



Onondaga County Legislature

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CONSENSUS REVIEW ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES

April 20, 2017

Kevin Holmquist, Chairman

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr. Whorrall, Mr. Ulatowski, Ms. Hudson, Ms. Boyle, Mr. Kinne

ADVISORY MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr. Carni, Mr. Jordan, *Mr. Knapp

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mr. Sgrmo

ALSO ATTENDING: Mr. Fisher, Mr. Alex Walsh, *see also attached attendance sheet*

Chairman Holmquist called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. He noted that everyone received the recommendations from committee members; there was tremendous input. After review the top 8 were chosen for discussion today. If anyone feels really strongly about looking at another category, it can be done.

Chairman Holmquist reminded members that they are advisory; focusing what should be looked at and who has responsibility. He said that the committee doesn't want to get too deep into the "how". The "how" things will be addressed by the elected boards. This is a home rule state and ultimately it is up to the elected officials. The local governments have been doing this and we don't want to dictate to anybody, but can help prioritize the items that Consensus came out with and give them some focus. That was the committee's impetus. Chairman Holmquist asked if everybody was on board with that or if anyone wished to take exception to that goal. No objection was heard; and the committee informally agreed.

Chairman Holmquist said that with keeping on task, and moving efficiently, thoroughly, and quickly, that in subsequent meetings the committee will try to tackle two or three items in each meeting. It might be appropriate to invite guest speaker, but since only the "who's and what's" will be done, it might not be necessary. Once into the first topic, it will become readily apparent that all of these are surprisingly complicated with a lot of nuances. There is a tremendous diversity in municipalities: small villages, big villages, small towns, big towns, and a whole bunch of departments in city government and in county government. Many of the issues touch upon multiple groups of municipalities.

Top Discussion Topics:

Water

Solid Waste

Emergency Management

Corrections

Centralized IT

Libraries

Economic Development

Parks & Recreation

Chairman Holmquist said that these are broad categories and each had two or more members that were interested in each of the categories. He asked the members if they felt it was a good list; stating that other items can be added later. There was no objection to the list and members informally agreed to the categories listed.

Ms. Hudson referred to the possibility of bringing in guest speakers and referenced EMS as an example – the committee may need them to provide an overview of the "how's and whys" because they are the experts. Chairman Holmquist stated that it was a great point, and pointed out that if two categories were to be discussed in an hour, if there is a guest speaker, the committee won't solve much. The issues are very complicated; sometimes a guest speaker may not be needed and sometimes the committee might want it. He used parks as an example – there is a lot to talk about. It doesn't have to necessarily be a merger. It could be that the city and county share equipment, services, or recreation. If the goal is to move pretty quickly and give the elected boards

5 – 8 areas to look at, with broad, general recommendations – not mandating anything -- then members can all follow up with their boards. He said that there is more detail in the Consensus report; there are a lot of errors and omissions. There is a lot of good stuff in there, but there is a lot of missing information, and we don't want to get dragged down too far that way. Once we get into it, it will take more than a half hour to really fully address it – if there is a guest speaker it will be hard to talk about more than one thing.

WATER:

Ms. Boyle:

- Water is a source of income for the city; there is currently money in the state budget for infrastructure, which has been the problem.
- Interested to know what the needs are in the county and what the benefits would be
- Doesn't see the city as having a water problem

Chairman Holmquist:

- Recent OCWA and MWB merger affects everything
- City's water system and many village water systems have aging infrastructure

Ms. Boyle:

- If everything merged under one roof, what would the positive outcomes be

Mr. Carni:

- Its advantageous for grant writing and applying to the state
- If it were combined with different municipalities and infrastructure – looking at it in a unique way, then maybe the state would look at it more favorably; could access more grants from government

Mr. Ulatowski:

- Known that city has crumbling infrastructure

Ms. Boyle:

- \$3.2 billion in the state budget for infrastructure, so doesn't know if infrastructure will continue to be a problem.

Mr. Jordan:

- Understands that half the water goes out the lines in the city – doesn't go to the end of the line
- Might be in a better bargaining position if the city was making application for federal or state funds because if the system blows, the city will be in dire financial straits - more of an impending problem or impetus as to why they need funds
- To broaden it out, they are going to say that the county has a broader base and absorb the blow a lot more effectively than the city could – maybe they wouldn't give as much money – not has much of an impending crisis with the county as it is for the city
- Might have a better chance of getting more money or any money if it is the city applying for it vs. the county

Ms. Boyle:

- Some of the towns and villages also have infrastructure problems.

