



Onondaga County Legislature

JAMIE McNAMARA
Clerk

JAMES J. ROWLEY
Chairman

TAMMY BARBER
Deputy Clerk

401 Montgomery Street • Court House • Room 407 • Syracuse, New York 13202
Phone: 315.435.2070 • Fax: 315.435.8434 • www.ongov.net/legislature

WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE MINUTES – FEBRUARY 28, 2023 BRIAN F. MAY, CHAIR

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr. Burtis, Ms. Abbott, Mr. Knapp, *Mrs. Ervin, **Mr. Kinne

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mr. Ryan

ALSO ATTENDING: Chairman Rowley, Ms. Gunnip, Ms. Cody, Ms. Kuhn; also see attached

Chair May called the meeting to order at 11:39 a.m. *The minutes of the previous meeting had been distributed, and there were no objections to waiving the reading. There were no corrections to the minutes, and the minutes were approved.*

CONSENT AGENDA

1. SYRACUSE/ONONDAGA COUNTY PLANNING AGENCY:

- a. Amending the 2023 County Budget to Accept Grant Funds from Syracuse Onondaga Food Systems Alliance/Syracuse Grows to Support the Onondaga County Agriculture Council’s “Buy Local – Onondaga Grown” Marketing Campaign (\$149,800) (*Sponsored by Mr. Burtis*)
- b. Amending the 2023 County Budget to Accept Grant Funds from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, through the New York State Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Services, for Updates to the Onondaga County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan (\$190,000) (*Sponsored by Mr. Burtis*)

A motion was made by Mr. Knapp to approve the consent agenda.

Comment from the committee:

- Thanks to Mr. Kwasnowski and his team for their efforts to secure the Ag Council grant funds, specifically Ms. Coon and Mr. Jordan

Seconded by Ms. Abbott. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.

REGULAR AGENDA

Chair May presented items 1a, 4a and 6a on the agenda.

1. HOME RULE REQUEST:

- a. Memorializing the New York State Legislature to Enact Senate Bill No. S3512 and Assembly Bill No. A3900, and Concurring in the Preparation of a Home Rule Request (*Sponsored by Ms. Abbott*)

- Resolution passed last year, but with district lines changing, the responsibility was shifted
- Same as before, but with new Senate and Assembly bill numbers

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

2. HEALTH DEPARTMENT: Ann Rooney, Deputy County Executive Human Services
a. 2022 Transfer Resolution (\$832,700) (*Sponsored by Ms. Gunnip*)

- Tick Surveillance - \$50,000
 - Sustain operations and partnership with Upstate
 - If someone in community finds a tick, they can send it to Upstate to be tested for tick-borne illnesses
 - Doing in partnership with Lyme and Tick Alliance
- Medical Examiner
 - Currently going through accreditation process, so all items listed will help in this effort
 - Radiography Equipment – x-ray machine used in MEO
 - Current equipment surpassed life expectancy
 - Been working with vendor to keep current operational
 - Will replace with state of the art equipment
 - Floor replacement in special autopsy room
 - Infrastructure replacement for autopsy room
 - Suffered wear and tear since the building was built
 - Digital fingerprint equipment
 - Versus using paper and ink; capture prints digitally
 - Forensic File Server
 - For digital evidence - looking at (i.e.) cell phones and capturing information
 - Will allow to be state of the art

Questions/Comments from the committee:

- How much money did the county receive for MMIS? (source of the transfer account)
 - Finance:
 - Most transfers administration is proposing are being funded from surplus in Medicaid account (MMIS)
 - It is the local share counties are responsible to pay state for Medicaid program
 - ~\$10M surplus in 2022 related to the account
 - Federal government enhanced reimbursement for Medicaid program during pandemic to help states and local governments (in states where local governments participate and pay for part of the program)
 - When 2022 budget was prepared, it was anticipated that the health emergency (tied to enhanced reimbursement) would end 1st quarter, but it was extended throughout 2022 - enhanced aid continued all year
 - Health emergency projected to end in May 2023
 - Will discuss potential Medicaid issues at the end of the agenda based on the state proposal
 - This money will not be called back; it is a direct benefit from federal government through the state

