STATE OF NEW YORK
COUNTY OF ONONDAGA COUNTY LEISLATURE

In the Matter of the
2014 Proposed County Budget

PUBLIC HEARING in the above matter conducted at the Onondaga County Legislative Chambers, 401 Montgomery Street, Syracuse, New York before, JOHN F. DRURY, CSB, RPR, Notary Public in and for the State of New York, on October 3, 2013, 7:00 pm.

COUNTY LEGISLATORS PRESENT:
1st District BRIAN MAY
2nd District JOHN C. DOUGHERTY
3rd District CHESTER A. DUDZINSKI, JR.
4th District JUDITH A. TASSONE
5th District KATHLEEN A. RAPP
6th District MICHAEL E. PLOCHOCKI
7th District DANNY J. LIEBKA
8th District CHRISTOPHER J. RYAN
9th District ROBERT J. ANDREWS
10th District KEVIN A. HOLMQVIST
11th District PATRICK M. KILMARTIN
12th District DAVID S. KNAPP (Chairman Finance)
13th District DEREK T. SHERWOOD, JR.
14th District CARY C. JORDAN
15th District J. RYAN MAHON, Chairman 16th District MONICA WILLIAMS
17th District LINDA R. ERVIN

Legislative Clerk DEBBIE MATURO

Reported By:
John F. Drury, CSB, RPR
Court Reporter 471-7397

MR. KNAPP: If everyone could take a seat we'll get started. I'd like to call to order the public hearing for the Proposed 2014 Budget. Briefly I just want to make sure you see the exits in case there is any kind of emergency, we have a pretty good attendance tonight. In the back, and the front. (Pointing).

Before we get started we're would everyone rise for the pledge of the flag. (All joined in Pledge of Allegiance).

MR. KNAPP: Thank you. Just a reminder to check everyone's cell phones, make sure they're turned off or at least on silent mode so we don't interrupt any of our speakers. The purpose of this meeting tonight is to discuss our Proposed 2014 Budget. And so I would ask that the comments that are to be made concern the budget and not extraneous issues or certainly not political type issues. With that we'll get started. Mr. Chairman, do you have any preliminary comments?

INDEX TO SPEAKERS

SPEAKERS ORGANIZATION PAGES
1 RONNIE BELL 4 - 7
2 JASON ZEIGLER Assigned Counsel Panel 8 - 11
3 JASON SMITH 12 - 13
4 DAVE APPLETON 13 - 17
5 DAVID HOLDER Convention & Visitors 17 - 21
6 Mayor JOE SARACENI Village of Baldwinsville 22 - 25
7 Mayor BETH GREENWOOD Village of Tully 26 - 27
8 Mayor MARK OLSON Mayors Association 27 - 30
9 MARC STORNEILL Assigned Counsel 30 - 32

Mr. KNAPP: Are there any members of the Legislature that would like to make any comments before we get started with the public comment period? Being none we'll move into the public comments. We do have several speakers who have signed up. I have the cards here that you filled out before you came in, so I will call the names in the order that folks signed in, no particular order other than that. And we do have several, so I would ask that you keep your comments to three minutes or so and so we can make sure we get everybody in.

Up first is Ronnie Bell from Syracuse, New York.

RONNIE BELL: Thank you. Thanks for the opportunity to speak to you tonight during the public hearing. I'm Ronnie Bell, and I own my home on Stenard Avenue in Syracuse, part of the 15th Legislative District, since 1992. I am
Bell

current in all my tax payments. I speak to you as a concerned resident of Onondaga County and a life long progressive democrat. I would like to start with the hot button issues.

Number 1. I do not advocate the Trash to Ash proposal because of its potential harm to the air and water quality due to the higher burn rate at the Jamesville incinerator. Nothing concerns our citizens more than the air we breathe and the water we drink. We must do everything to protect these precious resources.

