



Onondaga County Legislature

JAMIE McNAMARA
Clerk

JAMES J. ROWLEY
Chairman

TAMMY BARBER
Deputy Clerk

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WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE MINUTES – APRIL 25, 2023 BRIAN F. MAY, CHAIR

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mr. Kinne

ALSO ATTENDING: Ms. Cody, Ms. Kuhn, Dr. Chase, Mr. McCarron, Mr. Bush; 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.*

1. APPOINTMENT:

a. **Recommending Appointments to the Central New York Regional Transportation Authority** (Sponsored by Mr. Rowley)

A motion was made by Ms. Abbott, seconded by Mr. Burtis, to approve this item. Ayes: 4 Abstentions: 2 (Ryan, Knapp); MOTION CARRIED.

2. DISTRICT ATTORNEY: Joseph Coolican, First Chief Assistant District Attorney

a. **Personnel Resolution** (Sponsored by Mr. Olson)

- Lost over 20 Assistant District Attorneys (ADA's) in 2022
- Criminal Justice Reform in affect 2020, Raise the Age and Bail Reform revamped discovery obligations in every case from misdemeanor to a murder; radically increasing workload of ADA's and changing nature of the job
- Pandemic – increase in violent crime; 2020 and 2021 had record number of homicides, violent crime (especially in city)
- As crime went up and cases shut down; felony trials per year:
 - 2016 – 62
 - 2018 & 2019 – 48
 - 2020 – 12
 - 2021 – 22
 - 2022 – 39
- This left a pandemic related law jam that broke in 2022; ADA's who were managing their caseload, suddenly could not
- Hiring freeze in public and/or private sectors exploded; people could do less work for more money
- “ADA 0” positions (10) starting pay is \$66,000 - not hiring attorneys at \$66,000
- Asking to unfund those positions, and use the savings to increase ability to hire new admitted attorneys
- ADAs with 1 or 2 years' experience in adjoining counties are making \$86,000
- If bring someone in at “ADA 1”, starting is \$72,000; cannot compete
- Traditionally have 3 Homicide Prosecutors – one was elected judge (Melinda McGunnigle), another left for private practice, and another took job at Attorney General's Office (invested in for years, but left for a \$20-\$30 pay increase)
- Never heard of people leaving DA's office for private practice, and now had 4 in the past year
- Attorney General's Office had 2 openings to do investigations into custodial deaths – every ADA applied for the jobs
- Person who has the job in AG office left the DA's Office in 2021 making \$95,000 and now makes over \$150,000
- 2 left for a new bureau in AG's office making \$20,000 - \$30,000 more than in the DA's office

Questions/Comments from the committee:

- Talking about need for a solution for couple years; increasing problem brought to Legislature's attention; well informed
- It says renaming, then removing titles effective first pay period of June 2023; where are those listed?
 - Personnel:
 - Currently there is a separate MC schedule including both DA titles and Law Department titles
 - Removal is taking DA titles off that schedule and creating a new salary schedule (attached to resolution)
- Last year there were 21 vacant funded, so if approved, how many vacant funded would there be at the new salary rate?
 - Finance:
 - Estimated annual cost based on current filled positions is ~\$680,000
 - 17 vacant funded ADA titles in that series; more than enough to cover increased costs related to this proposal
 - DA agreed to use those savings to fund this initiative
 - Mr. Coolican and Mr. Weiss will work with Finance to ensure they keep enough vacant titles to pay for program
 - Of the 17 vacant funded, it will take ~8 or 10 of those positions to pay for this initiative
 - This still allows Mr. Coolican the ability to hire into some of the vacant funded positions
 - Doing this initiative because they cannot fill positions, so it will still be a challenge
 - DA:
 - Understand that, and can ask more of those ADA's if they are getting a living wage
 - Do not have ability to pay overtime and increased workload ~50% with no added compensation
 - Not attractive competitive position to be in
 - Finance:
 - This is not abolishing any positions; working within the DA's existing budget and roster
 - Will incorporate this into next year's spending plan to ensure a swap out of funded vacants for the cost of this program
 - If DA's office believes they can fill more positions, then the DA will have to come back to make that case
- Will the ADA's come off the roster or be unfunded in the fall to fund the new salary rate?
 - Finance:
 - Doing that right now, but do not need to touch any of the positions; will not fill them
 - Going into budget, will unfund enough positions to pay for this initiative going forward
 - Will still leave vacant positions the DA's office can fill on top of what they have now
 - If this initiative does what they hope it will, and they attract more than what is vacant, then the DA will make case to ask for additional positions
 - DA
 - Accurate; cannot see the future with crime rates and other factors that weigh into how they do their job
 - Have crisis now trying to deal with, then will move forward
- Is the DA's office comfortable managing their caseload with funding the new salary rate for existing positions, as well as hiring 10 ADA's?
 - Yes
- There is a need for ADAs and to retain those that the county has with a competitive wage
- Need and justification has been established