Mr. Carni:

- It's clear and obvious that the city has an issue because it's in the paper all of the time
- Understands based on the discussions during the Consensus process, that there are other towns and villages that are in just as dire straits as the city

Mr. Jordan:

- Agreed; the problem with the towns and villages is that the city, because of its size, is eligible to apply for a lot of grants
- If it is just, i.e., the Village of North Syracuse, they can't independently apply for infrastructure funds; the smaller entities can't necessary apply for monies.

Ms. Boyle

- With the towns and villages having the same problems, if we didn't merge it would probably be better for them – they would have better access to some of those grants if applied together
- In trying to identify benefits – if the towns and villages merged they would probably have better access to grants

Mr. Kinne:

- Mr. Jordan is wrong about the water that the city loses; city loses water from Skaneateles Lake to the beginning – that pipe is wood and very old, a major problem – they lose about 40% of the water there
- Infrastructure in the city is bad, infrastructure in Towns of Geddes and Solvay are bad, Dewitt has issues
- Look at holistic approach – all want clean water – why do we need 2 or 3 people in charge of water; it's an extra salary; why do we need all of the equipment – i.e. maybe the city has 5 backhoes sitting part of the time that Geddes or Dewitt could use
- Holistic approach – all benefit because we all want clean water – have one agency in charge of it
- Not discussing oranges and apples – all one thing – all want drinkable water – it is common sense

Ms. Boyle:

- Council just approved quite a bit of money to do repairs in Skaneateles

Chairman Holmquist said that the committee is wading into some of the “how’s”; thinks the committee can come up with the next step. He suggested maybe reaching out to stakeholders: OCWA, City Water, County Legislature, City Council, and see what they think, and asked if it warrants bringing in guest speakers.

Mr. Kinne:

- Is it being suggested that the Chairman or the committee send a letter to OCWA or anybody else?

Chairman Holmquist:

- If that is the wish of the committee; whatever the appropriate next step might be for this topic
- Certainly does not want to make too many recommendations to entities that haven't heard from us; want to be collaborative
- For anything the committee recommends – does not want it to be a surprise and wants to know what their thoughts are beforehand

Mr. Kinne:

- Proposed that the committee sent a letter to all the people and get an idea of what they are thinking
- Start the process and get people thinking - start with OCWA and City
- Understands that there is only one entity that has its own water supply – East Syracuse

Mr. Jordan:

- Skaneateles has its own and maybe Marcellus

Chief Andrews:

- East Syracuse doesn't have their own.

Mr. Ulatowski:

- Mike Hooker, OCWA, would be an ideal person; OCWA touches every single entities – would have a better overview of the problems and where the fixes are – could help us make recommendations
- Guest speakers are a great idea – committee members shouldn't try to be experts.

Mr. Jordan:

- Really talking about OCWA taking it all over – good idea to have them come in and talk about the effect on rates, see if it is something they are willing to take on

Mr. Ulatowski:

- Town of Clay has OCWA customers and Town of Clay water customers
- Town of Clay buys its water from MWB – bought at a discount and able to deliver it back to residents for less than OCWA customers are receiving it
- Not anxious about changing any of that, but at the same time there are pockets of residents in the Town of Clay that aren't served by either town water or OCWA, and those situations occur in other towns
- Someone like Mike Hooker might be able to tell us how to connect those pieces and fill those gaps in

Ms. Boyle:

- How do we position ourselves to best access that state money that might be available

Chairman Holmquist asked members if they were on board with the suggestion of bringing in Mr. Hooker; the members informally agreed.

SOLID WASTE:

Chairman Holmquist said this was discussed at the last meeting; the Consensus report talked a lot about SOTS. Other trash districts have been formed throughout the county, including the one he has talked about in Manlius. This is a case where everyone knows it exists; there are a lot of towns that have opinions on this. Little towns and villages are in different situations. Having been immersed in this issue for quite awhile, it might be something that if we have a recommendation where there are certainly opportunities, but not putting ourselves in a position of dictating. Generally speaking the Consensus recommendation is pretty good. It suggests that every municipality look into this. There are economies of scale, environmental benefits, quality of life, and cost benefits. There are different nuances in towns and villages.