Number 2. I do not advocate any legislation that would restrict the rights of Onondaga County workers to receive back pay when contract negotiations are not settled prior to expiration. The rights of county workers are already restricted due to Taylor Law provisions, so it is imperative that negotiations at impasse resulting in arbitration or eventual

Bell

and non-profits. This gives one book a month to every County child from birth to their entrance into kindergarten in cooperation with the Dolly Parton Foundation.

On Revenue:

Number 1. I advocate the creation of an Onondaga County OTB authority to create a new revenue stream for the city and the County. It is disingenuous to oppose government sponsorship when we have the New York State Lottery authority, bingo and casinos already in place.

Number 2. I advocate using the Onondaga County fund balance above the credit rating cushion for more programs and services for workers.

And 3rd and last. I do not advocate any further tax breaks for Destiny USA and Mr. Congel. I advocate incentives for job creating businesses with enforceable clawback clauses. Thank you very much for your time.

Bell

settlement go back to the contract expiration date. Otherwise, management is encouraged to bargain in bad faith.

Number 3. I advocate the creation of a meaningful oversight board for the Justice Center.

On Education:

Number 1. I advocate more OCC funding in classroom/program initiatives that create pathways to apprenticeships, jobs for students and less funding for capital projects, especially those that compete with already existing County run facilities.

Number 2. The $7.5 million portion of the Human Services budget that funds Say Yes initiatives needs evaluation to ensure its efficient and effective use.

I advocate similar programs for the rest of the County.

Number 3. I advocate funding the Imagination Library project throughout Onondaga County as a partnership with like minded foundations, corporations

Zeigler

MR. KNAPP: Thank you, Mr. Bell.

Next we have Jason Zeigler.

JASON ZEIGLER: Hi, my name is Jason Zeigler, I'm an attorney, attorney in private practice, and much of my practice consists of accepting assignments, court appointed assignments from the judges throughout this County.

Pay for most of that comes through the Onondaga County Assigned Counsel Program.

As I would hope that most of the county legislators are aware of at this point, there have been numerous lawsuits against this County and the Assigned Counsel Program, really stemming from a lot of behavior from the program itself.

Also the New York Civil Liberties Union filed a lawsuit against the state, alleging systemic deficiencies statewide. This County was dragged in as a defendant in that suit. That suit is scheduled for trial this December.

What really prompted me to want to
Zeigler
1 come up here and speak with you today is
2 I think it's really the request of the
3 County Legislature, there is an audit
4 now ongoing in the Onondaga County
5 Assigned Counsel Program. As an
6 attorney that's had problems with
7 Assigned Counsel I would like to say
8 thank you, it's a step in the right
9 direction.
10 What prompted me to come up here
11 was, within days of the attorneys
12 meeting with people from the County
13 comptroller's office, the Assigned
14 Counsel Program began shredding a
15 voluminous amount of documents, this is
16 in front of people coming into the
17 office.
18 Keeping in mind that this is a
19 hearing over the budget, and public
20 comments for the budgets, I'm just going
21 to leave with this. And in 2004 the
22 raise for what attorneys were paid to
23 represent indigent defendants and
24 indigent family court litigants was

Zeigler
1 bills are not being processed, it's the
2 end of the year and that's pretty
3 standard for anybody dealing with
4 Assigned Counsel.
5 I would like to put out there that
6 I'd be more than happy to meet with
7 representatives from the Public Safety
8 Committee to explain what is going on.
9 I doubt you get a clear answer from the
10 Assigned Counsel Program. And when
11 making determinations to the budget,
12 please keep in mind that the problem is
13 not necessarily do we have more cases
14 this year, it's that the money for the
15 pay raise in 2004 was never given. So
16 you have a problem that keeps repeating
17 itself because it's essentially the
18 program has been inadequately funded for
19 the last 10 years. I think I'm going to
20 leave it at that. Thank you for your
21 time.
22 MR. KNAPP: Thank you, Mr. Zeigler.
23 Next is Jason Smith.
24 JASON SMITH: Hello, my name is