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

3. SHERIFF'S OFFICE:**a. Personnel Resolution** (Sponsored by Mr. Olson)

- No one from the Sheriff's Office to present

4. COUNTY CLERK:

- a. **Authorizing New York State Reimbursement for 2023 Expenses of the Recording Officer for the County of Onondaga for Administration of Mortgage Taxes (\$459,747)**

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

5. ONONDAGA COMMUNITY COLLEGE:

- a. **Calling for a Public Hearing on the Tentative 2023-2024 Budget of the Onondaga Community College (May 23, 2023 at 11:15 a.m.)**

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

6. COMPTROLLER: Marty Masterpole, Comptroller

- a. **Amending the 2023 County Budget to Make Funds Available to Support Digitalization of Payroll Records (\$75,000)**

- Digitize personnel payroll records; currently still on microfiche and microfilm
- This is not a matching grant requirement, but NYS Archives said they are more likely to get it if there is skin in game
- Cautiously optimistic that the \$75,000 from NYS will be awarded next month
- NYS retention – some things have to retain in perpetuity; others can be disposed of after certain amount of years
- Not 100% sure what is on all of the microfiche and microfilms
- There are also filing cabinets that are locked with no keys that have to be drilled open
- Hoping this \$75,000 will be the only ask and can get through this with the total \$150,000
- There is an outside chance there may be another ask next year if necessary
- Moving forward, state has come with enhanced reporting for purposes of retirement, so a lot of information trying to digitize will be enhanced reported to the state, and no longer necessary to come out of Comptroller's Office

Questions/Comments from the committee:

- Please clarify the budgeting in the resolution
 - Finance:
 - 1st – Appropriating county share from fund balance
 - 2nd – Appropriating the state money
 - 3rd – Interfund transfer to move the money from operating to the grant budget (project set up)
 - Bottom pieces establish the project (transfer to grant and revenue in project)
 - Comptroller:
 - Have copies of grant application available if anyone wants to review it
- Is this project going to be contracted out, assuming it cannot be done in-house?
 - Comptroller:
 - Yes; NYS Archives grant has requirements for contractors that can do it
 - In-house almost impossible as Comptrollers does not have machinery to read some of it
 - Image Integrators (contractor) meets the qualifications, and they know the records retention laws

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

7. LAW DEPARTMENT:

- a. **Settlement of Actions**

Ms. Felice stated for the record, “Legislators, the resolutions you are to consider concern proposed litigation settlements, and therefore recommend such be discussed in Executive Session.”

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

Mr. Burtis made a motion, seconded by Mr. Ryan, to exit executive session and enter regular session. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.

Chair May stated for the record that no motions or actions were taken during executive session.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



JAMIE McNAMARA, Clerk
Onondaga County Legislature

ATTENDANCE

COMMITTEE: **WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE**

DATE: **APRIL 25, 2023**

| NAME (Please Print) | DEPARTMENT/AGENCY |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| Joe Coolican | District Attorney's |
| Barry Weiss | DA's Office |
| Michele Robinson | DA's Office |
| Kristi Smule | Fin Ops |
| ARON KOHLER | Finance |
| M. BERUNSKY | OCSC |
| Kate Felce | Law |
| Bob Durr | Law |
| Tim Frateschi | Leg |
| Darcie Lesniak | Leg. |
| John DeSantis | Leg. |
| Jim Beube | Leg. |
| Steve Morgan | CFO |
| Carl Hummel | Personnel |