Mr. Ulatowski

- Since he's been on the town board, they have moved from everyone having an independent hauler to creating five trash districts within the Town of Clay
- It addresses all of the aspects just spoke of: quality of life issue – one truck going through a neighborhood once a week; economies of scale – cost dropped \$200 on average per resident
- Lowest hanging fruit that all could embrace and show an immediate result
- Several other towns have gravitated in this direction

Chairman Holmquist:

- For the ones that haven't, is there a reason that is known?

Mr. Ulatowski:

- Hasn't had dialogue with any counterparts specifically on this issue – doesn't know
- It wasn't a difficult task to undertake – prototype is available for everyone, documents exist – just need to change names and words
- A lot of the ground work has been done already and village or town can share that with others; then just having political will to advance it
- A no brainer – one of the easiest things he has seen happen in his town

Mr. Whorrall:

- Hasn't heard any comments about problems with trash in the Mayors' meetings
- Villages within the Town of Manlius do their own trash pick up.
- Village bids out for recycling, but owns their own trash truck

Chairman Holmquist:

- Other trash districts that exist -- SOTS, Clay, and elsewhere, are the villages included in there, even though they are not participating, could they be in the future, if they wanted to - where they would draw new contracts
- In Manlius, the Village of Minoa, Fayetteville and Manlius were included for a future date should circumstances change; if a village wants to opt in, they are all set – they can do it at any time for any reason

Mr. Ulatowski:

- Clay has the Village of North Syracuse and they are not included

Mr. Kinne:

- Why would a municipal entity want to take on trash – don't they have to hire employees

Mr. Whorrall:

- DPW employees are used.

Mr. Kinne:

- They have other jobs to do.

Mr. Whorrall:

- Sure, but there are also down times – they plan it all out
- The worst time has been in the winter with a snow storm because they have to go out and plow. They plow and then go out and do trash pick up.

Mr. Kinne:

- Wouldn't it be more efficient to let the private sector handle it?

Mr. Whorrall:

- Sometimes people don't like what they get for service in the private sector – it's the same as having someone else do the plowing. If the village plows the streets at 8:00 a.m. and others that are paid to do so decide not to plow until 10:00 a.m., that's a problem
- Have never had a complaint; people appreciate the trash pick up. If there is ever a problem, the people call and the employees go right back and take care of it. Residents like that after the trash is picked up, it is set back up in the yard – they don't fling it in the driveway or throw it in the yard.
- You don't get the same service all the time with a hauler
- With the recyclables, his blue bin is in the middle of the yard when he comes home – the guy goes a mile a minute, gets out and then flings the bin up the driveway or front yard.

Chairman Holmquist:

- There is a higher level of services in the villages – they pay for it, but want to have it
- In the trash districts, there are formal restrictions – can put out X amount each week – villages generally provide more service
- Getting into nuances – it is up to the Village of Manlius; if they want to pay more for a higher level of service, he doesn't disagree with it

*Mr. Knapp arrived at the meeting.

Mr. Kinne:

- Shouldn't close the door on all possibilities; if you put out a contract for the trash pickup and are not happy with it after six months, then you cancel the contract and get somebody else to do it
- You've got to hold people accountable.

Mr. Ulatowski:

- That's tough to do

Mr. Jordan:

- Clay has had different haulers - changed periodically

Mr. Kinne:

- Change is always hard.

Mr. Ulatowski:

- It's one of the nastiest ones, if there is an interruption of service
- Clay almost had that happen. Fortunately were able to re-contract with a previous hauler that could do the job because the one just hired for one of the districts couldn't meet the obligation; were worried about things piling up
- It is something that you want to be real careful with

Mr. Whorrall:

- If it were something that they got complaints about, they would look elsewhere, but they don't get complaints because it's done properly.

Mr. Ulatowski:

- Village of Manlius basically created a village trash district – not unlike what Clay is doing or other towns are doing in trash districts
- Village has DPW doing the hauling – no different than Clay having an independent hauler – can see where that would work just as well
- Having all of the individual haulers coming in each weekday in the same neighborhood is really what the disruption is.
- The cost is 1/3 to 1/2 by doing to a trash district.

Chairman Holmquist said that for purposes of this committee, Consensus' recommendation were pretty good – this committee's could be similar – prioritizing for the varied and diverse municipalities to take a look and appreciate the benefits of SOTS. The City is essentially the same thing – really a trash district of sorts with a level of service.