Smith
1 Jason Smith, I'm from Onondaga County, I
2 live in North Syracuse, I am not
3 prepared for this, and most of the
4 people apparently here tonight are. I
5 hope you'll forgive me the ignorance I
6 have in this matter.
7 I read in the paper about the
8 computers, may not be much allocated for
9 computers. I would like to hope that
10 that gets returned, so to speak. From
11 personal experience, I have two
12 computers I work with, one is 14 years
13 old the other one nine years old. The
14 IT department explained that it will not
15 allocate for new computers until 2016.
16 My computer, if you take it out of
17 the budget this year I might get pushed
18 to 2017, and then further down the line
19 another issue where you want to take it
20 out to maybe 2018 or 2019. The
21 computers do not function well. And I
22 know others in our department don't
23 function either, they are of similar age
24 and poor functioning is probably a good
Appleton
term. So I ask that that be added back
in if possible, if there could be some
way and I would appreciate it. Thank
you.
MR. KNAPP: Thank you, Mr. Smith.
Next is Dave Appleton.
DAVE APPLETON: I'd like to speak
about this scam known as the City
Abstract. No less an authority than the
New York State Comptroller has condemned
this practice years ago and yet it has
continued. Last year, two years ago I
respectfully submitted a letter from the
Comptroller outlining his objections to
the Legislature; that was promptly
ignored.
Last year I respectfully submitted
the same letter again. Sunk into
oblivion. I have done the same thing
for the last two years in front of the
Common Council at their budget public
forums and never heard a word about it.
You continue this practice even though
it has been rejected by the head fiscal

officer of the state. It allows the
city to hide their expenses under the
County. It obscures the true cost of
city government. The city residents
deserve to know how much their city
government costs them. When they pay
their County tax bill, roughly a third
of that I believe is the city abstract,
but that doesn't say that on the tax
bill or explain what the abstract is, it
just gives a County tax. People think
they're paying for County government
there.

Much of that is to reimburse the
County for expenses incurred by the
City. The City government should tax,
their people should be responsible for
that, and then they pay the County.
That's the way it's supposed to be done.
No one seems to be interested in
correcting this. So I wanted to come
before you once again and give you
copies of the Comptroller's letter
objecting to this practice.

And those of you who are
representatives of the suburbs, you have
no business taxing the city residents to
collect money incurred by the city
government. You should collect from the
city, just like you collect from the
state government when you do a service
for them. You do not collect from the
state taxpayers all across the state,
you collect from whoever incurred the
debt.
If a private individual or company
tried this we would be accused of fraud.
And yet this practice continues and
increases, increases. This year I see
another 486,000 just under the SOCPA,
which is only one part of the city
abstract. That's almost half a million
dollars increase that should show up on
the city budget, it did last year, and
now it's just magically disappeared.
This allows Mayor Miner and her
cronies to claim that they have not
increased the city budget. An easy
claim to make if they're allowed to
slice off pieces of it and hide it with
the County. We deserve to know how much
our government is actually costing. And
all I'm asking you to do is to read this
letter and discuss it. It's roughly
one-third I believe of the County taxes
that the city taxpayers pay, I believe
goes to this Abstract and it should be
collected by the city. They should,
when people pay their city taxes, it
should show this is how much the city is
costing me. And this is how much the
County is costing me. This is deceitful
and it should stop.

And I would ask you once again to at
least discuss it amongst yourselves and
it would be nice to know if you had
discussed it, because as I say I've
tried to get some attention for this for
the past several years and I've heard
absolutely nothing. Did anyone even
talk about it? I will leave another
copy of the New York State Code with you
Holder

and I hope you take a few minutes to discuss it amongst yourselves when you have time. Mr. Ryan, I believe I gave these to you last year so I'll give them to you now.

CHAIRMAN McMAHON: Thank you Mr. Appleton.

MR. KNAPP: Thank you, Mr. Appleton.

Next we have David Holder.

