

KENT COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Thursday, June 13, 2002
Administration Building - Room 310

Meeting called to order at 8:33 a.m. by Chair Steven R. Heacock.

Present: Commissioners Boelema, Buege, Hiddema, Horton, Koorndyk, Kuhn, Kuipers, Mast, Mayhue, McGuire, Morgan, Morren, Postmus, Sak, Smoke, Vaughn, Vonk, Chair Heacock – 18.

Absent: Wahlfield – 1 (Excused).

Invocation: Commissioner Morren introduced Reverend Curt Walters, Covenant Christian Reformed Church, who gave the invocation. The Pledge of Allegiance followed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

PUBLIC HEARING

Community Mental Health Authority

At 8:33 a.m., Chair Heacock announced this is the first of three public hearings required to be held prior to establishing a mental health authority pursuant to the mental health code. On December 17, 2001, the Kent Community Mental Health Board voted to recommend, to the Board of Commissioners (“BOC”), to establish Kent Community Mental Health (“CMH”) as an authority. As a mental health authority, Kent CMH would no longer operate as a county department, but would instead be an independent unit separate from governance by the BOC although Authority board members would continue to be appointed by this Commission. The Legislative & Human Resources Committee has held three work sessions and a public comment period on the proposal and on May 25, 2002, the BOC initiated the process to consider establishing Kent CMH as an Authority. According to the Mental Health Code, prior to establishing Kent CMH as an Authority, the BOC must hold three public hearings and adopt an enabling resolution which addresses the following issues: 1) the purpose of the authority; 2) the duration of the authority; 3) the method by which the Authority may be dissolved or terminated; and, 4) the distribution of assets in the event of termination and certain employment matters subject to the provisions of the Mental Health Code. Chair Heacock invited anyone who wished to comment on this proposed Authority to address the Board at this time.

- 1) Mary Smith, International Representative for the UAW (represents Kent County employees). Ms. Smith discussed some of the problems Kent District Library (“KDL”) employees have experienced since leaving county employment. The move to Authority status did not appear to be a good move for many of the employees in several ways. The KDL is very management top heavy with one manager to every four employees. In 1995, there was one manager for every eight line staff. Management people are full time while the union employees are

mostly part-time. A job audit performed shortly after KDL became an Authority resulted in demotions or wage freezes for many of the line staff employees. For many long-term employees this move resulted in real inequities. During the last contract negotiation, they tried to fix the mistake, but were only able to resolve some. Another job audit is presently underway. The KDL employees now pay 10% of their insurance premium and will pay 12% next year. The majority of the library personnel are not happy with the move from county employment. Why would the Commission want to move a department outside of county realms when there is no proof that it is a good move? She cautioned the Board to give it more time; get more proof that it is a good move for the sake of the Kent County employees.

- 2) Mark DeHaan, 3248 Sunrise Street SE, Grand Rapids - He has a loved one who has been a consumer of the mental health services in Kent County for the past 20 years or more. He and his wife are members of a mental illness support group which is affiliated with the Christian Reformed Church, a dues paying member of the national alliance for mentally ill and are acquainted with many consumers of the mental health services of this county. He opposes the change to Authority status for the CMH board for the following reasons: 1) lack of authority, 2) replacing key personnel puts stress on agency, and 3) higher costs. He urged the BOC to reject this experiment - it is not worth the gamble.
- 3) Ginny Smith, President of Local 2600 - From a survey, she learned that employees biggest concern is for their benefits and pension. Six of the top administrators at CMH are taking the early out. The employees' thoughts are if they are bailing now because they will be going to an Authority status does that mean that their pension will be downsized? Will those remaining be protected? Comments from some Kalamazoo Authority employees are not positive. Some of the CMH employees are afraid to speak out, even at public comment, because they are afraid of retaliation.
- 4) Rod Phillips, Kentwood - As a county employee he's concerned that CMH becoming an Authority is not right for Kent County. He believes that if CMH becomes an Authority, it would be difficult for the Authority to attract and retain qualified personnel. Another concern is that the salary benefits guarantee is only for one year. This is bad timing due to the retirement of six top administrators.
- 5) Marleah Bevelacqua, employee of CMH - She sees Kent County Human Resources providing a valuable resource rather than a hindrance. As an Authority, the CMH would lose this service. As a 10-year employee, her intent, as well as that of a lot of other people who work for CMH, is to try to stay with the County if Cornerstone or CMH becomes an Authority. Going to an Authority will create turnover and affect consumers in a negative way.

