



Onondaga County Legislature

JAMIE McNAMARA
Clerk

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Chairman

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WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE MINUTES – DECEMBER 13, 2023 **BRIAN F. MAY, CHAIR**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr. Ryan, Mr. Burtis, Ms. Abbott, Mr. Knapp, Mr. Kinne, Mrs. Ervin
ALSO ATTENDING: Ms. Cody, Ms. Kuhn, Mr. McCarron; also see attached

Chair May called the meeting to order at 9:41 a.m., and the previous meeting's minutes were approved.

1. **WATER ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION:** Shannon Harty, Commissioner
 - a. **Authorizing the Acquisition of Real Property in the Town of Clay for Sewer Purposes (\$216,000)**
(Sponsored by Ms. Abbott)

Title: A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ACQUISITION OF REAL PROPERTY IN THE TOWN OF CLAY FOR SEWER PURPOSES

Purpose: The Onondaga County Department of Water Environment Protection (WEP) is undertaking a project to bring new sanitary sewer service to the Route 31 Corridor in the Town of Clay. This project will provide a public benefit to an area of the Town of Clay that sanitary sewer infrastructure does not exist. This project will consist of a 5 MGD pumping station, approximately 20000 linear feet of force main, and segments of gravity sanitary sewers. Force mains will discharge to the existing Oak Orchard Wastewater Treatment Plant for treatment prior to being discharged to the Oneida River. Legislative approval was granted in summer of 2020 for engineering services related to this project, with initial authorization of construction funds (\$16M) occurring in February 2022. Purchase of land is necessary to facilitate installation of required infrastructure. This will allow the County to establish a utility corridor that provides the most fiscal sense for this Project. The land purchase will also satisfy requirements for significant contractor staging area(s) that are necessary for a project of this magnitude.

Summary: Onondaga County Department of Water Environment Protection is requesting to acquire a vacant parcel of land for Consolidated Sanitary District purposes and needs at an amount not to exceed \$216,000.

Fiscal Impact: Purchase is funded from prior authorizations and will have no fiscal impact on the 2023 Budget.

- Authorizing WEP to acquire 8.45 acre piece of land on Van Hoesen Road
- Part of pump station to serve sewer expansion in Oak Orchard service area
- Already authorized \$1.6M engineering and \$16M construction - money will fund purchase of land
- Building new pump station located on land currently owned by OCIDA at intersection of Caughdenoy and 31
- Need to build 3.6 miles of force main between pump station and Oak Orchard
- Working with design engineers and established route for force main
- 80% of force main in public right-of-ways along Caughdenoy, Van Hoesen and Verplank, easements county owns
- Short stint between Caughdenoy and Van Hoesen - 8.45 acre parcel is piece of stint
- Had appraisal done in August; value based on that appraisal and owner accepted; no negotiation or challenge of value
- \$216,000 purchase will provide permanent easement for force main route and staging area during construction
- Will build pump station in the intersection of Caughdenoy & 31; currently no sewers in that area
- Pump station and force main will be first step to provide sewers to existing properties and future development

A motion was made by Mr. Burtis, seconded by Ms. Abbott, to approve this item. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.

2. PERSONNEL: Donna Briscoe, Director of Employee Relations**a. Personnel Resolution** (*Sponsored by Ms. Gunnip*)

A motion was made by Mr. Kinne, seconded by Mr. Knapp, to approve this item. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.

b. Accepting and Approving the Contract Between Onondaga County and the International Union of Operating Engineers, Local 158, AFL-CIO

- 4 year term, 2023 – 2026; 3% wage increase each year
- First 3 years have off schedule onetime payments: 2023 - \$3,000; 2024 - \$2,500; 2025 - \$1,000
- Changes to holiday language giving onetime exception similar to CSEA
- Small increases to shift differential, weekend differential and meal allowance
- Added language about training fund and International Union, who has program and encourages people to use training facility; county opted in
- Added drug and alcohol policy implemented in other bargaining units

A motion was made by Mr. Kinne, seconded by Mrs. Ervin, to approve this item. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.

