



# Onondaga County Legislature

JAMIE McNAMARA  
Clerk

JAMES J. ROWLEY  
Chairman

MELANIE VILARDI  
Deputy Clerk

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## WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE MINUTES – MARCH 22, 2022 BRIAN F. MAY, CHAIRMAN

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Mr. Ryan, Mr. Burtis, Ms. Abbott, Mr. Olson, Mr. Kinne, Mrs. Ervin  
**ALSO ATTENDING:** Chairman Rowley, Ms. Kuhn, Dr. Chase, Mr. Bush, Mr. Garland; also see attached

Chairman May called the meeting to order at 11:37 a.m. *A motion was made by Mr. Burtis, seconded by Mr. Olson to waive the reading of the minutes of the previous committee meeting. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED. A motion was made by Ms. Abbott, seconded by Mr. Kinne to approve the minutes of the previous committee meeting. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.*

### 1. **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:** Martin Skahen, Director

#### a. **Authorizing the Transfer of County Property Consisting of Two Vacant Lots at 209-217 Charles Ave, Solvay, New York to Home Headquarters, Inc. (Sponsored by Mr. Burtis)**

- Transfer of parcel of land in Solvay from county to Home Headquarters; will build 2 market rate homes on property
- Part of revitalization initiative; property acquired through tax auction; did RFP for building homes, Home Headquarters won; this is next step in getting homes built

Mr. Burtis asked if they will be owner occupied, and Mr. Skahen said yes for 10 years. The person buying the home signs an agreement, and if they sell, the agreement has to be transferred as part of the sale.

Mr. Skahen responded to Mr. Ryan that they did a property through their housing development fund company on Charles Avenue in 2017.

Mr. Kinne asked for clarification on the \$310,000 in subsidies. Mr. Skahen:

- Subsidies from county's grant with Empire State Development (ESD) to build the house; cost of building home outweighs cost of what the sale of home would be; subsidy makes the deal work
- NYS ESD provides subsidy; will be taxed on sale price of house, which should be around \$160 - \$170,000
- Sale price of home is market rate, not income qualified; 1,500 sq. ft. 3 bedroom house

**Mr. Kinne requested that when the houses sell, Mr. Skahen report back to the Legislature on what they sold for.** Mr. Skahen agreed.

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

### 2. **SOCIAL SERVICES – ECONOMIC SECURITY:** Sarah Merrick, Commissioner

#### a. **Providing for a Transfer of Function and Various Personnel Changes with Regard to the Temporary Assistance Employment Program JobsPlus! (Sponsored by Dr. Chase)**

- Transfer of employment program, JobsPlus! (Temporary Assistance (TA) mandated employment program) to DSS-ES
- Will be under auspices of department; allows transfer of 67 employees from that program to DSS
- Welfare reform happened almost 30 years ago, if someone eligible for TA, mandated that if they were capable (no

disability), they must seek employment

- (1) Employment program is there to provide job coaches and other support to successfully find employment
- (2) Must work with TA clients with short term or long term disability
- Coaching services allow DSS to refer people that have short term or long term disability to services – mental health, substance abuse, medical services – to hopefully get short term disability resolved and help find employment
- (3) Work with people and apply on their behalf to SS in hopes to have clients receive SS income and transition off TA; much higher benefit from SS income
- Mandated services, taking away from OCC, and bringing under umbrella of SS; they have been operating eligibility side of TA, and will now bring mandated employment part under DSS auspices

Mr. Kinne asked how a person collects social security if they do not have a track record of working. Ms. Merrick replied that there are two branches of Social Security: (1) based on disability and (2) based on disability and being employed. DSS will apply for the social security income solely based on disability.

