



Onondaga County Legislature

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Chairman

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WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE MINUTES – AUGUST 23, 2022 BRIAN F. MAY, CHAIRMAN

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mr. Ryan

ALSO ATTENDING: Chairman Rowley, Ms. Gunnip, Mr. Bush, Mr. Garland; also see attached

Chair May called the meeting to order at 11:37 a.m. Chair May stated the approval of the minutes would be suspended until the next Ways and Means meeting.

1. **CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES:**

a. **Transfer Resolution (\$155,000)** (*Sponsored by Dr. Chase*)

2. **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT (E-911):**

a. **Transfer Resolution (\$15,000)** (*Sponsored by Mr. Olson*)

b. **Authorizing Executing of Agreements Regarding Mutual Aid Services Provided for Incident Response in Onondaga County by the Liverpool Fire Department** (*Sponsored by Mr. Olson*)

3. **WATER ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION:**

a. **Amending the 2022 County Budget and Appropriating for Increased Costs Associated with Increased Utility and Supply Chain Expenses (\$5,510,000)** (*Sponsored by Ms. Abbott*)

A motion was made by Mrs. Ervin, seconded by Mr. Olson, to approve the consent agenda. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.

REGULAR AGENDA

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

a. **Authorizing the Onondaga County Executive to File the 2022 Action Plan for the Community Development Block Grant, Home Grant and Emergency Solutions Grant Programs (\$3,196,455)** (*Sponsored by Mr. Burtis*)

- HUD Block grant; receive annually; entitlement grant – do not compete for, rewarded every year
- This year’s allocation down 2.4%; formula grant – find out amount when it shows up
- Clay receives own allocation as they are large enough entity – Community Development administers Clay’s allocation and receives 10% admin fee; Clay receives rest for their own projects
- Same goal accomplished by funding all projects submitted; only exceptions are Van Buren and Village of Solvay
- Village submitted 5 apps (4 for \$150,000 and 1 for \$50,000); Steering Committee considered that the county is spending another \$1M on façades on Milton Ave, did DOT work, and village working on 2 projects from previous years

*Ms. Abbott arrived at the meeting.

A motion was made by Mr. Burtis, seconded by Mr. Kinne, to approve this item. Ayes: 5 Abstentions: 1 (Olson); MOTION CARRIED.

2. TRANSPORTATION: Martin Voss, Commissioner**a. Authorizing Execution of Agreements with Cayuga County and with Towns and Villages Located in Onondaga County to Perform Snow and Ice Removal Services on Onondaga County Roads**
(Sponsored by Ms. Cody)

- Authorize entering into intermunicipal agreements with all 19 towns, couple villages and Cayuga County for municipal snow and ice removal in winter
- 2 year agreement at 3% a year; revisit in 2024
- Suggestion to have other municipalities not in the agreement help – DOT has looked at every scenario, but depends on where roads are, and what existing routes look like, to see if there is a way to maximize routes
- In agreement, there are towns that do 3 miles and others that do 30 miles; 50% of Van Buren’s work is DOT’s, which is because of the way the town is set up
- Have contingency plans with employees from Parks and WEP to help out; have not needed it the last 2 years
- Generosity of plow agreement was to offset other changes at the time by the Legislature and County Executive; managed to find ways to make it work; not sure these increases are sustainable long term
- Some concern with fuel prices and supply chain issues; towns buying salt and fuel from county
- Snowplow drivers are doing 12-16 hour days; 16 hours is the limit
- Agreement: towns and villages plow ~340 miles for the county; county plows 400 miles for state – main state highways; only state roads county not touching is interstates and Thruway

Staff in DOT

- Hiring going slowly; have 3 new trainees, 1 retiree coming back for winter; still facing same crisis as state
- Concerned with how winter presents itself and how DOT will respond; will do what is necessary to get job done, but there are rules on governing how hard the staff can work in the winter
- Currently down 5-6 drivers at each shop (~25% of workforce); need 20 at each shop
- County is 24/7 coverage, unlike towns and villages; night crews handle morning commute
- Losing workforce from county to towns; every town in the county pays better than the county

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

- Why doing 400 miles for state when short staffed? Way routes set up, it is more efficient for the county to go off route and handle; everything connecting to Route 20 is the county’s, so trucks are out there
- This lengthens route, but makes more sense for county to do, rather than state going off interstate to do
- Mr. Donnelly, previous commissioner, set this up in the most efficient way possible
- County equipment more appropriate for higher volume roads; trucks are larger; roads given to towns and villages are smaller and narrower
- State reimbursement to county is different, not as generous
- Sales tax formula changed, and this agreement was a way for county to compensate towns and villages for losses
- i.e. Fayetteville – \$20 mil hit since 2010 when redid sales tax agreement; almost 5-6 years of budget lost