3. FINANCE:

- a. Southwood-Jamesville Water District Tax – General Apportionment**
- b. Southwood-Jamesville Water District Tax Town of Dewitt Apportionment**
- c. Southwood-Jamesville Water District Tax Town of Onondaga Apportionment**
- d. Warners Water District Tax – General Apportionment**
- e. Warners Water District Tax, Town of Camillus Apportionment**
- f. Warners Water District Tax, Town of Van Buren Apportionment**
- g. 2023 Town Tax Rates, Fixed, Ratified and Confirmed**
- i. Authorize the County Comptroller to Transfer 2023 Unencumbered Appropriations and Appropriate Revenue After Expiration of the 2023 Fiscal Year Upon Approval of the County Executive and the Chair of the Ways and Means Committee**
- j. Authorizing the County Comptroller, Upon Approval of the Finance Department, Division of Management and Budget and the County Executive's Office, to Transfer 2023 Unencumbered Appropriation Account Balances in Excess of \$7,500 Into, Between, and Among All Interdepartmental Chargeback Appropriation Accounts and Adjust the Corresponding Interdepartmental Revenue Accounts**

A motion was made by Mr. Knapp, seconded by Mr. Ryan, to approve items 3a – 3j. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.

4. PLANNING DEPARTMENT: Daniel Kwasnowski, Director; Martin Skahen, Director of Community Development; Robert Petrovich, Director of Economic Development**a. Amending the 2023 County Budget to Provide for the Appropriation of General Fund Balance in Furtherance of Onondaga County Comprehensive Plan Implementation (\$30,000,000)**

Mr. Kwasnowski presented the following information:

Comprehensive Plan Implementation Package

\$30 million dollars from Fund Balance to be allocated toward projects and programs to support implementation of Plan Onondaga.

Allocation by theme:

Strong Centers – \$8,000,000

In addition to existing planning programs in local communities, these funds will drive local investment in villages, hamlets, town centers and Syracuse.

Community Development

\$5M Main Street Program – The county will continue to invest in our highly successful main street program initiative. This comprehensive grant program provides funding for local revitalization efforts to grow retail business districts. Revitalization examples include improving business facades, acquiring a property that is an eyesore, demolition of a property that is an eyesore, performing streetscape improvements and more.

- Create sense of place in centers, village centers, hamlets, cities neighborhoods; places where they can increase quality of life for those living there; improve maintenance, appearance and sense of place, which spurs business investments

Economic Development

\$3M Small Business Micro Loans – Targeted loans with below-market interest rates and favorable terms to local businesses in mixed use centers to provide gap financing for small business expansion, start-up, property acquisition, renovation, furniture, fixtures equipment and related expenses.

- Small business microloan – can be stressful with small business, so having source of funding that is easy to get without a lot of requirements is important
- Two programs together will complement each other

Housing and Neighborhoods - \$12,000,000

To further the creation of a variety of housing in centers and build upon the Onondaga County Housing Incentive Program and implementation of the Onondaga County Housing Study being conducted now.

Community Development

\$5M toward addressing critical infrastructure issues that present a unique barrier to infill development in mixed-use centers.

\$5M toward the creation of expanded forms of Senior Housing including cottage homes, condominium and other senior living communities.

\$2M expansion of the O-CHIP program targeting the creation of mixed-use, mixed income and affordable housing.

- When redeveloping, there is always something that has to be done that can be beyond cost of improving building
- Projects in villages and city will have unanticipated costs, and there is not always HUD funding to support it
- Would like to see new types of senior living like condos, affordable housing
- Developers need to have incentives and reason to go after that type of housing
- Mixed use and projects in villages and hamlets are infill projects (not expanding footprint), increasing tax value and helping community bottom lines

Greenways and Blueways - \$5,000,000

Department of Planning

\$5M toward implementation of planning objectives relative to development and improvement of greenway and blueway programming and facilities. These projects may be county projects, but will also include potential funding to municipalities, and possibly even private interests to further greenway and blueway development. Where possible, these funds will be matched with other funding sources.

- Most popular theme that touches where people live, as well as the character of landscape and communities
- Want to connect communities with greenways and blueways
- Working to bring greenways into proximity of neighborhoods, so everyone has access
- Improving natural environment and establishing sense of identity
- May have to do capital improvement projects and/or acquire land
- Putting together committee that will go through Planning Department and have a Legislator on it

- Also working with Parks Commissioner, Brian Kelley
- Would like to get list of projects; not currently in plan to bog it down

Agriculture - \$5,000,000

Department of Planning

\$5M toward implementation of planning objectives found in Plan Onondaga and the Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan centering on agritourism, farmland protection, and Regional Market improvements.

