



COUNTY OF ONONDAGA

Office of the County Legislature

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Clerk

DALE A. SWEETLAND
Chairman

JOHANNA H. ROBB
Deputy Clerk

LOCAL LAW PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES
February 20, 2007

IN ATTENDANCE: Nicholas J. Pirro, County Executive; William H. Meyer, Legislator; Jennifer Testut Smith, County Attorney; Johanna Robb, Deputy Clerk, County Legislature

Pursuant to Article 3, Section 20 of the Municipal Home Rule Law, County Executive Nicholas J. Pirro held a public hearing on the above date at 9:00 A.M., in the Legislative Chambers. The purpose of the hearing was to consider Local Law No. , 2006, entitled "A LOCAL LAW ADOPTING THE PROVISIONS OF REAL PROPERTY TAX LAW SECTION 458-a IN RELATION TO THE ALTERNATIVE VETERANS EXEMPTION AND AMENDING LOCAL LAW NO. 1-1998."

The Deputy Clerk read the official notice of public hearing and stated that proof of publication in the Syracuse Post Standard and affidavits of posting were on file in the Office of the Clerk.

County Executive Pirro asked for speakers wishing to be heard.

LEGISLATOR WILLIAM H. MEYER: Mr. Meyer spoke in favor of the local law. Mr. Meyer stated that he is Chairman of the Legislatures Ways and Means Committee and sponsor of the local law. Mr. Meyer explained that the last time the limits for this exemption were increased was in the late 1990's, this modest increase today just puts veterans and their families back to where the limits were when they were increased in 1998. Mr. Meyer added that this local law only applies to the County property tax bill, other local governments such as the City of Syracuse, towns and villages must act to increase the limits that apply to their tax bill. Mr. Meyer urged all local veterans and their families to contact their local assessor to insure that they have applied for all the exemptions that they may qualify.

RONALD FAIRBANK, 1ST VICE PRESIDENT OF VIETNAM VETERANS OF CNY: Mr. Fairbank asked how the population of veterans is established in Onondaga County, where the number comes from. Mr. Fairbanks said a lot of veterans won't declare themselves as veterans; how many do we truly have. Mr. Meyer said the County records are based on property owners who apply for the exemptions. Mr. Pirro added that the numbers are also derived from the State and Federal Office of Veterans Affairs, through census information and military records. Mr. Fairbanks asked if the Onondaga County Veterans Counsel has access to those numbers, could they audit those

numbers. Mr. Pirro said the Federal government says what the census is for the County, they have challenged it at times when they felt it was not accurate, asked if Mr. Fairbanks feels there is a miscount regarding number of veterans. Mr. Fairbanks said he has no understanding of how the number is put together. Mr. Pirro said mostly it is from veterans records that are provided to the State and Federal governments whereby veterans register for benefits. Mr. Pirro will check into it further and supply any additional information.

ROBERT J. DUNCANSON, KOREAN VETERAN: Mr. Duncanson said a lot of his questions have been answered, prevailed upon Mr. Pirro to sign this local law.

ROBERT A. HARDING, VETERAN OF KOREAN WAR AND VIETNAM WAR: since leaving the military, Mr. Harding said he has seen many of the benefits eroded, his taxes have gone up recently, has had a \$10,000 increase in assessment and will have to downsize. He is in full support of an accurate count, by some means, of the veterans in this County and an initiative toward protecting their benefits.

Mr. Pirro closed the hearing at 9:10 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,



JOHANNA H. ROBB, Deputy Clerk
Onondaga County Legislature