

## ISSUES UPDATE – OCTOBER 2008



*During the third quarter of 2008, much time was spent on preparing a balanced budget for 2009, for review by the Commissioners. With the cooperation of the Elected Officials and Department Heads, we prepared a budget plan that was presented to the liaison committees and finally the Finance Committee. We are now drafting the plan adopted by the Finance Committee, to be presented to the full Board in October.*

In addition to the work on the 2009 budget, much activity occurred to include the following:

- In August, the voters of Ingham County approved a special millage for farmland and open space preservation. The rate is 0.1400 mills (\$0.14 per \$1,000 of taxable value) for a period of ten (10) years (2008-2017) inclusive, and this Millage will raise an estimated additional \$1.05 million for farmland and open space preservation in the first calendar year of the levy based on state taxable valuation. Millage funds will be available for the preservation of farmland and open space beginning with the Agricultural Preservation Board's 2009 landowner application cycle. Under the most conservative estimate, assuming the cost of a conservation easement for the average farmland or open space land in Ingham County is \$2,500 per acre and the landowner donates 25% of the value of the conservation easement, 4,963 acres of farmland and an additional 1,173 acres of open space land can be protected over a 10 year time period.
- Ingham County accepted a \$240,000 offer from the Community Mental Health Authority of Clinton, Eaton, and Ingham Counties to purchase approximately seven acres of county-owned real property located at 812 East Jolly Road, Lansing, Michigan. The sale of this property was finalized in September. In the event that CMH is dissolved before the purchase of the building at 812 East Jolly Road, by CMH, the ownership of the land will revert to Ingham County, at a purchase price equal to the amount paid to Ingham County by CMH for the property (\$240,000) or the appraised value of the land at the time of the reversion of ownership, whichever is less. The current lease between the Ingham County Board of Commissioners, the Ingham County Building Authority, and the Community Mental Health Authority of Clinton, Eaton, Ingham Counties (CMH) was also modified to include language allowing CMH to purchase the building, for \$1.00, at any point subsequent to the date at which the bonds used to finance the construction of the building are paid off, July 1, 2018.
- PA 164 of 2007 took effect on July 1, 2008, and as a result the 79 cent county-wide landline surcharge as well as the 29 cent per line charge the state levied on cellular phones was replaced by a 31 cent county-wide surcharge on all devices capable of accessing 9-1-1, coupled with a new 19 cent state wide surcharge on the same devices. Under this scenario, landline users would see a reduction in monthly per line surcharges of 79 cents to 50 cents, and cellular users would see an increase from 29 cents to 50 cents. PA 164 was intended to provide counties with a more

stable mechanism of funding 911 services. However, the Act is set to expire in February 2009. The Michigan Association of Counties is working to ensure the sunset is extended.

- Ingham County voters approved the millage renewal for the time period of four (4) years (2008-2011) to support 911 emergency telephone and dispatch systems, at the primary election held August 5, 2008. The millage and telephone surcharge that have been established have maintained financing for a county-wide system of emergency telephone and dispatch services for the benefit of the citizens of the County through several renewals. The voters originally approved a millage in 1986. The current millage authorization expires on December 31, 2008.
- The Ingham County Board of Commissioners recently amended the regulation requiring a license for the retail sale of tobacco, to prohibit the sale of tobacco to minors, and restricting the location of tobacco vending machines to increase the penalties for tobacco license violations. The effect on the 2009 budget is expected to be minimal; however, the penalty for the first violation of the regulation was doubled from \$50.00 to \$100.00. The other penalties will be increased by the cost increase factor used to adjust the fee schedule. A second violation will result in a \$270.00 penalty, up from \$250.00 in the previous regulation. The penalty for a third violation was increased from \$500.00 to \$540.00 and a fourth violation was increased from \$1000.00 to \$1,080.00. These changes are effective October 1, 2008.
- The Ingham County Board of Commissioners in cooperation with the Ingham County Circuit Court–Family Division purchased Our Savior Lutheran Church and School for the price of \$1,975,000.00, with Juvenile Justice Special Millage funds. The 46,000 square foot church/school building is located on 22 acres of land at 1601 W. Holmes Road, just west of the intersection of Martin Luther King Jr. and Holmes Streets. The facility was named the Ingham County Family Center in recognition of its mission to improve the juvenile justice system as a service to the families of Ingham County.
- The County renovated the facility to convert this property to provide services for youth and their families. One of the initial programs operating there is a day school called the Ingham Academy, for non-violent youths who are struggling in school. These young people are hand-selected, based on their need for a structured school environment and their likelihood of graduation. In addition to the day school, we plan to offer some evening study and activity time for at-risk youth. **There will be no overnight stays**, and all day and evening programming will be highly structured and safe for the participants and neighborhood.
- The Ingham Academy is operated by the Ingham County Circuit Court’s Family Division which provides a variety of services for at-risk and adjudicated youth and their families.
- The Ingham County Board of Commissioners and Ingham County Family Division of the Circuit Court held a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony on September 17, 2008, to officially open the Ingham County Family Center. This facility began operation on

