

Ramsey County Charter Commission Minutes of October 24, 2016

The meeting was held at Association of MN Counties, 125 Charles Ave, St Paul, MN with the following members in attendance:

	Members Present	Members Absent
District 1		Joe Murphy (Vacant)
District 2	Bob Benke	James Meyer
District 3	Eric Haugee Randy Gustafson	
District 4		Theresa Tenelle Nix Sharon Garth
District 5	Wendy Underwood	Rachel Gillespie
District 6		Robert Lynn Humphrey Lizeth de la Torre
District 7	Robert Bruton	(Vacant)
At Large		Fred Perez Emily Kristen Holmes Samsel Renee Alexander

Also present: Jeff Stephenson, Ramsey County Civil Division Director
Janet Guthrie, Director of Administrative Services / Chief Clerk – County Board
Julie Kleinschmidt, Ramsey County Manager
Lee Mehrkens, Chief Financial Officer
Justin Hollis, Policy & Planning Analyst
Cheryl Kempe, Administrative Assistant

1. Call to Order: Chair Gustafson called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.
2. Approval of October 26, 2015 Agenda: Benke moved to approve the agenda for October 24, 2016; seconded by Bruton. Approved unanimously.
3. Approval of October 26, 2015 Meeting Minutes: Bruton moved to approve the minutes of the October 26, 2015 Meeting Minutes; seconded by Haugee. Approved unanimously.
4. Introductions of New Members: None
5. Citizen Comments/Input: None
6. Old Business: None
7. New Business: Julie Kleinschmidt, Ramsey County Manager; Lee Mehrkens, Chief Finance Officer; and Justin Hollis, Policy Analyst, presented Ramsey County Performance Measures and Community Indicators.

Highlights from the presentation:

- A considerable amount of time has been spent developing a reviewing performance measures with County Board to identify how well are we doing in meeting the county goals
- We are looking at the broader community indicators that can be compared across the region - are we allocating our focus in the right places?

- Ramsey County is trending positive in terms of jobs and adding new residents, we haven't seen this kind of boom since the 50's.
- Concentrated poverty remains high but is on the decline for the first time in decades; 25% of our children still live in poverty.
- Ramsey County is working on an "impact investment" framework such as increasing resident's wages.
- The County Manager is proposing a property tax levy increase of 2.8% for 2017 (as was done in 2016).
- Ramsey County has a proposed 2.7% total budget increase from all funding sources.

Discussion on Counties Transportation Improvement Board (CTIB)

- Funded by .25% sales tax.
- Comprised of Anoka, Ramsey, Washington, Dakota and Hennepin.
- Counties are to stay in until all debt is paid off; Dakota recently elected to leave the board.
- Includes all forms of transportation, not just light rail.
- CTIB's belief is that if you invest in transportation, jobs will follow.

Budget Highlights for 2017

- Ramsey County is one of three counties in MN to get 3 top GFOA (Government Finance Officers Association) ratings; and in the top 2% of all counties in the US to get the AAA ratings from two key rating agencies. Increased funding for child protection and child support services which are administered by the Co. Attorney's office.
- Expanded the MN Choices program. MN Choices applications are taking longer than they should. Computer systems are not at the level they should be.
- Completing Shoreview Library capital plan. Will be treated as a regional library with expanded hours. Ramsey has a new library director, Jill Boldenow, formerly from St Paul libraries.
- Bob Benke asked about the effects of the 2008 economic recession. The county saw a loss of about 25% of the property value in 2008; now getting close to complete recovery in aggregate. The lowest valued homes are coming back higher; more affluent areas are seeing smaller increases in market value. We are fortunate to have the fiscal disparities formula in place.

Community Indicators

- Information can be found online as demonstrated through the Ramsey County website at: <https://www.ramseycounty.us/communityindicators>
- Some trends are highlighted; economic and racial disparities in Ramsey County.
- This is the first iteration of these measures; they will be refined and seen in future presentations.

Budgets were presented by Service Teams within Ramsey County; it makes sense to look at multiple viewpoints and service team connections at the same time. Ramsey County Truth in Taxation Public Hearing will be Monday, November 28th at the Union Depot.

8. Presentation: Certificates of Appreciation were given to outgoing board members Robert Bruton and Eric Haugee.
9. Potential 2017 Charter Commission Meeting Dates (Mondays @ 7 pm):
February 6, May 1, August 7, October 23
Benke moved to approve 2017 meeting dates. Approved unanimously.

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Cheryl Kempe – Administrative Assistant – County Manager's Office