DAVID HOLDER: Hello, my name is David Holder, I live in Fayetteville, New York, I happen to work in downtown Syracuse, serving the entire County. I want to thank each of you for the time you've spent or will spend helping me better understand and really gain appreciation for what's been proposed in this year's budget. I know the CVB is only a small part of the legislative budget, the County's budget, but we play a big role in driving the sales tax for this area. I want to use tonight's time to express three different items about that role that we play.

First is the CVB program plans that I presented last week during the budget presentation are really based on three guiding principles. The first is input from our industry. The second is input from our customers. And the third is professional expertise that we're asked to bring to the table.

There are two documents that incorporate each of these principles and I've really had the opportunity to present these in committee meetings at earlier times this year. The first one is last year's 2012 Destination Marketing Analysis. It's a program that you paid for out of the 2012 budget. It was a great program that really forged a new future for tourism for this area. And we used it to create the 2013 Strategic Sales and Marketing Plan. I urge you to take a look at both of these documents, they are well founded. They really depend on industry-wide input and they target us to put us into aggressive...
Holder

October and November we begin to make
those contracts with those different
organizations that we place those
advertisements with, or that we start --
that we need to have a trade show
presence with. So I do ask that you
consider that as you're moving forward
through the budget process.

In consultation with this
Legislature we have made numerous
changes in recent years to make our
program as strong as it can be. They've
resulted in increased spending by our
visitors coming into our County. We're
going to continue doing that. We depend
on input from across the breadth of this
area and even from our, certainly our
Legislative delegation. We need that
input to guide us even further. Thank
you for tonight's time, I'm very
grateful as always for your support for
this industry, for the businesses that
depend on tourism, and certainly for the
Convention Visitors Bureau, thanks a lot.

Saraceni

MR. KNAPP: Thank you, Mr. Holder.

Next is Mayor Joe Saraceni.

MAYOR JOE SARACENI: Hi, thanks for
having me again, my name is Joe
Saraceni, I represent the Village of
Baldwinsville, one of 15 villages in
Onondaga County. I had some remarks
prepared for tonight but I couldn't
condense it down into three minutes so
I'll just speak off the cuff.

I will not be Mayor as of next
March, so I'll take this opportunity
again to thank you. I'll be commenting
on VIP monies and the importance of
villages in Onondaga County. Villages
are an integral part of the
infrastructure of Onondaga County.
Villages are as old as the city of
Syracuse. The village of Baldwinsville
was actually incorporated the same year
as the city of Syracuse, so our
infrastructure is just as old as the
city's. So I can certainly sympathize
with the city's infrastructure issues.

Saraceni

The VIP money that villages receive
is used wisely and efficiently. The
return on investment, and it should be
looked at as an investment, the return
on investment for Onondaga County
infrastructure in villages is typically,
especially when you're focused on
sewers, around two years. The more
efficient you make that system the less
burdensome villages are on the
infrastructure of the County. It's very
important that that be recognized.

I also wanted to stress while I was
here the importance of cooperation
between the County and villages as an
economic, and villages being economic
engines. In 1988 Nick Pirro, Dan O'Hara
as the mayor then; Nick Pirro the County
Executive, the Comptroller for Onondaga
County, how could I forget the Governor
named Cuomo was there. And they talked
about limitless possibilities if we all
just worked together to help improve our
infrastructure.

Saraceni

And now if you look at the ribbon
cutting ceremony today, it was the Paper
Mill Island project and the Lock Wall.
That was the County and a village
working together to try to turn around
brownfields to create economic engines.
And to this day if you go to
Baldwinsville, if anybody has ever been
to a concert in Baldwinsville, on Paper
Mill Island on any given weekend that
door is stacked three boats deep.
Millions of dollars worth of boats
coming into Baldwinsville, people
spending money in the shops in
Baldwinsville. People going to
concerts, enjoying what was once a brown
field. But because of the partnership
that existed between Onondaga County and
that small village, a village of only
7,000 residents, it had a tremendous
impact on that community.