Ms. Boyle:

- City is a really large trash district; provides a lot of jobs for people

Chairman Holmquist said that a good recommendation for this committee could be on the same page as Consensus and encourage what they did. He suggested that members re-read that section of the report, and the committee can construct a recommendation that essentially endorses what they are saying.

Mr. Jordan:

- In some ways it is a no brainer – the question is what is the optimal size for a trash district?

Mr. Holmquist:

- At the end of the day it's up to the municipality affected.

Ms. Boyle:

- Are there areas where trash districts could expand and service other areas; could potentially be less expensive

Chairman Holmquist:

- We could look at that

Mr. Jordan:

- Consensus mostly talks about the southern district where the biggest issue is – doesn't talk about other areas of the county
- The recommendation should apply countywide

Mr. Kinne:

- Seems the City could pick up the garbage in Nedrow easily

Ms. Boyle:

- Assumes the city has the most trucks, most employees – a full time sanitation department – they don't do other work
- Could potentially increase jobs for city residents and could save money in some areas like Nedrow

Chairman Holmquist:

- If there is equipment that is idle at certain times and they are contiguous areas, it would be obvious to share equipment – could be some opportunities.

Ms. Boyle:

- Possibly a longer day – city trash pickup is done before noon

Mr. Jordan:

- Could be cost savings for contiguous towns to the city to contract with the City for trash pickup

Mr. Knapp:

- Is still on the SOTS Board; Town of Lysander has reached out to SOTS about exploring either a partnership or using the model

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES:

Chairman Holmquist said that the Consensus broad categories were to create a county-wide system, group specs and purchasing of equipment, and establishing performance. He asked Mr. Whorrall to comment.

Mr. Whorrall:

- A lot of these things are already being done; a lot of the things have been happening - especially EMS – a lot of the purchasing goes through the county
- It's a tread lightly group of people that you want to be careful with because they are pretty dedicated to what they do and a lot of them do it on their own time.
- In the Town of Manlius they are one of the very few left where the fire department provides ambulance service – most have gotten away from it for various reasons.
- Share purchase with the county, purchase in bulk with vendors that they deal with; do a lot with Dewitt, which doesn't have an ambulance service, but runs EMS as first responder
- Biggest concern now – people in his community, where Fayetteville and Manlius have a total of 6 senior citizen complexes, and another one going in, and a couple of medical centers – the people look for “when I call you I want you at my doorstep”, not 20 minutes later you show up because you had to come for the city

- Concern is the control of putting a certain service, paid or not, in charge of what goes on in the county – some aren't the prime example of what it should be
- Madison County, the Town of Sullivan, Chittenango, Bridgeport all had ambulance service and discontinued them. They went to a paid service that supplies one ambulance service for their whole township. It covers from the county border of Chittenango to the other side of the county in Bridgeport. Several times Fayetteville and Manlius ambulances had to cover them because their one ambulance is out covering a call in Bridgeport when there is a call in Chittenango. That person can wait until the paid service comes from the city or they call the next closest -- Fayetteville and Manlius.
- We are not only covering our own territory, we are covering several others.
- It is set up as "the next closest ambulance" – there are times recently where they responded to Liverpool on an ambulance call from Manlius - that is not great service.
- The shared services part is huge--we do it, and there are things that are very costly.
- Right now our department wants to purchase a training mannequin, \$29,000 – it is something that we should be looking for grant money for our sharing within the towns – all pitch in a certain amount of money – that is the about the limit of your service
- In our territory, can't speak for others, our people would be up in arms if they called for an ambulance and didn't get one right out of the gate and had to wait for period of time, especially since serving 3 senior citizens' complexes – it is scary to them
- If out on a call and covering 2 ambulance calls, we automatically know that the next one up will be Fayetteville. Fayetteville will be coming right away, or CVAC (Cazenovia), which borders us
- EMS services is a tough thing – hard to give up the service; but it has become real expensive
- Constantly trying to get NYS legislature to pass a bill allowing for change for ambulance service for volunteer organizations because the cost is out of this world right now
- Transport of an advanced life support patient ranges from \$800 - \$1,000, not including the fuel
- Training can be shared, which already is
- Purchasing is huge. If you can purchase in bulk with one vendor, it is a lot better than going to multiple vendors.