Mr. Kinne asked who determines a mental disability. Ms. Merrick:

- Clients are able to go to their medical provider; DSS uses IMA – Independent Medical Assessment, independent objective assessment on whether someone is physically disabled, mentally disabled, or if there is substance abuse
- IMA has strong reputation of being independent, fair, and accurate; send to IMA for assessment; DSS does not do that

Mrs. Ervin asked where the 67 people will be located. Ms. Merrick:

- ~7 years ago JobsPlus! moved from Salvation Army location on South Salina street to 4<sup>th</sup> floor of KOB and 13<sup>th</sup> floor of Civic Center; collocated here for almost 7 years; now integrating management will take transition to its fullest

Mr. Olson said there are 70 positions on the resolution, but she only mentioned 67 employees. Ms. Merrick explained that they added a few extra employment Councilor I positions to address potential growth in caseload. Right now they are transferring 67 employees.

Mr. Olson asked if it was like this 7 years ago, and Ms. Merrick responded:

- Been this way for 27 years when welfare reform passed; different incentives and more money in it for educational institutions to help with population; seemed like great fit to have at OCC and access those educational services
- Extra money dried up; down to money available to help with coaching and getting them linked to appropriate services and SSI track if necessary

Ms. Abbott asked how many community members will be impacted by JobsPlus! in a year, and how will this affect the relationship with OCC. Ms. Merrick:

- Current caseload is ~4,000; not optional, so anyone in TA has to participate
- Already doing services, streamlines the process, and brings all in house; helps with management and squeezing out efficiencies; not duplicating efforts with OCC; also will not be confusing to TA clients
- Will continue to work with OCC; (i.e.) TA client that matches a need to go to OCC for advanced education; still have strong connection, but that would be a small percentage of the people

Mr. May asked Ms. Merrick to discuss the cost difference between what OCC is being paid and what the county will charge. Ms. Merrick:

- Currently have \$8.6 mil contract with OCC; when it is part of DSS's operation, it will be ~\$6 mil (maybe more)
- Maximize FFFS (Flexible Fund for Family Services), as well as SNAP employment and training, money in department
- \$500,000 to \$1 mil in local funds
- Will look at efficiencies for technology – previous authorization to build or add to current case management system
- Believe that bringing employment part into case management system will build efficiencies
- Down the road may not fill vacancies that occur by using technology; first, have to have it built and used
- Bringing in technology that JobsPlus! does not have will be a big efficiency and potential cost savings
- Will utilize what county brings including (i.e.) print shop and buying supplies in bulk

Chairman May asked if the titles strictly fit the JobsPlus! mold, or are they things that create opportunities and flexibility downstream to do other things with these folks. Ms. Merrick:

- Employment staff have to assist those on TA and SNAP (certain categories of SNAP recipients that have to seek employment), so they can help support TA and SNAP program; SNAP largest program servicing 72,000 people
- Additional support is a win/win

Chairman Rowley asked if the employees have their own compensation schedule. Ms. Merrick:

- Coming in unscheduled; has to be worked out after transfer occurs - whether unionization or not
- These are titles that other DSS departments throughout the state have with employment programs already embedded in their department; looked at Erie County and these are the titles they have

Chairman Rowley asked if they are testing into the positions, or will they be slotted in. Mr. Hummel:

- Still up in the air for couple positions with testing - may have to be tested as they were existing civil service titles the state has tested for before; working on that
- Representation of titles:
  - (1) first 4 positions listed are new and all MC
  - (2) last 2 positions are CSEA positions and are on that schedule
  - (3) Employment Councilor 1 and 2 were Job Readiness Coach and Team Leader at OCC; under Civil Service Law for Community Colleges, if they are deemed as professionals, they are unrepresented positions; bringing them over as unrepresented; created new salary schedule for these positions with multiple grades in case they are needed

***A motion was made by Mrs. Ervin, seconded by Ms. Abbott, to approve this item. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.***

**3. WATER ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION: Shannon Harty, Commissioner**  
**a. Personnel Resolution (*Sponsored by Ms. Abbott*)**

- Seeking advance step placement for 2 key management positions; on roster, fully funded for 2022 budget

Deputy Commissioner:

