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Full Commission

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Agency: Wayne County Commission

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Notes

Hey there Documentereados! I'm Noah #2 in Detroit checking in on the Wayne County Commission.

Let's meet our commissioners:

[ALISHA R. BELL, Chair - District 7](#)

[GLENN S. ANDERSON - District 12](#)

[AL HAIDOUS - District 11](#)

[MONIQUE BAKER MCCORMICK - District 6](#)

[IRMA CLARK-COLEMAN - District 5](#)

[TIM KILLEEN - District 1](#)

[MARTHA G. SCOTT - District 3](#)

[CARA A. CLEMENTE - District 4](#)

[JONATHAN C. KINLOCH - District 2](#)

[SAM BAYDOUN, Vice-Chair Pro Tempore - District 13](#)

[MELISSA DAUB - District 10](#)

[DAVID KNEZEK - District 8](#)

[JOSEPH PALAMARA, Vice-Chair - District 15](#)

[ALEX GARZA - District 14](#)

[TERRY MARECKI - District 9](#)

Pamela Fordham, Acting Clerk of the Commission

Items from committee reports that stood out to me before the meeting:

- Committee on Public Services - service contracts include for companies in Lansing and Okemos (Grosse Ile bridge), Frankenmuth (light displays),

Committee on Ways and Means - \$30 million for a new jail/prison, immediately followed by just a few thousand dollars here and there for homeland security and veterans affairs?

Committee on Health and Human Services - RESA subcontracted with a place in California for up to \$13.5 million, why could no company in Michigan do this?

I logged into Zoom at 10 a.m. sharp. Several commissioners were visible but no audio. Zoom participants trickled in reaching a peak total of 36. Commissioner Bell asked everyone to be seated and called to order the meeting at 10:12 a.m.

Knezek was confirmed as excused and all other commissioners were present.

My 2 cents: The invocation felt very inappropriate. I don't understand why such a thing is a regular part of these meetings. I am a non-Christian, non-religious resident of Wayne County and don't feel like the name of Jesus or specific Bible verses should be invoked at any point in any context governmental setting. There is more than enough Christian nationalism in our government as it is in 2024. With other states beginning to post the Bible passages in public spaces I feel more strongly about this than ever before.

Committee Reports: This is the [bulk of the agenda](#) and meeting content. Bell said that these contracts were vetted and discussed at the committee level before the meeting. I wish that some of these discussions could have at least been summarized at this meeting and hope that those discussions happened in other open meetings. I am very curious as to how these different contractors were chosen, particularly those that are out of county and out of state. Many of the items are simply updates of language and reflect a newly created division in Juvenile & Youth Services.

- A. Public Services - 7 items all voted on together, all voted yes
- B. Ways and Means - 12 items all voted on together, all voted yes
- C. Health and Human Services - 17 items all voted on together, all voted yes except Garza abstained from Item 16
- D. Audit - 2 items, all voted yes
- E. Government Operations - 5 items, all voted yes

New Business

- \$3 million to [Lavdas Enterprises](#) in Warren for employee shuttle services to remote parking lots from criminal justice complex at no cost to employees
- \$550,000 for fiduciary oversight to a company in South Carolina for design and

construction of criminal justice complex, already a [half a billion dollar project](#) that started in 2018

- Two new 2023 Dodge Chargers, \$114,000, from Lafontaine of Lansing (*there wasn't a closer dealership than that? Not 1 in the entire County of Wane?*). The Commission saved money by getting these in July and the money is coming from a crime prevention grant, not the general fund.

Birthdays, Honors, and In Memoria

- Commissioners added and highlighted several names in addition to those already on the agenda.
- [Detroit twins just celebrated their 100th birthdays!](#) They are also cousins of the Chair Bell.
- Moment of silence for those in memoria.

Public Comments

An email was read aloud expressing strong anti-Biden and anti-World Health Organization (WHO) sentiments, and called for the county to divest from anything WHO related. There was a call for public comments in person and over Zoom with no takers.

Remarks from Members

Bell wished happy birthday to Killeen and mentioned that 5 members recently attended the National Association of Counties [Annual Conference](#).

Baydoun applauded Dr. Abdul El Sayed, former director of the city health department on his [recent presentation before the U.S. Senate](#).

Meeting adjourned at 10:51 a.m.

Summary

- ... This meeting zipped along, but contained an awful lot of spending and appropriating funds as spelled out in the agenda.
- ... The presence of an invocation and the casualness in quoting the Bible was both striking and bothersome. It really feels inappropriate, unnecessary and above all a clear violation of the separation of church and state. Even if I attended a synagogue (which incidentally I very much do not) I would feel just as uncomfortable with this public display. Secular spaces must be secular. Or maybe I'm just embittering in my middle age.
- ... Hundred-year old twins Doris and Loris just celebrated their milestone birthday.

That's just automatically a cool/cute story. Or maybe I'm just softening up in my middle age.

Follow-Up Questions

- ... I truly appreciate brevity in meetings (they're meetings, not lectures after all), but this meeting was called for 2 hours and lasted all of 40 minutes. Couldn't we have had just 5 minutes of insights into all of the spending from the committees?
- ... Why is so much money spent in general elsewhere that seemingly could be spent within Wayne County instead at no additional effort?
- ... Not to beat a dead horse, but seriously, we had to get a couple of cruisers from a dealership in Lansing?

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