

Finance & Rules Committee
February 26, 2019
Minutes

Members Present: Committee Chair Michael Montigelli, Legislators Allen Drake, Daniel McBride, James Nabywaniec, Carolyn Fitzpatrick, and Board Chair Scott Gray

Others Present: Legislators John Peck and Anthony Doldo, County Administrator Robert Hagemann, Deputy Administrator Sarah Baldwin, County Attorney David Paulsen, Information Technology Director and Conf. Asst. for Fiscal Affairs Gregory Hudson, Insurance Director Lisa Jock, Real Property Tax Services Director Roxanne Burns, Real Property Tax Services Appraisal Technician Alex Marchenkoff, Watertown Daily Times Reporter Abe Kenmore, Confidential Secretary Jill Jones

Chairman Montigelli called the meeting to order at 6:25 p.m. and offered privilege of the floor, however no one present wished to address the Committee.

Cornell Cooperative Extension Executive Director Kevin Jordan gave an overview of Cooperative Extension saying they are educationally based and serve youth, family, farmers and communities using research based knowledge and practical applications for life long learning. He said they are here to serve the residents and businesses in the community, and they are a membership organization. They do not have degree programs, they provide research information from their land grant college (Cornell) and every land grant university in the United States.

He said Cornell Cooperative Extension Association has 120 employees (about 60 work part time and the other 60 are full time) is a public entity, is subject to Open Meetings Law, has a Board of Directors, was created by Jefferson County in 1912 by County Law §224 and operates as a 501(C)3 not for profit. Its formation allows for unique partnerships as Cooperative Extension can work directly with the County, Cornell University, New York State and USDA, and they are considered a subordinate government agency. The State provides a full benefit package for Cooperative Extension employees at no cost to Cooperative Extension.

Their primary program areas as set in County Law §224 are agriculture, community and economic vitality, environment, energy, nutrition, healthy families, and youth development. They have focused from the beginning on agriculture and youth development and Jefferson County's allocation is earmarked for those programs, as outlined in the contract. They have leveraged County dollars and it has allowed them to grow and serve the community beyond that; they receive \$667,000 from the County and their annual budget is about \$7 million. Mr. Jordan answered questions of legislators with regard to the Cooperative Extension organization and its programs.

Association for the Blind Executive Director Olivia Kassoum-Amadou made a presentation to the Committee concerning the history of their organization, the services and

equipment that they provide to the blind and visually impaired in Jefferson, Lewis and St. Lawrence Counties. The Association for the Blind was formed in 1918 by M.E. Avery and Evelyn Bourcy and has been providing services to Jefferson County residents since that time, more recently those services were expanded to include Lewis and St. Lawrence counties. The services provided include: assessments, counseling, referrals to educational institutions, transportation, employment referrals, eye examinations, glasses, braille watches, books, etc., talking book machines, dictionaries, walking canes, optiscopes, writing templates, radios, large print calendars and bingo cards, and large number dials for telephones. She advised that they are excited to be opening the Vision Rehabilitation Center, 146 Arsenal Street, Suite 9, Top of the Square, later this week, the only one of its kind in the North Country, and invited legislators to the ribbon cutting ceremony at the Center. She said it will allow the blind and visually impaired to receive services in Watertown instead of traveling to Utica, Syracuse, or Rochester, and she expects that it will increase their client numbers. There are currently over 3,000 people in the tri-county area that are blind or visually impaired, 85% of the population they serve is 55 or older. They are expanding children and youth services and currently there is a youth support group that has about 8 kids in it. Ms. Kassoum-Amadou answered questions of legislators related to their services.

The Committee approved the minutes of the January Committee meeting, as written.

Chairman Montigelli introduced a resolution amending the 2019 County Budget in relation to Samaritan Senior Village, Inc. and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator Fitzpatrick seconded by Legislator Nabywaniec and there being no discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented.