- Agritourism – big focus and been successful in county
- Ag Plan shows successful, but can do more
- Reach out to people and work with local communities to manage system
- Economic Development and ag land protection (over 13,000 acres protected)
 - Where does that food go, how does the county market and process it?
 - Huge opportunity for ag and food processing in community
 - Talked about food hub and co-packing/test kitchen for people to have facility to create new recipes and products

Community Mobility – No transfer from Fund Balance is necessary for this theme at this time.

Questions/comments from the committee:

- How does Planning feel about doing more infill in the city and suburbs where the structure already exists?
 - Planning:
 - Agree; need to build momentum and critical mass where the county already has it
 - Serves people well and is good policy along a range of issues like transportation
 - Better to build in than spread out
 - In countywide plan, created agricultural area/theme in land use map
 - Traditionally in Planning, agricultural zones are just that until someone builds on it
 - In this plan, agriculture is the business, economy and way of life; need it to stay and maintain
 - This does not mean they cannot do anything there, but means that if it stays agricultural and farming, then the county is achieving its goal as far as land use
 - Instead of looking at inside out, looking at outside in
 - Municipalities and everyone are all in
 - Establishing that as primary land use for that area, then have urbanized areas, villages and hamlets, which is the primary focus for promoting development
 - It is not exclusion of anything else, but the plan is working towards that land use vision
- Is the county giving Micron a loan?
 - Planning:
 - No, these are microloans, which is a small loan
- What is the interest charge and repayment plan (for the microloans)?
 - Economic Development:
 - Not a Micron loan, but a microloan
 - Creating program like what the city has with SEDCO
 - Will provide basic loan support for small businesses
 - Do not have anything for small businesses to help them outside of city
 - Microloan would potentially be \$5,000 or \$25,000 loan (i.e. dependent on employment), or after doing (i.e.) facility improvements or façade improvements, could be up to \$100,000 loan
 - Payment terms vary: smaller loan has 2 year payback period
 - Interest rates will be set by board, and would be discounted rate consistent with index off prime rate – more attractive as people are coming to county for this type of help
- Is main street a continuance of what is already being done?
 - Planning:
 - Yes

- What is the criteria in which one is awarded (a main street grant), and how are they awarded the funding?
 - Community Development:
 - Send out applications to every municipality and set deadline for applying
 - Supervisor or Mayor then works with property owners in their downtown districts to get projects from them
 - County asks for 25% match
 - Municipality puts together package and submits to CD for review
 - Projects are judged on various factors including (i.e.) contribution level and impact (based on density)
 - (i.e.) Town of Geddes did package for State Fair Blvd

REQUEST: Please share the gauge or definition of density/impact, and how Community Development grades these.

- Planning:
 - In Plan Onondaga there is a vibrancy map, which shows areas with more or less vibrancy
 - Vibrancy is a measure of variety of factors
 - Looks at density of businesses and services, proximity to each other, walkability
 - Downtown Syracuse is red and very dense, same as village of Skaneateles
 - Can see what areas need more work, or are underserved
 - In 5 or 10 years, idea to go back and redo analysis to see if it's different, and what the changes are
- What is the repayment timeline for the microloans?
 - Economic Development:
 - Program will have 3 types of loans available
 - Microloan would be \$5,000 and 2 year repayment period
 - Small business assistance fund would be up to \$25K with 5 year payback
 - Community impact fund for infrastructure improvements and façades are up to 15 year payback
- Will it be a 5-member board overseeing who gets the loans?
 - Economic Development:
 - The day to day will be staffed in ED
 - There is a screening process and Loan Review Committee, who will make recommendations to board
 - Board will then take action on whether to approve the recommendation for the loan
 - 5 person board appointed by County Executive: County Legislator, Risk Management Officer, Director of Economic Development, and 2 community members (to be named)
 - Plan to have a Legislator on the board
- Are the microloans eligible for any small business or only outside the city?
 - Economic Development:
 - City operates its own program under SEDCO, and no one in county can participate in that program
 - This program is for everyone else in the county outside city
- Main street had funds for city previously, will there be funds available for part of the city?
 - Community Development:
 - Yes; not sure what area, but will consider city, talk with them and send them an application
- Recommending the north side of the city
- This is a function of the municipality and what they want to do, correct?
 - Community Development:
 - Correct
- This \$30M only has a small part for housing, and the concern is what the county is doing about the affordable housing crisis; do not see this in here
 - Planning:
 - This is on top of the first \$10M of O-CHIP with a total of \$22M, which is a start
 - Working on building programs and figuring out what works for developers, communities, legislators, etc.
 - City on phase 2 of housing study and looking at implementation measures

