



Onondaga County Legislature

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Chairman

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Deputy Clerk

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WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE MINUTES – SEPTEMBER 15, 2023 BRIAN F. MAY, CHAIR

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

Chair May called the meeting to order at 9:34 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. DISTRICT ATTORNEY:

a. **2023 Transfer Resolution (\$22,000)** (Sponsored by Mr. Olson)

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

2. WATER ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION: Shannon Harty, Commissioner

a. **2023 Transfer Resolution (\$2,270,000)** (Sponsored by Ms. Abbott)

- 2 sizable unanticipated impacts to budget
 - Supplies & Materials Account
 - Try to anticipate supply chain issues with chemicals; contracts renew on 6 month basis, which had increases
 - Need additional \$1.6M
 - Proposing to fund through transfer of surplus funds in 2 accounts
 - 101 – Employee Salaries – anticipate \$1M surplus; hiring and recruiting, but have retirements
 - 413 – Utilities – last year needed budget amendment with utility rates spiking; rates have plummeted
 - Using \$600,000 from 413
 - Biosolids disposal – Metro WWTP
 - 5 year fixed contract; first 4 years had stable costs related to biosolids at \$3M
 - Due to regulatory environment and restrictions of biosolids, landfill under contract (Ontario County) could no longer receive the biosolids
 - Had to find alternative location and rates went up significantly; over budget by \$670,000
 - 2024 budget anticipating cost increase continuing to escalate; did not renew contract
 - Good news is WEP is starting new biosolids sludge dryer
 - Started testing systems, which will reduce amount of biosolids sending to landfill and create opportunity for Class A biosolids
 - Have good plan in place to mitigate impact to biosolids

*Mr. Kinne arrived at the meeting.

- Biosolids are currently going to Seneca Meadows
- All landfills across NYS shutting down, do not want biosolids
- Never able to use unstable biosolids; Class A biosolids can be used as cover and have a cheaper disposal rate
- The dryer will get biosolids to that (Class A); will be able to cut costs to 1/3

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

- Bought sludge dryer 2 years ago; started building last year; dryer equipment installed this summer; started burners last week and will be going through systems
- Hoping to put sludge through it by the end of October; will have ribbon cutting
- Looking at fueling with WEP's methane; currently have natural gas service working with National Grid to run burners
- Long term, will look at what is the best use of methane gas and how to stabilize utility bills

Ms. Abbott seconded the motion.

- Lot of WEP's budget is driven by Metro WWTP; small changes at Metro means big dollars
- Working on how to find tune, monitor and stabilize the budget

Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.**3. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: Martin Skahen, Director****a. Authorizing the Acceptance and Sale of Real Property Located at 3309 Howlett Hill Road in the Town of Onondaga (Sponsored by Mr. Burtis)**

- Property acquired through Housing Development Fund Company
- House looked great from outside, and inside looked good, but major reconstruction and an asbestos survey
- Found asbestos, spent quite a bit of money to abate the asbestos
- Did masonry work and shoring up holes, then the basement flooded to the first floor; water an issue for a while
- Brought in an architect to find out what it would cost to be able to sell the house, but very cost prohibitive
- Asking county to take the property back and dispose to developer who can fix or demolish the house
- Do not usually run into this problem, and have not had to ask for this to happen; this one is an exception

Questions/Comments from the committee:

- How old is the house?
 - 1920
- Why did the county take possession of the house?
 - Part of acquisitions of tax delinquent properties taking yearly from tax auction from Housing Development Fund Company to fix up and sell to low income first-time homebuyers
- The houses are usually taken from good neighborhoods, correct?
 - Not necessarily; doing one with Land Bank in city right now in Eastwood on South Collingwood
 - Most of the time, auction houses are out in the county
- Howlett Hill is a good area and a private developer should have taken the house
 - On the other side, Community Development (CD) is taking a property in a rundown neighborhood and will fix it up to make it one of the nicest houses on the street
 - It will then be sold to a low income first-time homebuyer (80% of average median income)
 - CD subsidizes the mortgage for \$30,000 to create life changing equity situation the person would never have
 - Their mortgage is equal to rent, but the person owns a home versus renting
- Is this an exception to the rule?
- Typically CD does this successfully and can offer a first-time homebuyer a chance to get out of a cycle and be on a better trajectory
 - Yes; also people doing work on the homes are independent contractors in Onondaga County who bid on the work
- The piece that government is involved in is getting people into home ownership to give them financial stability
 - Yes, it is a life changer for a family
 - Any social demographics will show that having a stable home results in better health, education and outcomes