Another program that I wanted to
point out and have worked well in
cooperation between Onondaga County and
Saraceni

1. the village is Facade Infrastructure Program. Since 1990 over $540,000 has
2. been poured into the village of
3. Baldwinsville to help Baldwinsville
4. clean up its act. We had to take a long
5. look in the mirror and say you know
6. what, we're a blighted community. We
7. reached out to Onondaga County. And
8. it's a federally funded program that the
9. County administers. But because of that
10. if you look at Baldwinsville today and
11. compare it with what that village looked
12. like, I grew up in the village, and it's
13. night and day.
14. And you know, in 10 years our
15. property tax values increased 50 percent.
16. That's not just good for Baldwinsville,
17. that's good for Onondaga County. So I
18. wanted to thank you again for giving me
19. the opportunity to speak and reinforce
20. the importance of Onondaga County
21. working with villages, specifically on
22. infrastructure projects. Thank you.
23. MR. KNAPP: Thank you, Mayor. Next

MR. KNAPP: Thank you, Mayor. Next

Olson

1. town at your Comprehensive Plan and
2. focussing on development we have taken a
3. very good hard look at our own
4. infrastructure and we are really
5. considering that as a very important
6. investment for ourselves at this point.
7. And we really appreciate the County
8. giving us the opportunity to continue to
9. work with the town and the County as we
10. focus our development and sprawl from
11. happening down south. Thank you very
12. much.
13. MAYOR MARK OLSON: Good evening. My
14. name is Mark Olson. On behalf of the
15. Mayors Association of Onondaga County, I
16. would like to thank you, all of you
17. sitting in this room tonight for helping
18. villages out. We talk about quality of
19. life in the villages. Every mayor in
20. this room tonight has worked hard about
21. increasing and making better quality of
22. life of our residents. And everybody in
23. Greenwood

Greenwood

1. we have Mayor Beth Greenwood of Tully.
2. MAYOR BETH GREENWOOD: Hello. Thank
3. you for giving me the opportunity to
4. speak. I am Beth Greenwood, I'm the
5. Mayor of the Village of Tully, to the
6. very opposite of the County down south.
7. I just wanted to echo and saying from
8. the side of the villages, we really do
9. appreciate the County's help with the
10. Village Infrastructure Improvement
11. Program.
12. As the proud owner of our very own
13. water and sewer systems, both being the
14. independent little corner of the world
15. that we are down there. We understand
16. the amount of time and energy and funds
17. it takes to maintain the infrastructure
18. and to support the kind of development
19. that the County is looking for,
20. focussing on the smart growth, keeping
21. infrastructure in place, and supporting
22. what's already there and preventing
23. sprawl.
24. As we're currently looking with our
25. Olson

1. this room from the County Legislature
2. does that every day also. So I want to
3. thank you for the collaborative effort.
4. Let's think about what's happening today
5. in the last few days.
6. The federal government shut down,
7. the state government is a mess. And
8. here we are at the County the village
9. and the town working together to find
10. solutions to our problems. And we have
11. problems, everybody in government does.
12. But together if we work and we find
13. solutions we will all succeed. And this
14. VIP Improvement Fund has helped villages
15. improve and will continue to help
16. villages improve. But we need help.
17. We've submitted close to $27 million
18. in extra capital projects that need to
19. be done. But we know it's going to take
20. time. But the partnership between the
21. County and the village and the Mayors
22. Association is what's going to move
23. these things forward. So I just want to
24. thank all of you. Mayor Donovan was the
Olson

president of the Mayors Association for
eight years, he left last week and as my
first official duty I've got to thank
Mayor Donovan for this, one week in and
I get to speak in front of the County
Legislature. So I do want to thank you
all very much for all that you have done
for us.

One thing I also wanted to point out
is that 90 percent of the village
residents live -- or 90 percent of the
County is village residents. So we play
an important role in what happens in the
County. In this structured program that
was done in 2010, while it was a benefit
for the County and for the city and the
villages it had to have some tweaking.