3. ONONDAGA COMMUNITY COLLEGE: Mark Manning, Chief Financial Officer**a. A Resolution Authorizing Various Improvements at Onondaga Community College Facilities in and for the County of Onondaga, New York, at a Maximum Estimated Cost of \$20,500,000, and Authorizing the Issuance of \$10,250,000 Bonds of Said County to Pay Costs Thereof (\$10,250,000)**
(Sponsored by Ms. Cody)

- HVAC, boilers, chillers for 4 buildings; building envelope packages of roofs, masonry; hazmat survey; windows; site improvement package including underground storage tanks, site survey, underground gas line replacement, etc.
- Consider NYSERDA – part of process; work with them to get grants and rebates

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

- b. A Resolution Authorizing the Construction of a Workforce Career Lab at Onondaga Community College in and for the County of Onondaga, New York, at a Maximum Estimated Cost of \$5,500,000, and Authorizing the Issuance of \$2,750,000 Bonds of Said County to Pay Costs Thereof (\$2,750,000) (Sponsored by Ms. Cody)**

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

- c. A Resolution Authorizing HVAC And Other Energy Related Improvements at Coyne Hall at Onondaga Community College in and for the County of Onondaga, New York, at a Maximum Estimated Cost of \$5,000,000, and Authorizing the Issuance of \$2,500,000 Bonds of Said County to Pay Costs Thereof (\$2,500,000) (Sponsored by Ms. Cody)**

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

- d. A Resolution Authorizing the School of Health Expansion Project for the Onondaga Community College in and for the County of Onondaga, New York, at a Maximum Estimated Cost of \$30,000,000, and Authorizing the Issuance of \$15,000,000 Bonds of Said County to Pay Costs Thereof (\$15,000,000) (Sponsored by Ms. Cody)**

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

- e. Approving Onondaga Community College's Wireless Network Upgrade Project and Associated Budget and Authorizing the use of a Portion of Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds for Project Costs (\$1,332,687)**

- College planning to use Empire stimulus funds – part of usage is technology upgrades; proceeding to use \$1,332,687 out of those funds; SUNY said if OCC could get county to support, they will handle the 50% local share
- Money county does not need to pay; will preserve half of the stimulus funds to use for other sources at college
- OCC needs a resolution from the county, letter from CPA firm showing approved project under stimulus funds, and letter from President; will submit to state, and state will fund 50%

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

4. BOARD OF ELECTIONS:

- a. Transfer Resolution (\$10,906)**

5. FINANCE: Steve Morgan, Chief Fiscal Officer

- a. Facilities - Transfer Resolution (\$858,993) (Sponsored by Ms. Cody)**
b. OCPL - Transfer Resolution (\$100,000) (Sponsored by Ms. Cody)
c. Parks & Recreation - Transfer Resolution (\$275,000) (Sponsored by Ms. Cody)
d. Transportation - Transfer Resolution (\$121,684) (Sponsored by Ms. Cody)

- Fixing all within the department when possible; when not, they are tapping into Medicaid program, due to the continued enhanced federal reimbursement receiving because of pandemic (underestimated this year)
- When budget put together, at \$0.06 kilowatt, now at \$0.10; gas at \$4/dekatherm, now at \$8; costs doubled since budget was put together; not seeing relief on horizon
- Have dabbled in different approaches utilizing consultants; locking in and doing reverse auctions; buying in bulk on some accounts; last time the county did, energy prices went down
- Will look at ways to make as steady as possible; back to paying what the market is; will look at it again

A motion was made by Mrs. Ervin, seconded by Mr. Kinne, to approve items 4a and 5a - d. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.

e. Amending the 2022 County Budget to Make Funds Available to Support Various Housing Initiatives within Onondaga County (\$14,726,082) – Martin Skahen, Director of Community Development

- Legislature representative will be part of selection for \$10M housing initiative
- General criteria for choosing one project over another
 - Impact and need based on application; difficult to be more specific until receiving applications
 - Committee will work together to decide which projects are the best to fund based on impact and need
 - Other criteria will come up based on what is received
- Who is on committee? Director of Community Development, representative from County Executive' office, representative from Purchasing, and member of the Legislature
- Skin in game for commitment – developers will have to show they have viable project and financial means to proceed if they receive funding; no dollar match
- Understanding of what other efforts are or could be done – builders and developers have incentive programs they can tap into; this is another “tool in the toolbox”; another thing that does not currently exist
- More information on eligibility (where to build targets, how builders are chosen, who, what, when and where) – program is countywide; not limited to any certain area; any viable project from builder will be eligible and reviewed
- Once approved, is there a way to ensure there are not multiple delays – assume it will be part of application to show the developer has means to do it, and they are down the road a bit on project
- County reimbursement program, so incentive to move; limit to \$250,000 per project; can fund a number of projects

Mrs. Ervin stated for the record that she “wants to see more being done for housing for folks who really need it.”