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

3. SOCIAL SERVICES – ECONOMIC SECURITY: Ann Rooney, Deputy County Executive Human Services
a. 2022 Transfer Resolution (\$607,982) (*Sponsored by Ms. Gunnip*)

- Expansion of call center
 - Vital for DSS during COVID; allowed workers to work seamlessly throughout pandemic
 - Will expand to all business lines in DSS
 - Helps with customer service including capability for call backs instead of holding; through Amazon web services
- Computers
 - DSS is an arm of the state; NYS supports information and technology
 - NYS will not support computers over 5 years old
 - Many computers in DSS rapidly approaching that age, so balance of funds will be used to replace those computers

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

4. EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT:**a. 2022 Transfer Resolution (\$247,500) (Sponsored by Mr. Olson)**

- Turnout gear when onsite for events; equipment expired and needs to be replaced

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

5. SYRACUSE/ONONDAGA COUNTY PLANNING AGENCY: Dan Kwasnowski, Director**a. 2022 Transfer Resolution (\$1,000,000) (Sponsored by Mr. Burtis)**

- Support planning activities on county, town and village levels
- Fayetteville and Manlius doing their plans; SOCPA is assisting
- Half of the funding (or more) will go to towns and villages to support planning efforts for comprehensive plans
 - Next CFA (*Consolidated Funding Application*) round, SOCPA can look for any grants to match this
- Other half of funds will be focused in northern county around semiconductor manufacturing facility
 - Work with towns, make sure planning is in place
 - Ensure infrastructure goes in right place and housing is there for workers
 - Ensure the creation of high quality communities

Questions/Comments from the committee:

- What types of assistance does SOCPA anticipate giving to towns and villages?
 - Comprehensive plans requests
 - (i.e.) town of Cicero updated their comprehensive plan along with zoning; preferred way to do it
 - Issued RFP for short listing firms, focusing on national firms that have deeper resources and can move quickly to do subarea plans (might be multilevel corridor for Rt. 31 or creating town center in town of Clay)
 - County Executive wants to focus on Brewerton – has momentum with development and code
 - Bring in national chain to do deeper touch on planning and work with community to answer questions like:
 - How much development can they take on?
 - What does it look like?
 - How can they get there?
- Will the dollars stay internal to fund costs to provide support? Or are the dollars going to the towns and villages?
 - It will go to towns and villages for a contract they have with a consultant
 - Through the contract, SOCPA will help with RFP process for towns
 - Will put together program similar to town planning grant program
- Is SOCPA involved with the planning happening in Inner Harbor? Does any of this money go towards that?
 - Do not see this money going towards that
 - \$190,000 NYS grant to do lakefront waterfront revitalization plan; focused on public ground
 - Larger landowners ready to build mixed use housing; especially around aquarium area
 - Mayor wanted to apply for funding right away, state wanted county to apply for funding before done
 - Received \$300,000 in design funds
 - Really reliable source of funding for projects
 - Good zoning code developed 20 years ago, established good foundation for developers
 - Developers and landowners ready to go; city in good shape with rezoning and being ready to build
 - Draft plan should be out in April or May

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

Request: Documentation of what has been spent or invested in the process for Micron, and what the county intends to do; including things like this \$1M which are diluted Micron support, but are relevant.

*Mrs. Ervin arrived at the meeting.

- Planning:
 - Hoping Plan Onondaga (countywide plan) will be available in April
 - Plan shows the direction the county needs to go in to make this successful
 - Need to know where to focus efforts, because towns and villages do not have the same resources

6. BOARD OF ELECTIONS:

a. 2022 Transfer Resolution (\$303,234)

- Primary and general election had multiple expenses; general election included overtime with hand counting and reconciliation

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

7. SHERIFF'S OFFICE: Chief Melissa Berlinski

a. 2022 Transfer Resolution (\$2,808,351) (Sponsored by Mr. Olson)

