



Onondaga County Legislature

DEBORAH L. MATURO
Clerk

DAVID H. KNAPP
Chairman

KATHERINE FRENCH
Deputy Clerk

401 Montgomery Street • Court House • Room 407 • Syracuse, New York 13202
Phone: 315.435.2070 Fax: 315.435.8434
www.ongov.net

WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE 2020 BUDGET REVIEW OF WAYS & MEANS DEPARTMENTS September 18, 2019 DEB CODY, CHAIR

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr. Rowley, Ms. Williams, Mrs. Ervin, Mr. Ryan, Mr. May, Mr. Jordan
ALSO PRESENT: Chairman Knapp, Mr. Holmquist, Dr. Chase, Mr. Burtis, Mr. Bush, Mrs. Tassone, Ms. Abbott-Kenan, Mr. McBride

Chair Cody called the meeting to order at 9:15 a.m.

COUNTY GENERAL-OTHER ITEMS, pg.3-34 - Steven Morgan, CFO; Tara Venditti, Deputy Budget Director

Contractual Expenses:

- Includes \$7,595,000
- Village Infrastructure Fund - \$5.2 million – increased in 2020 up from \$4.5 million
- Visit Syracuse - \$2.325 million
- Syracuse Nationals - \$25,000
- Tourism Initiatives - \$45,000
- OHA is funded at \$188,000
- Erie Canal Museum is funded at \$73,000
- Transfer to grants, \$250,000:
 - Greater Syracuse Land bank – at 2019 level
 - Decrease of \$200,000 – Hire Ground funding moved to DSS since they administer that contract
- All Other Expenses, \$94,929 - countywide memberships and dues for NYSAC, NYS County Executive's Association, audit fees for deferred savings plans and other County wide expenses.

OnCenter Revenue Fund, pg. 3-36:

- Account for OnCenter operations, managed by SMG
- \$2.7 million, includes \$1.275 million for the OnCenter subsidy including SMG:
 - \$25,000 more than 2019 budget
 - Had reduced the \$1.3 million subsidy down to \$1.25 million for this year;
 - Slowly look to get back to \$1.3 million
 - \$250,000 capital improvements – same as 2019
 - \$1.1 million for facilities maintenance support

County Wide Taxes, pg. 3-38:

- Estimates of property tax and sales tax
- Proposed property tax levy, adjusted by estimates of unpaid current year taxes and payments of delinquent taxes
- Estimates for deferred and uncollectable taxes, and prior year tax collections, are based on historical collection rates.
- Anticipate approximately \$15.5 million of deferred and uncollectable taxes and \$13.5 million of prior year tax collections in the 2020 budget.
- Property tax levy is \$149.6 million, a \$4 million increase when compared to the 2019 levy
 - This levy increase reduces the tax rate to \$5.00 per thousand and maintains a levy well below the property tax cap.

- County and other municipalities are required to submit and attest to either staying within the property tax cap or voting to override it and exceed the cap – never done in this county
- County raise the levy another \$4 million and still be under the property tax cap
- Non Real Property Tax Items, - \$286 million estimate of sales tax revenue:
 - Estimate 2019 sales tax collections will finish 3% higher than 2018 actual collections and assumes growth of 2% above the 2019 estimate
 - Yet to see any significant collections related to internet sales tax that was passed in the NYS budget
 - AIM funding that went to towns and villages will have to come out of our sales tax going forward
 - \$2.5 million will be scraped by the State Comptroller and paid to the municipalities

Interfund Transfers, pg. 3-40:

- Transfer of general fund dollars to support OCC, the Road Fund, Library and so forth
- It is the local dollar portion of those budgets. You will review these items when you review the budgets for those departments.

Debt Service, pg. 3-42:

- County wide debt service for costs are on page 3-42 and reflect countywide debt service for WEP, Water, and the General Fund.
- 2020 budget includes gross debt service payments of \$68.9 million – mitigated with reserves that have built up for debt service and the Oneida exclusivity payment which go to pay the debt service on the amphitheater

Countywide Allocations, pg. 3-44:

- All Other Expenses, \$3 million - cost of college chargebacks for County residents attending a community college outside Onondaga County.
- Certiorari, \$200,000 - expected cost of tax certiorari settlements; years where it has been under \$200K and years where it was over; hard to estimate
- Sales Tax to Other Govts, \$96 million estimate to share with the City and schools

Revenues:

- Other Real Property Tax Items, \$10 million:
 - PILOTS of \$2.7 million
 - \$7.4 million of interest and penalties on delinquent taxes
 - Interest and Earning – seeing rate of return increase - estimating investable balances earn an estimated .75%

Mr. Rowley:

- Contractual expenses, pg. 3.34, do you have breakdown of the \$840K – knows the bulk of it is Village Infrastructure - wondering how much we are giving to Visit Syracuse and if anything to the Nationals

Mr. Morgan:

- Visit Syracuse is \$2,325,000, \$105,000 more than 2019
- \$5.2 million is Village Infrastructure Fund

Mr. Rowley:

- Do we have any idea what the \$105K request is?