Chairman Montigelli introduced a resolution authorizing a joint services agreement with the Town of Pamela for optional county assessment services to the town pursuant to Real Property Tax Law §1537 and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator McBride and seconded by Legislator Drake.

Real Property Tax Services Director Burns said this arrangement is a result of discussions during the consolidation [shared services] meetings between the County, towns and villages, and under Real Property Tax Law §1537 the County can contract with towns for all or some assessment services. As the pool of assessors across the State is aging and there is no one in the wings to take over, and these kind of arrangements are a growing trend. Many assessors cover more than one town, but the State and she recommend only a limited number of parcels per assessor. When contracting with the County for services you receive professional expertise with a support staff, the agreements are generally a cafeteria plan; for Pamela it will be for data collection and exemption calculations. She advised there is no cost savings on the front end, but there will be savings by the end of the contract. She said the Town of Pamela let their Assessor go after learning he was not properly certified, and currently have an equalization rate of 57% and revaluation has not been done in 20-25 years. They then approached the County to provide the service. She introduced Appraisal Technician Alex Marchenkoff who will be considered the Town of Pamela Assessor and will be performing this service in addition to his present duties in the office. This service was talked about considerably at the consolidation [shared services]

meetings, and she said this could be the beginning of a trend where Real Property Tax Services can provide a much better product to the towns and generate revenue to cover the cost of the service. In response to questions from legislators Ms. Burns advised that there are only three elected assessors in the County in the Towns of Lyme, Philadelphia and Worth, all the others are appointed; the incentive from the State to be at 100% equalization used to be more, but it is currently only *up to* \$2.50/parcel and any sharing of that money would be negotiated with a town at the onset of the contract. There being no further discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented.

Chairman Montigelli introduced a resolution concurring in settlement of tax certiorari proceeding and authorizing refund of taxes in connection therewith (McDonald's Corporation) and entertained a motion for consideration. Mr. Hagemann advised that a revised resolution was on legislators desks reflecting the numbers for all five years that are covered by the County. A motion was duly made by Legislator Drake seconded by Legislator Nabywaniec, and there being no discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented.

Chairman Montigelli introduced a resolution urging New York State to fund all costs associated with new State-enacted voting reforms implemented at the County level and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator McBride seconded by Legislator Nabywaniec and there being no discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented.

Chairman Montigelli introduced a resolution opposing the proposed and amended 2020 Executive State Budget impacting Aid and Incentives to Municipalities and state cost shifts to counties and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator Nabywaniec and seconded by Legislator McBride. Mr. Hagemann advised that in the first round of estimated numbers in terms of the additional sales tax revenue Jefferson County will take in about \$1.5 million, but minus our distribution agreement with the City and towns (\$800,000) and the AIM Aid (\$500,000) the County will only be able to use about \$200,000. Chairman Montigelli stressed that any contact legislators have with our State representatives make sure they know how important this is to the County. Board Chair Gray advised that for 2019 we will only have 6 months of the additional sales tax revenue so it will be a general fund cost to the County to cover this mandate, and if the State captures this new revenue stream what else will they try next. There being no further discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented.

Chairman Montigelli introduced a resolution reappointing member to the Jefferson County Industrial Development Agency (Dave Converse) and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator Nabywaniec seconded by Legislator McBride and there being no discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented.

Chairman Montigelli introduced a resolution appointing member to the Jefferson County Industrial Development Agency (W. Edward Walldroff) and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator Drake seconded by Legislator Fitzpatrick

and there being no discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented.

