



**Wayne County Transit Authority – Meeting Notation**

**Date: September 25, 2024**

**Time: 3:00 PM – 4:00 PM**

**Location: 500 Griswold Street, 48226 (Guardian Building)  
30<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room (3010)**

**Attendees:**

Assad Turfe (Chair), Deputy County Executive, Wayne County – VOTING  
David Glabb (Secretary), Mayor, Huron Township – VOTING  
John Rhaesa, Mayor, City of Wayne – VOTING  
Bill Bazzi, Mayor, Dearborn Heights – VOTING  
Gregory Pitoniak, CEO, SEMCA – VOTING  
Jerry Sheppard, President, Trinity Transportation - VOTING

**Additional Attendees:**

Ellen Ha, Wayne County Corporation Counsel  
Rebecca Camargo, Wayne County Corporation Counsel  
Robert McCraight, Mayor, Romulus  
Dwight Ferrell, General Manager, SMART  
Tiffany Gunter, Deputy General Manager, SMART  
Bernard Parker, Vice President of External Affairs, SMART  
Scott Vandemergel, Director of Assessment and Equalization, Wayne County  
Darcel Brown, Chief Assistant to DCEO Assad Turfe, Wayne County  
Ashley McAdoo, Project Manager, Wayne County

**Not Present:**

Andrew Kandreas, Assistant County Executive, Wayne County  
Michele Hodges, Mayor, Grosse Pointe Park  
Steven Rzeppa (Treasurer), Mayor, Trenton  
Pat McRae, Supervisor, Redford

**Agenda Notes:**

**1. Call to Order**

- Meeting called to order at 3:06 pm
- Meeting called to order by DCEO Turfe

## **2. Roll Call**

- Roll call completed.
- Quorum present

## **3. Approval of Agenda**

- Motion to approve minutes made by David Glaab, motion seconded by Pitoniak.
- Agenda approved unanimously.

## **4. Approval of Minutes – July 26, 2023**

- July 26, 2023 minutes approved unanimously

## **5. Update from SMART Representatives**

- Conducting outreach concerning expansion of SMART services (will be returning in 2 months with findings)
- Labor contract with bus operators has been finalized.
- SMART bus operators are now the highest paid in Michigan (\$26.00 hourly with the potential for monetary incentives)
- Massive competition in the workforce – wage increases were needed to be competitive.
  - SMART has also lowered the age to 18 for bus operators to address this and to bring in more talent.
  - Great progress has been made concerning hiring.
- SMART has also brought on a maintenance consultant to handle fleet repair matters (to address liability)
- HNTB has also been retained (an infrastructure firm)
- There has been an evolution concerning transit.
  - SMART is pushing to expand its micro-transit services – SMART Flex (i.e., option that is comparable to Uber or Lyft/ride-sharing program)
  - There is a great need for this, as research is showing that many do not wish to travel long distances.
  - Many are opting to not own cars (because of expense, greater convenience, environmental consciousness, etc.)
  - Flex is operating in 5 communities (only one in Wayne County – Dearborn)
  - Paratransit was also highlighted (federally mandated service for disabled persons)
- SMART representatives shared their wish to expand mass transit.
  - Key to connecting residents to employment and opportunities.
  - Critical concerning driving economic growth and to cultivating a region that is competitive and world class.
  - Our region is the only metropolitan area that does not have a mass transit system.
- SMART has offered to hold meetings to continue discussions on how to push transit initiatives forward.
  - Also interested in discussing transit as a whole and the different programs that are offered so that there is clarity concerning all the services/options that are available for communities and riders.
  - Looking to collaborate with leaders regarding a long-range plan.

## **6. Approval of Resolution for Levy & Collection of Millage**

- Scott Vandemergel led conversation concerning levy and collection of the millage.
- Levy will be effective on 12/1/2024 tax bill.
- The levy is 3 of 4 authorized years (currently at year 3)

- Tax base grew for Wayne County (7.1%)
- Wayne County successfully beat inflation.
- Authorized levy – 12/1/2026
- Motion made to approve levy – motion seconded and passed unanimously.
- Supervisor Glaab and DCEO Turfe – documents executed.

#### **7. Other Items**

- DCEO Turfe – highlighted efforts that are being made to protect transit in Wayne County’s 43 communities with State legislature.
- Presently, there are 17 opt out communities.
- The County is presently illuminating this issue and how it adversely impacts residents and the promotion of equity.
- Major transit gaps that prevent residents from handling their day-to-day needs
- Working to amend Michigan Public Act 196 of 1986 (Public Transportation Authority Act)

#### **8. Public Comment**

- Issue raised concerning bus riders loitering around and inside businesses.
- Request for new drop-off point.
- SMART will follow up concerning the matter.

#### **9. Adjournment**

- Meeting adjourned at 4:09 PM