- 87% of this is overtime; know why there is overtime
- 13% is settling of contracts and impact on wages – contracts included retro checks with the settlements
- Increase in hourly wage for Special Patrol Officers (SPO)
- Maintenance/Utilities/Rents surplus due to value of credit for solar electricity produced at correctional facility
- SPROs in schools – get reimbursed; SPOs in civic center and county facilities

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

8. FINANCE: Steve Morgan, Chief Fiscal Officer

a. Approving and Directing the Correction of Certain Errors on Tax Bills

A motion was made by Mr. Knapp, seconded by Mrs. Ervin, to approve this item. Ayes: 6 Absent: 1 (Kinne); MOTION CARRIED.

- Items b – i are a mix of account cleanups, as well as using 2022 surplus to fund capital items and onetime expenses in cash; also a contingency transfer to not lose the funds in 2023
- Similar to last year, knew 2022 was ending in the black; worked with departments to identify (i.e.) a piece of equipment or an initiative that the department was in need of
- Departments came forward with proposals through Executive Office and Finance Department to be vetted
- Working with Comptroller's to put finishing touches on financials; actions taken today and next week will finish that
- Ending the year with a strong surplus

b. 2022 Transfer Resolution (\$172,230) (Law Dept.)

- Shore up Professional Services account
- Law is down attorneys; continue to tap into external counsel for (i.e.) labor issues or environmental issues
- Transferring funds from their salary line

Request: Provide a breakdown of who was paid and for what reasons.

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

c. 2022 Transfer Resolution (\$529,065) (Facilities Mgmt.) *(Sponsored by Ms. Cody)*

- ~\$400,000 for Maintenance/Utilities/Rents account; missed mark last year
- Remaining for All Other Expenses account due to increased postage and custodial contracts for cleaning facilities
- Use surplus as identified within department and balancer is Medicaid account

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

d. 2022 Transfer Resolution (\$197,818) (Parks & Rec) *(Sponsored by Ms. Cody)*

- Project will replace existing dock system at Oneida Shores; compliments new boat launch
- Docks are pulled out in October
- In regard to MMIS funds, NYS budget proposing to intercept enhanced federal Medicaid related to Affordable Care Act (ACA) – when ACA passed, part of the plan to cover more uninsured was expanding Medicaid program
- Some states were not doing it; NYS already expanded program
- Expansion of program was federal government saying they would enhance reimbursement for states to pick up the additional expanded population
- Instead of 50%, feds would pay up to 90% of new population they requested states pick up in Medicaid for uninsured
- Play by Senator Schumer to ensure NY got a share of the enhanced money
- Since counties in NYS participate in cost of Medicaid program, it was required that some of that money flow to counties, which it has since ACA in place; reduced annual Medicaid cap payment
- Statewide it is close to a billion dollars including NYC
- State budget is not austerity budget; they are not cutting things, but expanding spending on the backs of the counties
- What happens 1 or 2 years down the road when the state financial picture is not as rosy as it is currently?
- The concern is that the state will come after Medicaid cap
- There will still be a significant amount of the MMIS for 2022 that will go back to fund balance
- Proposed amount for the transfers is well within fiscal responsibility for overall picture

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

e. 2022 Transfer Resolution (\$2,000,000) (Parks & Rec) *(Sponsored by Ms. Cody)*

- Transfer out of contingency to a project
- 2022 budget – Legislature agreed to put \$2M into contingency initially meant to support and shore up Carrier Park in DeWitt with discussion of new sports complex at Hopkins
- Avoiding dollars going to bottom line and securing them for future conversation with Legislature on how to invest it
- Another \$1M in 2023 budget in contingency

Questions/Comments from committee:

- Does putting the money into a project account still give this body prerogative on what happens from here?
 - It will be invested in line with what transpires
 - If the sports complex does not go forward, the money may go to enhance the existing facility
 - Believe the Legislature will be part of the discussion
 - Money can be spent from the project account
- What happens with Carrier Park?
 - Dollars originally proposed to enhance Carrier Park based on softball and baseball being displaced from Hopkins
 - Do not know if that project will move forward; put on backburner
 - \$25M (originally for the sports complex) was used for Micron
 - If project will live on, discussion will start here and new funding would need to be approved to move forward
 - This is securing the dollars for a future conversation; do not know what the plan is now
 - Do not want the money falling to the bottom line; would like it available for future conversations