Mr. Ulatowski:

- AMR ambulance service in the city – is there a county subsidy for it, or a direct billing

Mr. Kinne:

- Experience from a couple of years ago was that it was direct billing.

Mr. Ulatowski:

- In looking at EMS, there is not a lot of taxpayer cost involved
- Where I live there are volunteer departments; there is some paid management; they bill the person riding for the cost of that service
- They are strategically placed in the Town of Clay via charter and have to meet certain guidelines as far as response times go.
- Sees this as being a very difficult one, not unlike fire departments, to try to bring another system in that would actually lower cost
- Agrees with training and purchasing being something they should all gravitate to
- Believes that every EMS service in Onondaga County is placed where it should be based on the response time, that their charter allows them to cover
- Because the service is provided primarily by volunteers, it's a pretty good system right now.

Mr. Whorrall:

- We cover a huge area – Town of Pompey, Delphi Fall, go to Cazenovia if CVAC is out on call; it is reciprocal; they do the same for us
- The worry is that it is one thing to say you can go county wide and strategically place ambulances, but it doesn't work. It didn't work when Rural Metro wanted 2 ambulances in north Chittenango, center of their town, to cover that area because they said they had people sitting around. Because of that they pulled an ambulance out of there; now they have one ambulance. If there is a back to back call, they are in trouble – they are waiting for someone else to come.
- We don't want to be in a position to say, i.e. you are going to put 3 ambulances in Fayetteville, then they get 2 calls to the medical center, and then 2 calls in Manlius at the same time. Who is coming – they are sending an ambulance from the city. That is not what people want.

Mr. Ulatowski:

- It all boils down to response time--that is what people are looking for--thinks the system works pretty well

Mr. Jordan:

- A complaint voiced to him was with a preferred/dedicated EMS system there could be a call and there could be another company on the next street over, but they don't get they call. Even though their response time is within the criterion, they aren't necessarily getting them there quickest. An ambulance one street over could be there a lot quicker than the one that is 4 blocks over, maybe on another call, finishing up a call, or returning from the hospital.
- Want to have a system where you are getting the ambulance there in the shortest amount of time, not necessarily one with set criterion in terms of maximum response time

Mr. Ulatowski:

- Isn't all of that handled at the 911 Center?

Mr. Whorrall:

- 911 Center has done an exception job at closest available
- If dropping off a patient at the hospital, and there is a call in Marcellus, and nobody else is close to Marcellus, then they send us to Marcellus; we end up in the city sometimes

Mr. Jordan:

- Maybe it's and an issue at 911 – told that they have had calls where they are a street over and another ambulance company who is farther away is responding to the scene and not them who is closer

Mr. Ulatowski:

- Has heard the other side of the story – there are some rogue ambulances that just drive around – they are the ones complaining

Mr. Whorrall:

- We have one that sits in the Town Center, Fayetteville, and waits.

Mr. Jordan:

- Do they have GPS's tied into 911 so they know where the ambulance are or is it all by reporting where they are?

Mr. Whorrall:

- Does not know

Chairman Holmquist said that it sounds like there are a lot of opportunities including memorializing the state, possibly purchasing, maybe endorsing some of the things happening.

Ms. Hudson:

- AMR has the training dummies; they have a big facility – maybe there is way we can work with them; see if we can use them for centralizing training

Ms. Boyle:

- Thinks the reason this was brought to the table in Consensus was to get away from volunteers, and get everyone on a professional service – probably not realistic

Mr. Ulatowski:

- It's not realistic; the cost to create it and staff it would wipe out any potential savings that Consensus generates.

Mr. Jordan:

- If not increase the cost

Ms. Boyle:

- The City has professional response now; scaling back the number of providers and increasing their territories is a recipe for poor service
- This is complicated, but there are some facilities that could benefit everybody.

Ms. Hudson:

- And not spend \$29,000

Mr. Whorrall:

- It's the quality of service you get in a home town ambulance service – serving the people in your hometown and you have to see them on the street – they like that kind of service.
- If you go to a fully paid service, they are there to make a buck; they don't give you the same service

Ms. Boyle:

- I wouldn't say that about medical personnel across the board; I wouldn't say that the services in the city are not compassionate.