- City housing study helping to inform County housing study with what things the county can do
 - Think phase 1 of the county housing study will be done in April; will know what the lay of land is for housing
 - Community Development:
 - Consultants love this, they have not seen this anywhere else in the country and will be telling people about it
 - Planning:
 - Too much at once is too much; doing this in steps and this is a big step; county is in a good place
 - Planning in communities will set stage for infill development, main street and town center developments to keep compact metropolitan community and lay groundwork for housing to come up
- Where will the senior housing be? Is it countywide?
 - Community Development:
 - Program runs by developers coming to county; put out the program, but do not necessarily know where people will come from until they submit their application
 - Like O-CHIP program, where the county puts it out to developers that it is available
 - When developer's projects are at a point to move forward and need funding, they send an application
 - Applications are reviewed with the committee
 - Planning:
 - Know some latent projects that could not happen due to funding issues
 - Know of some projects coming up, like in Inner Harbor that are senior oriented
 - They are out there, and people are trying to plan it; once announced, will get response
 - Hard part is how to get new housing projects, and where will they be
 - Will work with communities to identify where they need to be
 - Community Development:
 - Regular O-CHIP program, almost 30% of funding allocated was affordable housing
- Is there a percentage the county has to have for affordable housing?
 - Community Development:
 - No, so far 30% of what was awarded were those types of projects
 - There is no stipulation saying a percentage has to be affordable
 - Need more of everything to have more stock, which is a win
- Is this contingent on a developer doing the work? Is the county recruiting?
 - Planning:
 - Not yet, but it is a possibility if the county sees sites
 - There is a great deal of underutilized property in the county that is more difficult to develop
 - Next step is how to prep sites
- What are the specifics on how things are awarded, where will they be, and how much will be affordable?
- Legislators on CNY Regional Planning Board – there is a leap of faith and it is overwhelming, but county is ahead of curve and putting money towards this; NYS is studying housing issue here, as well as the city
- Do not have exact specifics yet, but starting
- Please explain the parameters of the main street program, as the village of Skaneateles does not qualify
 - Community Development:
 - Skaneateles put in an application for a library project
 - Program designed to help businesses that need a facelift
- It would have been good to have this \$30M request on the Legislator's desks last month; would appreciate more time to vet
- If there was a project that did not get funded, it would be up to Community Development, because it was not in the parameters (impact)?
 - Community Development:
 - It did not fit the intent of the program
 - Community Block grant could not be used for the library project either