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

f. Amending the 2022 County Budget to Make Surplus Room Occupancy Funding Available for use in Support of Hospitality Initiatives (\$1,500,000) (Sponsored by Ms. Gunnip)

The Hospitality Support Initiative is intended to provide direct funding to the hotel and ancillary hospitality industries in an effort to help stabilize our area's tourism infrastructure. The program will be coordinated by the Onondaga County Economic Development Department and an application has been developed to allow for hospitality related businesses to request funding.

The Hospitality and Tourism industry faced and continues to face tremendous hardships as a result of the COVID pandemic. Recovery in this sector continues to lag behind other sectors. In q1 2020, there were 25,381 jobs in the hospitality industry in Syracuse MSA. As of q4 2021 there are 21,657, which is still 3,714 below pre-pandemic. The current unemployment rate in this sector is approximately 9.6%

The fund will be comprised of \$1.5 million for existing ROT Fund balance. It will be divided into 2 separate initiatives:

1. Direct Aid to Hotels (\$500,000)
 - a. Any hotel in Onondaga County can apply for this funding
 - b. Maximum amount of any single award cannot exceed the percentage of ROT associated with the property (based on 2021 collections). Ex. Hotel "A" generated 7% of the total ROT collection so their award cannot exceed 7% of \$500,000 or \$35,000
 - c. Funds may be used for capital improvements, workforce development, marketing or other operating expenses
2. Direct Aid to Hospitality Tourism Infrastructure (\$1,000,000)
 - a. This funding would be for capital improvements only
 - b. This funding would be available for non-hotel businesses within the hospitality arena (Restaurants, Banquet Facilities, Sporting Facilities, Arts and Cultural organizations, etc.)

- Current ROT Fund Balance is \$2.8 million
- Balance after this expenditure would be \$1.3 Million
- The submissions will be reviewed by a committee composed of the Economic Development Director, the Deputy County Executive and a member of the Legislature.

- ROT trending – budget this year little over \$7M; expect return of at least as much as this project
- By end of year, ROT will be back where it is before this appropriation if approved
- New rate helping and starting to see more bed nights; with room nights and additional 2%, will see full effect in 2023
- *Suggestion:*
 - Have workforce development be #1 thing - every restaurant, every hotel down at least 10-20%; cannot do anything without workers; feel 100% should be workforce development
 - Industry severely impacted by pandemic; every employer struggling to fill jobs; have problems countywide
- Element of homeownership; has to be capital improvement piece

A motion was made by Mr. Kinne to approve this item.

- Is County assisting Hotel Syracuse parking garage – scenario publicized that garage is way behind on taxes; county gave up \$15M for hotel; county cannot let them go out of business

Request for next meeting:

1. Information on the Hotel Syracuse parking garage that is behind on taxes

Seconded by Mrs. Ervin. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.

g. Revising the Policy that Directs General Fund Accumulated Fund Balance in Excess of 15 Percent of General Fund Revenues to Debt Management and Reduction, and to Prevent Fluctuations in the Real Property Tax Levy, and Amending Resolution No. 270-1999, as Amended

- *Suggestion:*
 - Make evaluating policy part of annual process (i.e. at organizational meeting or budget process)
- Germane point is setting threshold; good fiscal stewardship to evaluate on annual basis with future resolution or policy
- Committee in agreement that discussion should happen more frequently on the fund balance percentage – possibly annually or every other year
- *Suggestion:*
 - Discuss when CFO reports on forecast, talk about yearend, discuss where the county is with fund balance, also Comptroller talking about financials; requires CFO input (not at budget with estimates)
- Currently talk about fund balance, 10% threshold when worried about it; not sure percentage has ever changed
- If approving \$10M at session, then there will be \$70M approved this year in additional fund balance use
- Will continue this conversation; stick to proposed 15%
- Ended pandemic and did not touch fund balance – proposal is increasing percentage by 50%
- *Suggestion:*
 - Use staged approach (i.e. 12.5%), then use 2.5% for other things; i.e. housing issues, hospitality and tourism
- 15% enough; married to 10% long time, but need to do something with the excess of 15%; sitting on \$200M
- Reminder that NYS comptroller would like county at 20% fund balance

A motion was made by Mr. Burtis, seconded by Ms. Abbott, to approve this item. Ayes: 4 (Burtis, Abbott, Ervin, May) Noes: 2 (Olson, Kinne); MOTION CARRIED.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



JAMIE McNAMARA, Clerk
Onondaga County Legislature

ATTENDANCE

COMMITTEE: WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE

DATE: AUGUST 23, 2022

NAME (Please Print)	DEPARTMENT/AGENCY
Rebecca Shirots	OC/DA
Nate Stevens	Ec. Dev.
Mark Nicotra	Parks
Mike LaFleur	OCCD
See Torney	OCC
Mark Mann	OCC
MATT ROSS	DOT
ARCHIE WILSON	DOT / EM
Phny Donahue	DOT / Fin Ops
Marty Schum	Community Development
Da Weas	EM
Tawesha Murphy	CE Office
John DeSantis	Leg
Darcie Lesniak	Leg
Jim Beebe	Leg.
Katharine Flicci	Law