Chair Heacock announced two more scheduled public hearings on Thursday, June 27 and Thursday, July 25, 2002, 8:30 a.m., Room 310, County Administration Building. In addition, written comments will be accepted by the BOC. The public hearing was declared closed at 8:50 a.m.

CONSENT AGENDA

- a) Approval of the Minutes of May 23, 2002, Meeting
- b) May 21, and June 4, 2002, Finance Committee Meeting Minutes
(Reports of Claims and Allowances)
- c) Appointment to Friend of the Court Citizens Advisory Committee – Laurie Ayers

Motion by Commissioner Morren, supported by Commissioner Sak, to approve the consent agenda items.

Motion carried:

Yeas: Vonk, Vaughn, Smoke, Sak, Postmus, Morren, Morgan, McGuire, Mayhue, Mast, Kuipers, Kuhn, Koorndyk, Horton, Hiddema, Buege, Boelema, Chair Heacock – 18.

Nays: 0.

RESOLUTIONS

6-13-02-69 – ADDITIONAL POSITIONS – PARKING / AERONAUTICS

WHEREAS, the Department of Aeronautics identified a need for 24-hour staffing to meet customer service standards due to additional scheduled passenger flights and enhanced security measures; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Aeronautics requests the addition of a Parking Supervisor (MPP 15), a full-time Parking Operations Agent (UAW 13), and a part-time Parking Operations Agent (UAW-13) to meet this need; and

WHEREAS, the annual net cost of adding the positions is \$85,517.67, funds which are available in the FY 2002 Department of Aeronautics budget.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Commissioners approves the addition of one Parking Supervisor (MPP 15) and 1.5 Parking Operations Agents (UAW 13) to the Department of Aeronautics parking facility.

Motion by Commissioner Sak, supported by Commissioner Hiddema, that the resolution be adopted.

Motion carried:

Yeas: Vonk, Vaughn, Smoke, Sak, Postmus, Morren, Morgan, McGuire, Mayhue, Mast, Kuipers, Kuhn, Koorndyk, Horton, Hiddema, Buege, Boelema, Chair Heacock – 18.

Nays: 0.

REPORTS

Justice Task Force

Commissioner Morgan stated that the Justice Task Force will meet sometime at the end of June.

MISCELLANEOUS

Statement

Commissioner Mayhue read a statement he released to the local media on June 9, 2002, in response to an article the *Grand Rapids Press* ran on June 7, 2002, entitled “Kent Jury Selection Unfair, Stats Show”. Commissioner Mayhue stated that “the people deserve a jury selection process that is fair and equitable.” (A copy of Commissioner Mayhue’s statement is on file in the Office of the County Clerk.)

Zoo

Commissioner Sak asked that the County consider hiring a consultant to look into whether the land west of the zoo could be used for zoo expansion and if not, then the County can seek other alternatives. He complimented Fred Meijer for his involvement in seeking a compromise/resolution on the zoo expansion.

Chair Heacock stated that the County is studying the land and is considering hiring a consultant. Soil engineers are looking at the possible use of that property, legal restrictions, and what the land could feasibly be used for. He is working with Mayor Logie so that Logie can have some input on the nature of that study.

Public Hearing

Commissioner Sak asked the Chair to consider an evening public hearing with regard to the Community Mental Health Authority issue.

Urban Sprawl

Commissioner Horton stated that approximately 340 agriculture acres in Ada, Vergennes and Grattan Townships were auctioned off and most will be lost to agriculture. He hopes to see the Urban Sprawl Task Force recommendation to set up a purchase and development rights program move forward to preserve this very important type of land.

Senior Meals Food Pantry

Commissioner Vaughn announced that the Senior Meals Food Pantry will relocate to 1059 Wealthy SE.

Community Mental Health Advisory Committee

Commissioner Boelema announced that the second strategic planning meeting of the Community Mental Health Advisory Committee was held yesterday.

Jury Study

Commissioner McGuire stated that he served on the Kent County Jury Commission for three years. During that time, Mr. Bentley’s City High School class produced an excellent study of Kent County’s jury system looking at why minority jury representation was so low. The report identified problems and offered solutions. Copies of the study would be available through City High.

Introductions

Chair Heacock introduced Betty Blase, MSU Extension Director, who has been acting as the interim director and has now been officially named the Director.

Administrator Delabbio introduced Neal Getz, the new management analyst in the Administrator's Office.

ADIOURNMENT

At 9:13 a.m., Commissioner Morren moved to adjourn, subject to the call of the Chair, and to Thursday, June 27, 2002, Room 310, County Administration Building, at 8:30 a.m., for an Official Meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Sak. Motion carried.

Steven R. Heacock, Chair

Mary Hollinrake, County Clerk