- Originally the money was for Carrier Park regardless of the sports complex
 - Not the understanding – it was tied to the sports complex
 - This is the first step to ensure the money is there, regardless of what it is used for
 - Money originally proposed to invest in baseball and softball world
 - Ultimately that is what it would have to be used for in one fashion or another; not decision prepared to make yet
 - This is an accounting initiative to preserve funding
- If the money was promised to Carrier Park regardless of the sports complex, it should go to Carrier Park
 - Not sure who it was promised by
- Goal of this is to stop money originally appropriated from falling on the floor
- What control does this body have on where the county goes from here?
- Support moving it out, but want to be part of the conversation of the \$2M going forward (as the Legislature was previously)
 - Legislature will be part of the conversation as there is another \$1M set aside for same purpose in this year's budget in contingency
- Is the concern that the administration will spend the \$2M on what they want?
- Want to make sure the Legislature has a seat at the table and is part of the discussion
- Would like to discuss this resolution with Mr. Morgan before it is voted on

Chair May stated there would not be a vote on the resolution.

f. 2022 Transfer Resolution (\$500,000) (Onetime Capital – Facilities Mgmt.) *(Sponsored by Ms. Cody)*

- Items f and g are funding for projects that were vetted in Capital Plan; 3 bond resolutions pulled from February session
- Bringing back to be funded with surplus
- This is for OnCenter improvements for Facilities Management

**Mr. Kinne left the meeting.

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

g. 2022 Transfer Resolution (\$570,000) (Onetime Capital - Parks & Rec) *(Sponsored by Ms. Cody)*

- Bond resolutions proposing to fund with cash
- \$240,000 for Oneida Shores pay gate for boat launch and a weigh station for tournaments
- \$330,000 for Oneida Shores sewer system in RV campground

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

h. Amending the 2022 County Budget to Make Funds Available for Use by the Onondaga County Public Library in its Project Account (\$71,200) (Onetime Expense – OCPL) *(Sponsored by Ms. Cody)*

- \$50,000 – Beauchamp branch lighting improvements
- \$21,200 – New cooling unit for Central Library data center
 - Have 2 but one on the fritz; data centers run hot and need to be cooled; this will keep equipment safe

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

i. Amending the 2022 County Budget to Make Funds Available for Use by the Department of Transportation in its Project Account (\$473,000) (Onetime Expense – DOT)

(Sponsored by Ms. Cody)

- Requesting a Gradall – very expensive piece of equipment
- In need of replacing one; used in prep for in-house highway and bridge projects

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

9. COUNTY LEGISLATURE: Chairman James Rowley

a. Amending the Rules of the Onondaga County Legislature *(Sponsored by Mr. Rowley)*

- Codifying in the rules the longstanding tradition of appointments
- Appointments usually come from County Executive or prerogative of the Chairman of Legislature; if not the leaders
- Nothing new, but codification of what doing for years at the Legislature

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

b. Establishing the Policy of this Legislature Regarding the Issuance of Bonds for Certain Capital Projects where Fund Balance Exceeds Twenty Percent *(Sponsored by Mr. Ryan)*

Chair May stated this item will be pushed to March Ways and Means Committee.