The Committee approved the following General Services Committee sponsored resolutions on a motion by Legislator McBride seconded by Legislators Fitzpatrick, Drake and Nabywaniec and unanimously carried:

- ✓ Reappropriating Funds from Various Unspent Grants Relative to the Fire and Emergency Management Department and Amending the 2019 County Budget in Relation Thereto
- ✓ Authorizing Grant Agreement, State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR) Determination, and Amending the 2019 County Budget in Relation to a 2018 Community Development Block Grant Award from the NYS Office of Community Renewal
- ✓ Amending the 2019 County Budget and Capital Plan to Recognize 2019 Revenue from Fort Drum Residential Communities Initiative
- ✓ Amending the 2019 County Budget to Re-Appropriate Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Funding. **In response to a question Mr. Hagemann advised that these funds will be spent within the first quarter of 2019.**
- ✓ Amending the 2019 County Budget in Relation to Law Enforcement
- ✓ Reappropriating Funds from Various Unspent Traffic Safety Committee Grants Relative to the Sheriff's Department and Amending the 2019 County Budget in Relation Thereto
- ✓ Reappropriating Funds from Various Unspent Homeland Security Grants Relative to the Sheriff's Department and Amending the 2019 County Budget in Relation Thereto
- ✓ Authorizing FY 2017 Operation Stonegarden Grant Agreement and Amending the 2019 County Budget in Relation Thereto

The Committee approved the following Health & Human Services Committee sponsored resolutions on a motion by Legislator McBride seconded by Legislators Fitzpatrick, Nabywaniec, and Drake and unanimously carried:

- ✓ Amending the 2019 County Budget to Rappropriate DSRIP Funding for the Office for the Aging
- ✓ Amending the 2019 County Budget to Reappropriate Funds and Accepting Additional 2019 Funding for Veterans Peer Support (P2P) Program
- ✓ Amending the 2019 County Budget to Reappropriate Federal Medicaid Administration Reimbursement for the Community Services Department
- ✓ Amending the 2019 County Budget to Reappropriate DSRIP Funding for Community Services Department
- ✓ Authorizing Funding in Connection with NYSDOH Local Health Department Performance Incentive Initiative and Amending the 2019 County Budget in Relation Thereto

County Attorney Paulsen advised that a County Highway vehicle was involved in an accident that resulted in a claim for \$5,567 in damages, but no personal injuries. Mr. Hagemann reminded legislators that any settlements over \$5,000 must be approved by the Committee, and

anything over \$10,000 must be approved by the Board. Following brief discussion, the Committee concurred with settlement of the claim for \$5,567.

On a motion by Legislator Nabywaniec seconded by Legislator Drake and unanimously carried, the Committee entered executive session at 7:38 p.m. to discuss employment of a particular individual. The Committee returned to open session at 7:50 p.m. on a motion by Legislator Nabywaniec seconded by Legislator Fitzpatrick and unanimously carried.

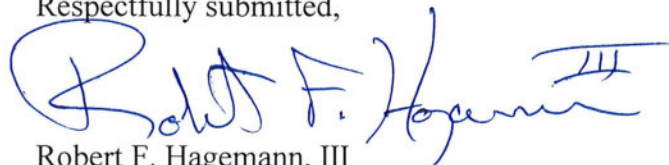
The Committee authorized County Attorney Paulsen to move forward with an offer of employment to a prospective employee.

Mr. Hagemann advised that Purchasing Director Sachetti graduated from the NYSAC County Government Institute.

Mr. Hagemann related that as was discussed during budget deliberations, the authorized agencies will be coming before the Finance & Rules Committee to make presentations concerning their services. The first two made presentations tonight and we will have two agencies presenting for each meeting through July. There are four that have not been scheduled yet, (Jefferson County Fair, Jefferson County Dairy, DPAO & Sports Fishery Advisory Board) and he has reached out to determine their interest in making presentations, as they receive considerably less than the other agencies. They will be added to the schedule if they express an interest in doing so. These agency presentations will be listed on the agenda when it is forwarded.

There being nothing further to come before the Committee, on a motion by Legislator Nabywaniec seconded by Legislator McBride and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert F. Hagemann, III". The signature is stylized with a large initial "R" and a prominent "H" at the end.

Robert F. Hagemann, III
Clerk of the Board