- Have 2 deputies in WEP: (1) oversees core functions, physical assets; (2) oversees regulatory programs - vacant
- Previous deputy retired earlier this year; oversees regulatory compliance, and operations and maintenance of wastewater treatment plants (WWTP) – collective system optimization and capacity management, Plumbing Control Division (public health arm), and environmental lab (certified by NYSDOH)
- Highly technical position; requires high degree of supervisory skills overseeing professional teams; requires skills that are critical for partnering and coordinating with regulatory agencies – i.e. NYSDOH, DEC, EPA
- Do not have someone in house; outside hire; candidate comes to WEP with 20+ years of consulting experience in wastewater; tremendous experience and relationships with regulatory partners at local and state level
- Advance step puts position at grade 37 step 20; commensurate with other deputy, as well as skills and market value of the person they would like

Wastewater Treatment Plant Superintendent:

- Management position overseeing head operators at 6 WWTPs; position vacant since June 2020
- Person needs to know all WWTPs inside and out; each are unique and complex; needs to be internal hire
- Person carrying duties is a Head Operator - covering this position along with Head Operator overseeing 2 WWTPs
- Want to move him into this position permanently; will cut back on overtime and allow for backfill and get head operators at the plants he is currently covering
- No impact to 2022 budget; both positions fully funded

Mr. Ryan asked what the monetary difference is between the previous deputy and this change. Ms. Harty responded it was a step 12 at \$115,000. Ms. Harty agreed with Mr. Ryan that it is a \$12,000 raise. Mr. Ryan asked the same question about the superintendent position, and Ms. Harty replied it is vacant funded at grade 36 step 1 (\$90,000).

Mr. Ryan:

- WEP has management vacancies to fill; did get info in the fall
- Lot of worthy MC upgrades in WEP; quite a few vacant funded positions at WEP
- MCs with \$15,000 - \$20,000 raises; good to be mindful that people in bargaining unit were 1% and 2%, 3% compounded over life of agreement; getting to point where MCs vastly increasing in dollars versus rank and file

Ms. Harty:

- Have significant vacancies for rank and file positions - 45 actively trying to fill; significant vacancies in management team; want the structure from management to have efficient processes in place and working effectively
- Need management team and salaries – Operations Superintendent funded at \$89,000; Head Operator union positions (base pay) are making more than that position, which is why they do not want to go to management

Chairman May wanted confirmation that this is a change in direction, and they are not speaking about apples to apples. This aligns with a different plan on how things will be done going forward. Ms. Harty:

- Changing organizational structure and expectations of management positions
- Bringing into department a higher demand for use of technology; need to use more to work more efficiently
- Need management to set up, support, and transition
- New approach to running WEP and mindset; adjusting skills, roles, and responsibility

Ms. Harty clarified for Mr. Kinne that they are actively recruiting and hiring. They have on boarded twelve “boots on the ground” positions, and they have had almost 30 personnel movements within the rank and file positions. They are moving both initiatives on a parallel path.

Ms. Harty explained to Mr. Kinne (concerning basement flooding) that they are working with the NYS Department of Homeland Security and FEMA to develop a mitigation program to protect homeowners. It would determine what the mitigation is to help prevent and mitigate future basement backups. The FEMA declaration is for public assistance through municipalities (individual assistance was not awarded).

Mrs. Ervin asked if WEP is working on diversifying the department, and how much so. Ms. Harty:

- Yes; internal candidate is not diverse candidate, but deputy candidate is
- Actively seeking an additional administrative position to develop a better recruiting program, promote further diversity
- Need better partnerships with local schools; need to build awareness of what WEP is and what they do
- Do not have team to do that, but it is in forefront; believe they have a candidate who will get WEP where it needs to go
- Build workforce development, training programs, recruiting, and networking to educate people that WEP is a great place to work; do not need college education
- Not there yet, but still in the vision for 2022

*A motion was made by Ms. Abbott, seconded by Mr. Olson, to approve this item. Ayes: 6 Abstentions: 1 (Ryan); MOTION CARRIED.*