10. NYS PROPOSAL ON ENHANCED FEDERAL MEDICAID ASSISTANCE:

a. INFORMATIONAL: Fiscal Impact on Onondaga County

- Potential paying point mid-cycle with state proposal of sweeping enhanced federal reimbursement related to ACA that has been flowing to counties since ACA put in place; NYS proposing to keep all the money
- Estimate of those dollars is ~\$14M from Onondaga County; partially into year would be ~\$10.5M
- State has only allowed 80% of enhanced money to flow to counties, so direct impact may be slightly less
- Heard that the state's justification is that since the hard cap for Medicaid was put in place, the state has been absorbing all of the increases in program costs for Medicaid; NYS shouldering burden of non-federal share of increased costs
- County pushed back on narrative – NYS is 1 of the only states requiring counties to pay a share of the Medicaid program
- Onondaga County's statutory cap payment is \$105M per year; not far off from what county levies in taxes completely
- Huge burden on county financial situation
- This is happening in a year where state is flush with money - Why put pressure on local governments with no impetus to do this? What does this mean for the future?
- Medicaid program on statewide basis is not sustainable; estimated at \$21 - \$22 billion next year
- Unless there is serious action taken at state level to rein in program, they will not be able to sustain
- NYSAC throwing their full weight behind advocating for this to be removed from the budget; not sure how successful that will be; big or possibly biggest revenue generator for state budget cycle
- Reason why enhanced aid exists in first place was the federal government using Medicaid as a way to expand health coverage to a certain population
- Feds offered states an enhanced reimbursement for the new population if they took on the expansion; NYS already did
- In NYS, since counties pay for a share, the money has to be shared with the counties
- There are still questions on legality of this (NYS proposal to keep the enhanced funding)
- Does federal legislation preclude the state from doing this?
- Could be midyear issues if it passes; would put a strain on the budget
- First forecast of county budget will be towards end of April; by then, NYS budget should be passed and will know if this is included; if it is, then it can be included in first projection; see what it means for bottom line overall

Questions/Comments from the committee:

- Is there a ballpark dollar figure?
 - Annual 100% value is \$14M; state only forwarded 80% of value to counties
 - State did not want to be in position to take money back if they overextended themselves
 - ACA in play in 2015 or 2016; all years where county received share of enhanced revenue, it was only 80%
 - Been waiting for state to reconcile and pay the rest; that is in the \$20M range for Onondaga County
 - Not only talking about not going back to years when NYS owed county more money, but also the county is not getting anything going forward
 - Experiencing 80% of \$14M, which is roughly the annual amount the county would be looking at

- Thought County Executive worked with Senator Schumer to put wording in legislation
 - Yes, the Senator was great about it, because he recognized counties pay part of the bill
 - Same thing with pandemic enhanced federal aid; requirement for it to be shared with counties
 - No doubt there are questions to federal government regarding this action, but not sure where that conversation is
 - Will see over next month with legal or lobbying issues to remove it from the budget

- Two weeks before COVID shutdown, Commissioner Merrick came in to Health Committee with another unfunded mandate that the county had no choice on and would have to participate in; serious financial issue; COVID enhanced reimbursement came and helped
 - Same approach used during the financial crisis; federal government determined that the fastest way to help states and counties was to give states more money for Medicaid program
 - Approach used for pandemic and ACA
 - Ms. Merrick was discussing that they cannot kick anyone off Medicaid, but now that is starting
 - Pandemic era enhanced benefits are coming to end – SNAP (food stamps), healthcare and other programs sunseting
 - Will see local impact to base programs that were alleviated due to enhanced benefits
 - Will see if what was anticipated in the county’s budget this year is enough to withstand additional pressures as a result of the enhanced programs sunseting

The meeting was adjourned at 12:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



JAMIE McNAMARA, Clerk
Onondaga County Legislature

ATTENDANCE

COMMITTEE: WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE
DATE: FEBRUARY 28, 2023

| NAME (Please Print) | DEPARTMENT/AGENCY |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| Eddie Velazquez | Central Current |
| Mary Beth Togni | Real Prop Tax Svcs. |
| MELISSA BERLINSKI | DCSO |
| Kristi Smiley | Finance |
| Mark Lub | BOE |
| Kimberly Richards | BOE |
| Michele Sardo | BOE |
| Jason Dean | Finance |
| Dan Kwastowski | SOC/PA |
| Ben Yans | Law |
| Br Kelly | Park S |
| MARK NIZDRA | PARK S |
| Steve Morgan | Finance |
| Dan Wears | EM |
| MATTY VOSS | DOT |
| Penny Donohue | DOT / Fin OPS |
| | |