- Is there a money qualifier? (i.e. did a lot in village of Baldwinsville)
 - Community Development:
 - Baldwinsville is one of the best communities for putting in applications and hitting the intent of the program
 - When CD sends out application, they also send cover letter that explains program, and what they are trying to accomplish; every round they revise the letter; can give the letter to the legislature for criteria
- Is the servicing of the loans done in Economic Development? Is there a history of doing this?
 - Economic Development:
 - Yes; during COVID, county provided funding for businesses in trouble, particularly in bar and restaurant industry; payback terms associated with those and are being managed through Economic Development
 - Intent for this is to be a revolving fund, and \$3M is a good start
 - Intention to get loans repaid; may be some unique instances for small loan forgiveness, but larger loans will not be forgiven and will need to be paid back
 - Economic Development will continue to service and manage the process
- What are the expectations of the loan, and the idea that this could be a large payout and the program could stop
- Revolving nature of this is logical, and that is the intent; this is the institution of a program, not a one-shot
- For the microloan program, it was said that the city would not be able to access microloans, which is confusing; the city is part of the county; if someone is in the city, why would they not be eligible for a microloan?
 - Economic Development:
 - Trying to be consistent; businesses in city have vehicle available to them
 - These same businesses in villages and hamlets do not have any access to this
 - Economic Development does not have anything to help them, because projects are too small; send them to SBA
 - Intention to create vehicle outside of city and in county to access this
 - There is an existing city program for city businesses
- If a city business cannot get the city loan, it would be nice to have a backup, as they are still a member of the county
- Do not like the city versus county argument; this is meant to supplement
- There is a good vehicle in the city; county trying to do this for those outside the city that do not have a vehicle
- SEDCO is where city can go to; if they do not get money from there, there is a reason they did not get approve; it is an assumption that by switching entities, the business would get an approval
- There is also taxing authority in each jurisdiction; city residents pay city taxes and receive city services; county standpoint is the same
- Concerning the \$5M for infrastructure, if a developer wanted to (i.e.) take a vacant building, and it is specific for infrastructure, would the developer buy the building (county not helping)?
 - Community Development:
 - Correct; targeted towards infill infrastructure projects
 - (i.e.) Camillus Cutlery on site for infrastructure for factory, but residential infrastructure is different; had to do infrastructure work
 - (i.e.) Project in Salina with 4 apartment buildings that will be on a kickball field; developer has to put infrastructure in that will then be turned over to town; would have to do to make it a residential site
 - Infill projects only, not to run sewer lines to some field where they want to build homes
 - Designed for residential not commercial, but can be used for mixed use
- What is the legal process to form an LDC, and what is the corporate structure of the LDC?
 - Law:
 - Familiar with it and have formed in past; administrative and set forth by Not-for-Profit Corporation Law
 - Basically not-for-profit corporation structure with bylaws and board, and a filing with state for approval
 - Fairly administrative filing once meeting statutory requisites
- At any point in the process, is there legislative action required?
 - Law:
 - Do not believe any further legislative action will be required beyond funding; Law Department handles this

- Why is the county funding it in a project account first, then transferring to the LDC?
- When doing that, will there be legislative action associated with that process?
- Is it being transferred to the project account to get it out of fund balance and get the money committed?
 - Finance:
 - That is part of the reason
 - The money needs to be appropriated before doing anything and to fund the LDC, which is not yet formed
 - Goal to get funds approved, locked into a project, then go forward with the process to create LDC, as well as the terms between county and LDC to determine how the funds will flow, depending on the program developed
- Will there be guardrails to prevent the LDC from issuing debt with (i.e.) county assets?
 - Finance:
 - Going to be on record saying the county is not issuing debt
 - LDC, as corporation, will be required to have annual financial statement audit
 - There will be transparency across the board
 - No intent to issue debt out of the LDC; no assets or revenue to pay it
- In 2008, Monroe County formed an LDC to put assets and transferred assets to LDC to issue debt against the assets
 - Finance:
 - Would not be able to do that without legislative approval
 - What legislators would vote on would be to approve the administration of microloans
- How many LDCs does the county operate currently?
 - Economic Development:
 - Out of this office, there are 2 – Civic Development Corporation and Trust for Cultural Resources
 - Finance:
 - OTASC (Onondaga Tobacco Asset Securitization Corporation)
 - Greater Syracuse Sound Stage
 - Onondaga Convention Center Hotel Development Corporation, which was to accept grant money from state to support renovation for Hotel Syracuse
- Are those LDCs audited financial statements part of the county's, or do they stand alone?
 - Finance:
 - Depends on whether they are pulled in as a full component unit or not
 - That is beyond what Finance can explain
 - If they meet requirements, they are required to be part of a component unit or blended component unit, and included in county financial statements

Chair May stated there would not be a vote taken.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:48 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



JAMIE McNAMARA, Clerk
Onondaga County Legislature

ATTENDANCE

COMMITTEE: WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE

DATE: DECEMBER 13, 2023

NAME (Please Print)	DEPARTMENT/AGENCY
Don Weber	Prop Tax
Donna Bruscia	Personnel
Ann Marie Donohue	Personnel
Anna Bejian	Personnel
Patricia Gonzalez	Comptroller
Donna Layhlin	Comptrollers
Tim Tschynowski	Comp
M. Murphy	Sheriffs
M. BERLINSKI	SHERIFFS
J. Passaro	OSD
J. Young	OSD
J. Kelly	OSD
Jan Komeo	Personnel
Jan Karasnowski	OCDA
Michelle Mignao	OCID
Kristi Sudi	Fin Aff
SHANNON HARTY	OCDA
Mardy Skahn	CI
KEVIN J. MEAKER	CL
Darci Lemiah	Leg
Jim Beebe	Leg
John DeSantis	Leg
Tim Fratascio	Leg