CORRECTIONS:

Chairman Holmquist said that there are some opportunities; should all be thinking about the role of this committee and potential recommendations. In keeping with the spirit of what was said that the beginning of the meeting, where all agreed that we are looking at the "what and the who", and not the "how", the next topic is not an easy topic, but pretty easy for this committee, because it's a category that is entirely the county. An obvious recommendation could be that the sheriff's department and the County should look into this – it is up to them; there are opportunity there. The sheriff's department are professionals. The Consensus recommendation is to consolidate into a single organizational structure. For any other groups that are affected, there are mechanisms. If the sheriff's department makes recommendations to not do it, that would be the end of it. If they make a recommendation to do it, and the county legislature wishes to pursue it, then obviously the legislature has public hearings and mechanisms to do so. The county legislature is elected, sheriff is elected, and at the end of the day they would be able to gather the input from the potential stakeholders and people's opinions from the community.

Chairman Holmquist asked members if they see any further role for this committee as an advisory group. He said that he knows that all have opinions on this, but the recommendation is going to amount to that we think it's a good idea to investigate this; they are professionals and let them make recommendations to Public Safety, collaborate with the legislature, executive, and other people.

Chairman Holmquist recognized Chief Ken Andrews, Sheriff's Department. Chief Andrews said that this topic has come up, they have been thinking about it; this would be one of the easier ones. The sheriff is willing to consider it and sit down with the parties involved to look into it. Regarding the "how's" it gets a little more difficult because of the union issues. There are hurdles to get over to get it done; but basically it is all in house and thinks the Sheriff is willing to work in that direction.

Mr. Knapp noted that there is is a template – Erie County had a similar situation with different unions, and they successfully accomplished it. There were a couple of lawsuits.

Chief Andrews referred to the water topic – 25 years ago, Dewitt, looked into joining with OCWA. The reason they didn't joint is because there was a charge for the fire hydrants. There was going to be a \$100,000 charge to the Town of Dewitt residents for the fire hydrant usage. Even though Dewitt was going to sell its water system to OCWA, in 10 years the million dollars would be gone, and then there would be an increased cost to tax payers. He suggested that those issues be looked at and addressed upfront; there are going to be municipalities hesitating – it may be great right now, but in the long run cost more money. As a town representative at the time, he was looking out for his taxpayer base and it wasn't going to be good for them in the long run.

CENTRALIZED IT

Chairman Holmquist said that this came up on a lot of people's radar. Due to the time, it wouldn't be discussed today. There is a general agreement that there could be all kinds of opportunities and collaborations.

Chairman Holmquist said that for the purposes of today, with respect to the Consensus report, libraries, economic development, parks & recreation – speakers will be needed for some of them.

Mr. Fisher said that since the committee first met, the governor's plan regarding property tax savings did not pass, but was modified. The state legislature passed a law that will bear directly on what this committee does. It requires that each executive of each municipality in Onondaga County participate in a panel. The 19 supervisors, the 15 village mayors, the city mayor, will be on the panel by law, and the county executive will chair

the panel. By law, the county executive must present a plan to the county legislature no later than August 1st. Her plan is to focus on the recommendation of the Consensus Commission and not reinvent the wheel in the plan that she presents to the legislature. He said that the committee's input to that plan will be greatly welcomed. The law allows for the school district and BOCES to be included into the panel, and the county executive will invite all of them. They do not have to accept the invitation – school boards will have to vote to accept it and appoint a representative. She will also invite special improvement districts. The plan that must go to the legislature by August 1st would be greatly benefitted by this committee.

Mr. Fisher explained that legislature does not have to vote on the plan. It will go back to the panel for the vote. The panel makes the vote, not the legislature; recommendations for changes to it can be made. When it comes back to the panel, the executive can veto any part of it that affects their unit of government. For example, if the plan said that something were merged between Clay and Lysander, then the Town Supervisors would be able to say no and veto it. Mr. Jordan asked what happens if it gets vetoed. Mr. Fisher said that it would be removed from the plan before the panel votes on it. If the panel votes on it, it goes into effect.

Mr. Fisher said that part of the plan is for the county to estimate the savings. If it passes in 2017, the savings have to be estimated in 2018 and the state will match the savings. If it doesn't pass in 2017, they have to rinse and repeat and put the plan forward in 2018. If it passes in 2018, then the savings in 2019 are what gets counted. The state will match the savings set forth in the plan.

