



Wayne County
Commission
Chair

7th District Update Alisha Bell

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Fall 2019

New budget keeps county on sound financial path

Wayne County Commissioners have adopted a \$1.63 billion county operating budget for the 2019-20 fiscal year. The budget is balanced for the fifth consecutive year and includes a surplus of \$5.7 million.

"The good news is we are funding some badly needed programs. The better news is that we continue to show financial responsibility in doing so," Wayne County Commission Chair Alisha Bell said.

Programs being funded under the new budget



Commission Chair Alisha Bell took part in the recent budget hearings leading to the approval of the 2019-20 fiscal year budget.

include a new countywide Violent Crimes Initiative that will include 10 sheriff's department officers and three assistant county prosecutors, at a cost of \$1.9 million.

"We made it a priority to take this strong stand against violent crime and to protect our residents," Chair Bell said.

Other budget highlights include:

- An additional outreach officer to assist county military veterans.
 - Accelerated road funding of \$5 million.
 - Roughly \$14.5 million for bonded debt service to help construct the county's new criminal justice complex.
- As has been their recent practice, commissioners also worked on a one-year projection for 2020-21 to guide future spending.

Budget meetings were held in several communities and videos were posted online.

"I am pleased that so many people were able to take part in this budget process," Chair Bell said. "This is a big part of our efforts to increase transparency."

Commissioners take stand against gun violence, hate

Wayne County Commissioners have taken a unanimous stand in remembrance of the victims of recent mass shootings and calling for an end to such attacks.

"The gun violence in this country has got to be stopped," Chair Alisha Bell said.

"I'm hopeful Congress will do something on banning assault weapons, and let's pray we don't have any more mass shootings in this country."

The resolution honored the memory of those who lost their lives

in recent mass shootings in Dayton, Ohio, El Paso, Texas and Gilroy, Calif., as well as those lost to gun violence in Detroit.

The resolution also "strongly condemns any hatred toward immigrants already residing or seeking to reside in the United States." It states that "the idea of hate often spawns further hate and as a nation we must work together to quell the urge to vehemently disagree publicly which often leads to violence and the loss of innocent lives."

In Dayton, nine people were killed and 27 others wounded in a mass shooting that occurred during the early hours of Aug. 4 in the city's entertainment district.

In El Paso, at least 22 people, many of them Mexican Americans, died as a result of a mass shooting in a Walmart store. That attack is being investigated as a hate crime.

In Gilroy, three people were killed and 12 injured at a July 28 community festival in another mass shooting being investigated as a hate crime.

Commission's county guide books are now available in Arabic and Spanish

The 2019-20 edition of A Citizen's Guide to Wayne County Government, a handbook detailing county elected officials, departments and services, is now available in Arabic and Spanish upon citizens' request.

The Arabic and Spanish language guides were created as an initiative of Wayne County Commission Chair Alisha Bell.

"We are the most diverse county in Michigan with many new Americans and households where English is not the primary language spoken," Chair Bell said. "Making this vital information available in additional languages is a good way to reach out to those residents, build trust and encourage their participation in county government."

Copies remain available in English as well.

The citizen's guide contains detailed information on the county commission, elected offices and all county departments, including parks and public services. It also includes contact information for each agency.

To order a copy of the guide, in whichever language is preferred, please call Chair Bell's office at (313) 224-0936 or send an email to her at abell3@waynecounty.com.



Commissioners oppose efforts to increase truck weights

Wayne County Commissioners have unanimously supported a resolution opposing any legislation that would increase the weight and length of tractor-trailer trucks that travel on county roads.

Presented by Wayne County Commission Chair Alisha Bell, the resolution states that any increases beyond the current capacity of county infrastructure would cause excessive damage to roads and bridges and increase safety risks for motorists.

"Many of our roads and bridges desperately need repair and increasing truck weights and lengths would only make them worse," Chair Bell said. "Road safety cannot be compromised."

Other counties throughout the U.S. have adopted similar legislation.

Recent Federal Highway Administration data states there are 78 structurally deficient bridges within Wayne County.

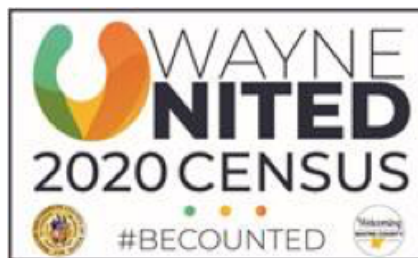
In addition, only 16 percent of the roads in Wayne County are considered to be in "good condition" according to recent data from the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG).

The resolution urges action by the Michigan Legislature and Gov. Gretchen Whitmer to propose and enact legislation that would enforce strict weight limits to protect the integrity of the state's infrastructure.

Make sure you count in 2020 U.S. Census

Please make sure you take part in the upcoming 2020 U.S. Census. The census determines vital issues such as how much federal revenue Wayne County will receive for road projects. It will also determine how seats will be apportioned in the U.S. House and Michigan Legislature. Census data will also help the county better prepare for its residents' future needs.

With so much at stake, it is important that everyone is counted, and counted fairly. For the first time, households will be able to complete census information by telephone or



online. Paper questionnaires may also be distributed in some areas as well.

Households will be initially mailed an invitation and details on how to respond online sometime between March 12-20, 2020. Some households will also be sent a paper questionnaire at this time with additional information on how to respond by phone.

Fraud unit helps return homes to rightful owners

Are you a victim of mortgage or deed fraud? The Wayne County Mortgage and Deed Fraud Unit can help.

Mortgage fraud happens when someone obtains money from a mortgage company by misrepresenting any material fact (including using a fraudulent deed) when applying for a mortgage. It also occurs when there is an exchange of cash outside the settlement statement officially signed at the closing.

Deed fraud happens when someone forges someone else's signature on a document transferring any interest in real estate. It also happens when someone transfers property they do not have a legal right or interest in. The forged document does not have to be recorded for forgery to occur.

The unit takes citizen complaints through its hotline, (313) 224-5869. The hotline accepts calls 24/7. Voicemails concerning fraud are returned in a timely fashion. Citizens may also submit complaints online at the register of deeds page at waynecounty.com.

Wayne County Register of Deeds Bernard J. Youngblood formed the unit in 2005, in partnership with the county sheriff's department and prosecutor's office, to combat a rise in mortgage and deed fraud throughout the county. Since then, the unit has opened 1,970 cases leading to 284 convictions and the return of 321 homes to their rightful owners.

Historic centennial



Commission Chair Alisha Bell was joined by her colleagues in recognizing the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment, which granted women the right to vote in all elections throughout the United States.

Commissioners support SEIU employees

Commission Chair Alisha Bell lent her support to members of Service Employees International Union Local 1 in their bid for a \$15 per hour minimum wage. SEIU workers provide security in downtown Detroit office buildings.

Several commissioners met with union members in June to discuss the issue and have also attended a union rally calling attention to the \$15 minimum wage issue.

"We stand with you and now its time to fight for our union," Chair Bell said. "We need unions to make sure we have proper training, to make sure we have proper health care, to make sure we have all the needs that make up a strong working body."



Commission Chair Alisha Bell joined the fight in supporting SEIU workers.

District 7 roads map

Major freeways in red



Wayne County Commission
Chair



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Annual picnic updates county programs, activities



Commission Chair Alisha Bell welcomed constituents from District 7 to her annual Evening in the Park Family Cookout and Legislative Briefing July 18 in Hines Park. The event featured food and fun for all and the opportunity to learn more about Wayne County services and programs.

