administrator.

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