Chairman Holmquist asked if the entire plan is defeated, does it still come back. Mr. Fisher said that the voting down would happen at the panel level. If it gets voted down in 2017, the county executive is required by law to put the same plan or a different plan in front of the legislature on August 1, 2018.

Mr. Ulatowski asked if he understood Mr. Fisher to say that the county executive is going to endorse the Consensus report at the panel. Mr. Fisher said that she will limit the plan to what came forward from Consensus, not re-invent the wheel. It will not necessarily be every piece of it. That still has to be determined.

Mr. Ulatowski said that his understanding is that every county across the state has to go through the same process. Mr. Fisher said that any county with populations below one million – not NYC. Mr. Ulatowski said that the other 57 counties have to basically create something from scratch, and we have a model. Mr. Fisher agreed. Mr. Ulatowski said that Mr. Fisher was at the same debate that he was at and the vote that occurred before the debate said that the majority of people were in favor of Consensus, but by the time it was done, it was quite the opposite. He asked why would something be endorsed that doesn't really have much favor. Mr. Fisher said that it is well known how to gain at an Oxford debate – you go in and vote against it and then on the way out you vote for it, or you go in and for it, and on the way out vote against it. Mr. Ulatowski said that he didn't know that. Mr. Fisher said "we didn't think of it until later." He said that debate was specifically on what has come to be known as recommendation no. 50, not nos. 1-49. The county executive hasn't made any decisions over what is in the plan, but rather than start from scratch, she will begin with what is in the Consensus plan. The panel will have the benefit of all of the work that Consensus did and the benefit of the work of this committee, before it gets started. The tricky part is that we have to quantify the savings in the plan because that is how we get the state match. There were rough numbers in the Consensus report, but it is not enough to get the state to reimburse – have been told that there has to be details about how the savings happen and describe where the money will go when it comes in, i.e. MWB and OCWA – the grant went to OCWA, not the county. The county has savings, but so do they. OCWA gets the grant and can apply it to reducing the cost of water for their rate payers. The county doesn't get any of that. Someone will have to make the decision if there savings between two municipalities or two school districts and there is match – where does that match go. He said that we will prioritize and reduce rates for reduced taxes and not just send it somewhere where someone can spend it somewhere else.

Mr. Jordan said that in pushing this plan upon counties, the state did nothing about assuming responsibility for mandated services – Medicaid, etc. They haven't done anything about assuming financial responsibility on the local level. Mr. Fisher said that they haven't done anything this year, but have done quite a lot in recent years. They capped Medicaid and it stopped growing; it is below \$100 million and it has been. If you look at the last five years of county local share of mandated costs, that has been flat since 2013. Mr. Jordan said it is still a huge portion. To say that we aren't going to increase it, isn't doing much for our taxpayers. Instead of pushing these mandated programs onto the counties, they ought to look at their own house – clean their own house and stop shifting expenses onto the counties. That would do more for our taxpayers than all of this. It is focusing on

smoke and mirrors instead of the substance of the problem. The problem is that Albany is spending money and giving us the bill. Mr. Fisher said that is not the only problem. Mr. Fisher said that if you look at the billion dollars of property tax in this county, \$170 million are county mandated costs, 17%. Mr. Jordan said that is not the county tax, the majority of it is mandated services. Mr. Fisher said if you add up all of the property tax - \$1 billion, \$162 million is state mandated cost on the county line; there are other mandated costs no where near the county's. He said that the majority of the property tax is not for mandated costs. Mr. Jordan said that the budget book, which the county executive's office puts out, says the exact opposite. Every newspapers article says the exact opposite. Mr. Ulatowski agreed and said that there would be no tax if there were no mandated services. Mr. Fisher said that it is \$170 million, but the total budget is \$1.2 billion. Mr. Fisher said "let's audit it – the information that is out there is wrong. There are reactionary people like the mayor and the comptroller who want you to believe that the only thing we have to solve is in Albany." He agreed that we have to solve that, but said that we also have to solve the spending problem that we have here.

Chairman Holmquist stated for the record that the mayor and the comptroller are not reactionary. "The county executive, once again, stands alone."

Mr. Kinne agreed that the state should clean its own house, but it doesn't relieve any elected official from doing their part as well. He said that we all know there are problems out there; there are inefficiencies. If you are going to complain about the mandate, you've got to look at the other side. "Let's take care of it; let's get our house clean." Talking people wanting better service – would like to know if they still feel the same way if their tax bill was itemized, if they know what they are paying for. He believes there are people that wouldn't agree with it and would want their taxes lowered.