- People that buy these homes will have equity in the home for a loan by the time their kids are in college, so the kid can go to college
- Been on Housing Development Fund Company Board for many years, and cannot remember last time the county had to take back home; this is the exception rather than rule
- Over the years, they have done many homes in Nedrow and other areas to make a difference in neighborhoods
- Absolutely a place for private sector, but private companies are not cutting price for first-time homebuyers to buy house
- Also, contractors used are on MWB list

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

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

- Tax bills that are incorrect over \$2,500 need legislative approval to get the bills corrected
- A few listed are due to sewer rates, and one owned by NYS that did not get the state exemption

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

5. PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT: Carl Hummel, Commissioner
a. Accepting and Approving the Contract Between Onondaga County and the Civil Service Employees' Association, Inc., Local 1000 AFSCME, ALF-CIO, Onondaga County Employees Local 834

- Tentative agreement with CSEA (not correction unit) (*Agreement on file with the Clerk*)
- 4 year agreement 2023-2026
- Wage increases
 - First year flat dollar amounts on schedule (compounding): Grades 1-5 receive \$2,500, Grades 6-15 receive \$1,750
 - Applied to all current employees comes out to be 3.4% increase – retroactive to beginning of year
 - 2024 – 2026 is 3%
- Grade increases for 19 titles
 - Appendix A shows the titles, current grade and grade agreed on with union
 - Hard to recruit positions and some have fallen below market rate for the work
- Shift differential premium going from \$1.10 to \$1.50, then \$1.75 last year of agreement
- Children's Protective Unit (CPU) On Call or night service
 - Premium that case workers receive based on when they do it, and their title
 - Has not increased since 2012
 - Increased by \$18 per level; matrix in packet
- CPU – sometimes pick up overflow work from Child Advocacy Center
 - Employees that are forensically trained and pick up overflow work will receive an annual \$175 stipend
- Modifications to calculation of overtime compensation premium, holiday eligibility premium, and continuous recruitment procedural
 - Make it easier for county to administer programs and keeps it consistent with other labor agreements
 - Change to way floating holidays earned
 - Have drug/alcohol testing policy as part of contract – reasonable suspicion testing, not random testing
 - Random testing will occur for those required under state and fed law

Questions/Comments from the committee:

- For grades 1-5, is the \$2,500 being added to the base?
 - Yes, instead of a percentage, it is a straight \$2,500 on the base
 - Next year the 3% will be on top of the new number

- Membership voted
 - Yes, it was ratified; approx. 60% to 40%
- Why did it take so long to come before the Legislature?
 - Union ratified on August 8th
 - Would have had to have everything to WMS by Aug 12th
 - Enormous amount of work to process to bring over
 - Could not have ready for September Session
- When will this go into effect?
 - Upon adoption; many provisions go into effect upon adoption
 - Wages retroactive to first full pay period of 2023
- What is the percentage going forward for the rates?
 - 2024, 2025 and 2026 are all 3%
- If someone is in a job title in the union with experience, can the county hire them at an advanced step? Or do they have to be hired at step 1?
 - Provision for advanced step hire under Appendix A Section 5
 - Department Head has to request from Personnel Commissioner (who has authority to approve advanced step hire)
 - It is based on either (1) difficulty of recruiting for position or (2) qualifications person has for the position
 - Commissioner consults with civil service staff to determine whether it is appropriate or not

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

The meeting was adjourned at 10:08 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



JAMIE McNAMARA, Clerk
Onondaga County Legislature

ATTENDANCE

COMMITTEE: WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE

DATE: SEPTEMBER 15, 2023

NAME (Please Print)	DEPARTMENT/AGENCY
DARCIE Lesniak	Leg
Jim Beebe	Leg
Don Weber	Tax
Mindy Skala	Community Development
Donna Bruscia	Personnel
Carl Hummel	Personnel
SHAWSON HARTY	OWNER
Daniel Rance	
John DeSantis	Leg.
Tim Fratocchi	Leg.
Ben Yaws	Law
Steve Morgan	CFO