And I take or I'd like to thank
Travis, Matt, Derrick, Kevin, Mayor Plat
and Mayor Donovan for recognizing that
and coming together and meeting and
talking about it. Not just saying we'll
see you in 2020, and that's it. We're
talking about it and working through it.

Stornelli

If we continue to talk and work through
these issues everybody in this room will
benefit. So I want to say thank you
again, I know it's a lot, but we do
appreciate this extra effort that you
had because you didn't have to do it.
But it will be a return for the County.
And thank you very much.

MR. KNAPP: Thank you, Mayor. Next
is Marc Stornelli.

MARC STORNELLI: Good evening
everybody, thank you for your time.
I'll be brief. I've been in Syracuse
all my life, family came here in 1928
I'm a private practice lawyer, and I get
the bulk of my clients from the Assigned
Counsel Program. I represent a
population of people who can't afford to
retain their own counsel. And as such
I'm constantly driving all over the
County to various justice courts.

And the Assigned Counsel Program
right now is so underfunded that I don't
get reimbursed anymore for travel and

Stornelli

mileage. I used to get reimbursed about
eight or nine years ago, ever since then
there hasn't been enough money in the
budget to reimburse for travel and most
types of postage.

I just briefly want to let you know
that as an assigned counsel lawyer there
is a lot of things I do for the people
of this County, especially my clients
that you might not otherwise understand.
Just looking at the normal thinking of a
lawyer's typical duties, besides going
to court and talking to District
Attorney's office and doing a little bit
of research there is a lot of things I
do with substance abuse issues and
people that have mild emotional and
mental health issues. There is a lot of
programs out there that people need
referrals into.

And also a lot of my clients I have
to do things for them that, for lack of
a better word, seem more like babysitting
than the practice of law. But it's

Stornelli

necessary for them because things have
to be repeated to them or they can't
read or write or they forget things and
lose things. And in order to be a
competent lawyer I have to help them in
many different ways that you might not
understand as being part of the typical
lawyers duties. Which is why I'm here
to advocate for much more funding for
your local Assigned Counsel Program.

I just, most, 90 percent of my
client are Assigned Counsel I have a
very small percentage that are retained.
So I mostly help the people, as I said
that can't afford a lawyer. And there
is a lot more that goes into helping the
indigent than you might understand from
a typical lawyer.

So like I said, I'll keep it short
and sweet, and I just ask you to
consider much more funding for the local
Assigned Counsel Program. Thank you.

MR. KNAPP: Thank you, Mr. Stornelli.

That is the last of the speakers who
Chairman

signed in ahead of time. Is there
anyone else who would like to come
forward and say a few words? Being
none, I declare the public comment
period is closed.

Are any of the Legislators, any of
you that would like to come forward and
say a few words? Mr. Chairman, would
you like to say any final words?

CHAIRMAN McMAHON: Thank you,
Chairman Knapp, and thank you to all of
our members who have put a lot and time
to date in this process, and the
executive team and comptroller's team.
We heard a lot today to consider, some
of the issues brought up here are in our
budget, marked in our budget for policy
issues that are to be addressed later
on. But thank you everyone for coming
out tonight and this is an important
part of the process. Thank you.

MR. KNAPP: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Before I close the meeting I would like
to add just a few things. Our County

Chairman

Chief Financial Officer Steve Morgan and
his team I would like to thank them for
the level of communication they have had
with us through this process and putting
everything together very succinctly for
us. Thanks very much, Steve.

Also like to thank Bob Antonacci
from the Comptroller's office for all
his help in analyzing the budget. And
of course the County Law Department for
their thoughtful advice.

And honestly, we couldn't do any of
this without our clerk of the
Legislature, Debbie Maturo and her
staff: Sue Stanczyk, Darce Lesnyak,
Catherine French, Jamie McNamara, Kim
Memory and Patrick Mocete and Bill
Kinne.

These folks, especially have to
single out one would be Sue Stanczyk,
stays nights, weekends. Very, very
condensed period to put together $1.22
billion budget is a herculean effort
too. So I want to thank all the staff