Chairman Holmquist said that now we know there is a deadline; this committee set its own deadline for June, but now there is an August 1st deadline that the governor has set. That heightens our need and urgency to stay on pace and on target. Local government is willing to get better; and as we said in the first meeting, the Consensus report is nothing more than a continuation of what local government has been doing for decades. Collaboration, cooperation, and consolidation have all come from local government. He said that we all know the problems are from Albany; they always have been. The governor has made it a lot worse in recent years. Unfortunately, he has maybe one cohort locally, and everyone else is on the same page.

Chairman Holmquist said that we are willing to do what Mr. Kinne just said and get better, do our due diligence, want to work together, and have made it through a number of topics. In the event that, for example, Mr. Hooker is not available for the next meeting, maybe the committee would allow the latitude of inviting someone else in – let the agenda be driven by who is available. The committee has agreed that these are all good areas to talk about. He believe all are on board with parks and recreation, and there is a lot of interest merging the agencies in economic development as per the Consensus report. Also, he said that almost everyone agreed that a statewide library card would be a great idea.

Mr. Knapp referred to the state law and asked if the panel decides on a set of recommendations, how does it work if some of them require a referendum – who would call for it. Mr. Fisher said it depends on what the recommendation is. The least significant change would be an IMA; the governing board would have to approve it and whoever has signature authority would have to sign it. A transfer of function, where you get out of a business, i.e. Lysander gets out of the parks business and gives it up to Van Buren – that would require a voter referendum. A double referendum is where people inside and outside of the city have to vote and there has to be majority in both. The most extreme is a dissolution – i.e. a village dissolves and the town takes over all of its functions. That would require a voter referendum and it depends on who dissolves. State law would dictate exactly how something goes into effect. The plan would not necessary say how because the lawyers should be able to figure out the how based on state and local law.

Mr. Ulatowski said that you are going to create chaos – there could be 57 different plans; who will make the decision on what is right or wrong. Then you take that and multiply it by the number of towns and villages in the 57 counties – it is nightmare. Mr. Fisher said that the advantage is that we have the Consensus plan. Mr. Ulatowski agreed that we have that here. Mr. Jordan said that it took 3 years to come up with the recommendation, and now they want the counties to do it in six months. Mr. Ulatowski said that we have a huge

head start, but the neighboring counties have no idea. They don't understand what the governor put forward. Chairman Holmquist said that they will all vote no and that will be the end of it.

Ms. Boyle said that these are good conversations to have – always good to review and see if there is any way to save some money. Mr. Ulatowski agreed. Mr. Jordan said that he is not advocating against us trying to maximize our efficiencies and lower cost as much as possible. He is objectionable to Albany putting the thumb on us and basically doing very little on their end. Mr. Ulatowski referred to what the state did with the tax cap. They said that in exchange for you adopting the tax cap, we will give you mandate relief. "We did our part, and now we are being asked again to do something else, and the promises aren't there." He said that it is really not a 2% tax cap anyway, it is like .6%. He said they are going to starve us out.

Chairman Holmquist said that the agenda will go out as soon as possible, and we will do the best we can on these 8 topics. If there are any other topics that anyone feels should be added, they can be – will try to hit two topics at the next meeting.

Ms. Boyle said that she would like to add another item. There are certain areas where larger groups of people working together saves money. Health care is one of those areas. She doesn't think it is covered in the Consensus report. Employee health care, benefits – it might be worth taking a look. Mr. Holmquist said that the county executive group is going to limit their discussion to Consensus, but this committee can certainly look at it; our recommendations are to other elected boards. Mr. Fisher said it would really fall under procurement.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah L. Maturo

DEBORAH L. MATURO, Clerk
Onondaga County Legislature

COMMITTEE: CONSENSUS REVIEW ADVISORY COMMITTEE

DATE: April 20, 2017

PLEASE PRINT

NAME:	DEPT/ORG:
<i>Paul Whorrall</i>	<i>Mayor - Village of Manlius</i>
<i>Sue Stanczyk</i>	<i>Leg</i>
<i>John Andrews</i>	<i>OCSD</i>
<i>Helen Hudson</i>	<i>City of Syracuse</i>