September 2, 2008, as the Ingham Academy opened for the 2008/09 school year. The Ingham County Board of Commissioners and Ingham County Family Division is excited about moving forward with this positive step for the young people in our community and anticipates providing programming at the facility.

- The Ingham County Board of Commissioners approved conditionally entering into a contract for \$25,000 from the Juvenile Justice Millage Fund with Child and Family Services for the Angel House Program for the period of August 1, 2008 through December 1, 2008, for services to Ingham County residents. This bridge appropriation was in response to dire financial operational problems for Angel House which jeopardized its continued operation. Child and Family Services in cooperation with Ingham County Circuit Court's Family Division and DHS is working to provide the Ingham County Board of Commissioners with a long-term financial plan, including a description of how this transitional funding will help the organization remain financially solvent to maintain its long-term service to our community.
- The Ingham County Board of Commissioners allocated \$100,000 among three entities for the 2009 Juvenile Justice Community Agency Process. This is the third allocation out of JJM funds to contract with qualified vendors, to increase the capacity of the county juvenile justice system for the treatment of delinquent and disturbed youth, which the County believes to be consistent with the provisions of the millage.
- The Ingham County Board of Commissioners authorized entering into contract negotiations with Sentinel Offender Services for services pursuant to the requirements of a scope of work as set forth in a County Request for Proposals (RFP). The JUCC Sub-Committee will serve as the Electronic Monitoring Oversight Committee (EMOC) for the purpose of working with Sentinel Offender Services to develop program policies and procedures, with input and final agreement from the Courts and to provide ongoing oversight of the Offender-Funded Electronic Monitoring Program and present a contract for approval by the Ingham County Board of Commissioners.
- The Board of Commissioners authorized entering into a contract with ImageSoft at a cost of \$246,200 for the purpose of supplying and installing an On-Base 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 Ingham County Board of Commissioners authorized an appropriation from the 9-1-1 Emergency Telephone Dispatch Services Budget by approving reimbursement to the City of East Lansing's and the City of Lansing's 2008/09 9-1-1 operational budgets to fully reimburse them for up to 95% of their costs.
- The Ingham County Board of Commissioners authorized entering into an agreement with the M.D.O.C. and subcontracts for approved vendors for the Ingham County/City of Lansing Community Corrections FY 2008-2009 programming, including \$279,300

in CCAB Plans and Services and Administration Funds, \$31,347 in Drunk Driving Jail Reduction and Community Treatment Program Funds for a total of \$310,647 and for the use of 31.75 residential beds per day amounting to \$550,465.63 for the time period of October 1, 2008 through September 30, 2009.

- The Ingham County Board of Commissioners authorized accepting a grant from the Bureau of Juvenile Justice to the Ingham County Family Division, for the sum of \$40,000, for purposes of providing educational services to 30 court wards who are students of the Ingham Academy, for the 2008 summer school program.
- The Ingham County Board of Commissioners approved the acceptance of the "Grants to Encourage Arrest Policies" grant from the office of the United States Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs for a total project cost of \$247,520, of which \$125,000 is a federal grant and \$122,520 is the local match for the time period of July 1, 2008 through November 30, 2009. This renewal grant, in cooperation with the City of Lansing Police Department and Lansing School District, is to teach the "GREAT gang resistance" curriculum in the Lansing Public Schools.
- The effort from Ingham County to consolidate the two current 9-1-1 Centers has been very active this past quarter. The 911 Steering Committee has been working with the project consultant Plante & Moran LLC, to develop an Action Plan that outlines a time schedule and major deliverables with the goal to have a fully functioning Ingham County 9-1-1 Center by July of 2010. Specialized Subcommittees have been formed to accomplish this and a DRAFT Action Plan has been widely circulated to the Ingham County Public Safety Community. The DRAFT Action Plan was also presented to the Law Enforcement Committee and submitted to the City of Lansing and East Lansing for their review and comments.
- The Board of Commissioners passed a resolution instituting a six week hiring delay for the 2009 budget year. This was one of the strategies used to balance the 2009 budget and should result in a \$500,000 savings for 2009.
- FEMA relief funds were made available to assist in the repairs and restoration of Rayner Park as a result of severe storms that swept through Ingham County in June 2008. The community-built playground and restroom building at the park as well as over 20 mature trees were damaged. Staff was able to repair the playground and restroom.
- An application for an acquisition grant was made to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Trust Fund, for the purchase of 120 acres adjacent to Lake Lansing Park-North. With matching funds coming from the Meridian Township Land Preservation Board, Ingham County Board of Commissioners and local fundraising, the grant will provide for the Parks Department to purchase the undeveloped land which is rich in natural, untouched beauty. Plans are to retain the property in its natural state with only hiking trails passing through a portion of this pristine area.