**4. FACILITIES MANAGEMENT: Archie Wixson, Commissioner**  
**a. Personnel Resolution (Sponsored by Ms. Cody)**

- Approve creation of Locksmith; previous locksmith passed away; no time to prepare or train; position was Maintenance 2 Worker, same grade as Locksmith; no budget impact
- Will not fill Maintenance 2; fill Locksmith position - title duties define what is needed to fill it
- Lucky that previous locksmith cross trained through ranks by previous locksmith; no such candidate with skill set

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

**5. COUNTY CLERK:** Lisa Dell, Clerk**a. Personnel Resolution**

- Vault Attendant and Clerk I - abolish positions; job descriptions not needed and not enough to do what is required
- Need to index and put more documents in ecommerce to generate customer service; will be salary savings

*A motion was made by Mr. Burtis, seconded by Mr. Ryan, to approve this item. Ayes: 6 Absent: 1 (Olson); MOTION CARRIED.*

**6. PERSONNEL:** Dawn Clarry, Deputy Commissioner**a. Accepting and Approving the Contract Between Onondaga County and the Onondaga County Sheriff's Captain's Association**

- Introduce Donna Briscoe, Director of Employee Relations, who will be phasing in to handle contracts
- Captain's Association terms from January 1, 2021 – December 31, 2024
- 2.5% wage increase for all years of contract, retro to Jan.
- Adjusted overtime – paid straight time for first 5 hours over 40, time and half after 5 hours and over 40
- Increase to schedule equity adjustment to 14 days; compensates for working more hours than lieutenants
- Increased rank equity stipend, which helps keep gap between Lieutenant and Captain; does not go on base wage, very close exceeding chiefs; also increased longevity premium
- Total cost of the 4 year contract: \$434,502.22
- Current contract had overtime after 10 hours; only have 2 Captains that work regular overtime (i.e. police); minimal cost; felt could negotiate with

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

**7. FINANCE:** Don Weber, Real Property Tax Director**a. Approving and Directing the Correction of Certain Errors on Tax Bills**

- Two fairly large corrections related to WEP sewer charges:
  - (1) Apartment building – units based on number of apartments, not water usage (usual); assessors thought building was complete (charging based on units), but construction not complete; WEP agreed to reduce units
  - (2) Building using water, but not going into sewer; private septic

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

**8. LEGISLATURE:****a. Changing the Date of the June 2022 Legislative Session (Sponsored by Mr. Rowley)**

Chairman May said the change is moving June session from Tuesday (June 7<sup>th</sup>) to Wednesday (June 8<sup>th</sup>).

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

**9. LAW:****a. Litigation update**

Mr. Yaus stated that he would like to discuss and consider pending litigation going to trial in Albany April 5<sup>th</sup>, and he proposed it be discussed in executive session.

*A motion was made by Mr. Burtis, seconded by Mr. Olson, to go into executive session for the purpose of discussing proposed, pending, or current litigation. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.*

*A motion was made by Mr. Ryan, seconded by Mrs. Ervin, to exit executive session and enter regular session. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.*

Chairman May stated no motions or actions were taken during executive session.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



JAMIE McNAMARA, Clerk  
Onondaga County Legislature

### ATTENDANCE

COMMITTEE: WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE

DATE: MARCH 22, 2022

NAME (Please Print)	DEPARTMENT/AGENCY
Patricia Gonzalez	Comptroller
Sarah Merrick	DSS-ES
Dan Mulvihill	Financial operations
Ben Yans	Law
Dawn Clamy	Personnel
Donna BRISOLE	PERSONNEL
Armen Sebejian	PERSONNEL
Marty Starker	Community Development
Tenesha Murphy	CE
Don Weber	Tax
SHANNON HARTY	WER
Carl Hummel	Personnel
Jessica Adler	FIN OPS
LISA DELL	Onn Co Clerk
Steve Morgan	CFO
Brian Donnelly	CE
John DeSantis	LEG
JARCLE LEONIAK	LEG
Ryan Frantzen	LEG
Tim Fratecki	LEG
Archie Wixson	FACILITIES