- The new American Bald Eagle Exhibit was completed and opened at the Potter Park Zoo. This new exhibit provides total unobstructed viewing of the eagles. The exhibit is located in the North American exhibit area, just inside the Zoo entrance, adjacent to the Otter/Arctic Fox exhibit. The project was completed in a cooperative effort between the Parks Department and the Potter Park Zoological Society.
- Working in cooperation with staff from the Allen Neighborhood Center, MSU Extension Horticulture Educator, Gary Heilig, began the first urban gardening series on September 15, 2008 at the Hunter Park Greenhouse in Lansing. This is a 10 week volunteer training program designed to help area residents understand how to grow food plants successfully in the greenhouse and in the landscape.
- Twenty-nine Ingham County delegates competed among more than 500 4-H members represented in the three day 4-H Horse Show at the MSU Pavilion held in August 2008. Participants increased their skills in horsemanship and understanding of the training of horses. They also gained skills in leadership, initiative, self-reliance, sportsmanship and other traits of character by participating in both the county shows and the state show.
- Ingham County 4-H members enrolled in livestock projects worked to enhance their skills in marketing and communication during the summer months leading up to the 2008 Ingham County Fair. In July, several local businesses hosted a program for members titled "How to Approach a Buyer". During the session, youth practiced their sales pitch with "practice buyers". The "buyers" were employees or volunteers from Mason Elevator, Greenstone Farm Credit Service, Ingham County Farm Bureau and the 4-H Livestock Sale Committee.
- In September, Ingham County MSU Extension presented a Twilight Tour of the MSU Corn Variety Plots at Jorgensen Farm Elevator. Participants walked among the many corn variety plots at the site to observe how they fared in the 2008 growing season. There were 68 people in attendance at the meeting and 77% of the producers indicated that, based on what they learned by observing the plots, they are more likely to use the MSU Corn Variety trials in the future.
- An MSU Extension intern helped Lansing's Westside Summer Fest attract a record crowd. The Westside Alliance is an organization working toward the revitalization of the business districts along Saginaw Street between Stanley and Grand, on Lansing's Westside. It is one of the many programs of the Northwest Initiative. The Alliance and MSU Extension teamed up during the summer of 2008 to create a meaningful internship opportunity. Nikki Shippel, a junior at MSU, with the help of many volunteers, was able to market the festival, engage vendors and beautify the festival site. As a result, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Westside Summer Fest drew in more than 5,000 people to enjoy musical entertainment, food, art and non-profit vendors and countless activities for kids.

- The Human Resources Department completed a reorganization that included the elimination of an FTE, reorganization of responsibilities, and a cost savings to Ingham County of approximately \$60,000.
- The County Services Committee began discussion with the Facilities and Purchasing Departments to review the Purchasing Policy to include revision of the awarding of contracts for construction projects. In cooperation with Union officials, a revised policy is expected to be completed during 2008.
- The MIS Department completed a reorganization that began with Phase I during 2007. Due to the hiring freeze, the completion of this reorganization will not be finalized until a technician is hired in January 2009. A key component to this reorganization was to provide additional technical support to the Sheriff's Office.
- The Board of Commissioners approved the complete replacement of table and chairs for the Community Building at the Fairgrounds.
- The Board of Commissioners approved a "Hiring Freeze" through the end of 2008. The hiring freeze was implemented as a result of the budget concerns for 2009 and the anticipation of layoffs of Ingham County employees.
- The County Services Committee began discussions related to expanding the Ingham County Road Commission from 3 to 4 or 5 members. Discussions will continue at a future Public Hearing.

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