Mr. Morgan:

- A big part is that Mr. Liedka is trying to re-establish himself outside of CenterState
- They have found their own space--will be moving out; utilizing administrative support services elsewhere

Mr. Rowley:

- Is this the second year we have funding the land bank

Mr. Morgan:

- How was it funded in the past – the transfer to grant was \$0 in 2018

Mr. Morgan:

- It started at \$500,000 and has slowly whittled down – it must have been funded under a different account

Mr. Rowley:

- What does non-real property tax items consist of

Mr. Morgan:

- ROT that support Visit Syracuse, Erie Canal and OHA

Mr. Rowley:

- Same question for OnCenter – what's in the non-real property tax line

Mr. Morgan:

- Its ROT all the time

Mr. Rowley:

- Pg. 3-38 – You mentioned that the real property tax county wide is \$149 million; that the number on page 2-10. This page says \$147 million.

Mr. Morgan:

- That includes prior years' tax collections, as well as deferred and uncollectible – those 3 items roll up to that number, including the levy

Mr. Rowley:

- Curious about estimate for sales tax; the description is 2% over projected, but are up 5.25% over modified budget
- What was the bump for the bowling?

Mr. Morgan:

- It's hard to pinpoint the exact impact on sales tax, but certainly the overall growth in 2018 was significant, it was 7% – we grew year over year for 2017 to 2018, 7%
- No doubt that the fact that the bowling conference was here for that time certainly had an impact on that
- The level of granularity of information from the state doesn't allow us to pinpoint why people are here and spending money
- It might be a good question for Mr. Liedka; they do quite a bit of analysis on the economic impact of having events in the community
- I'd be remiss if I didn't state that obviously the bowling conference had something to do with the hefty growth in sales tax in 2018
- Ending 2018 with sales tax collections higher than we did in 2019 – a good problem
- Assuming 3% growth this year; are at 2% now; factor in another 2% growth over that in 2020

Mr. Rowley:

- Pg. 3-44 – knows the bulk of Sales Tax to Other Govts. is to the city, but approximately how much are we giving to the schools

Mr. Morgan:

- Last year it was just under \$2.5 million – a vast majority of that goes to the city – with the amended sales tax agreement that goes through 2030, those shares remain the same

Mr. Rowley:

- All Other Expenses, \$3 million – that's all chargebacks?

Mr. Morgan:

- Correct
- Have had to increase it steadily over the last few years

Ms. Williams:

- Land bank, \$250K – what does it go toward?

Mr. Morgan:

- It has varied over the years, as there have been conditions on it; not sure if there will be conditions on the \$250K going into 2020 or not, but believes it is general support of the land bank

Ms. Williams:

- Has a lot of concerns about the land bank – speaking specifically in my district, there seems to be an awful lot of land bank homes and don't see anything being done
- Is there a way that we can get exactly how many land bank homes are in the city of Syracuse; do they provide us with that information?

Mr. Morgan:

- Yes – the land bank has that information; we can facilitate getting you that information

Mr. Ryan:

- Village Infrastructure Fund – when we appropriated the funds, will they come back to us with specific projects or requests

Mr. Morgan:

- Villages required to submit a proposed plan on how they are going to use the funds
- I think the program is in its 10th year – tied to the sales tax agreement – they have to submit a plan for how they will use the money in their current year, and have to file how they will actually use the money in the previous year
- That comes to my office – those 2 pieces of information have to be received by us before we will pay them for the current year's amount
- Amounts are all spread based on population; amounts don't change – once they are set, they are set and that's what they receive every year
- They will receive a larger proportionate share since the money is going from \$4.5 million to \$5.2 million

Mr. Ryan:

- We appropriated "x" amount of money within the sales tax revenue

Mr. Morgan:

- No – that's not sales tax money

Mr. Ryan:

- But we give them back for approved projects that they are going to take on

Mr. Morgan:

- Yes
- In essence, it's local dollars that we appropriate for villages to maintain infrastructure, capital improvements; those types of expenses
- They have to submit a plan that we review; they have to submit an accounting of how they use the previous year's money before we will disburse the current year's allocation

Mr. Ryan:

- Do we have a list of projects that have been completed in the last 5 years?

Mr. Morgan:

- We have the information that has been submitted to us; we can put it into condensed form

Mr. Ryan:

- When do the requests go in for next year?

Mr. Morgan:

- We make payments in January and July
- Before make the paying in January, they have to have a report for how they used the previous year's money and then a budget for the current year and how they are going to use it
- Can get you a summary of the most recent project completions

Mr. Ryan:

- Can we go back 10 years?

Mr. Morgan:

- Without looking at the documents, they are fairly standard: sidewalk improvements/replacements; paving projects – all within the same grouping for the most part; will get you something

Chair Cody:

- AIM funding to towns and villages?

Mr. Morgan:

- With the passage to the state budget, originally the state proposed to straight out eliminate AIM funding for those towns and villages that it didn't represent – thinks it was 2% of their budget
- In essence it was going to pretty much phase out all of the state AIM that towns and villages get
- There was big push back; at the end of the day, the legislation requires the share of county sales tax within that jurisdiction to be used to replace that AIM
- The state said "we aren't going to pay you anymore, the county is going to pay you."
- The state comptroller will scrape off the amount that was going to towns and villages, \$2.5 million, that will now go to towns and villages – they will get the same amount, but it will come from the county's sales tax

- The offset to that is supposed to be the increase in internet sales tax collected with the new legislation passed in the budget, as well as the exemption on ESCOs, but the law doesn't specifically tie it to those

Chair Cody:

- Do you have a projection for the internet sales tax?

Mr. Morgan:

- No. The state provided a statewide projection – hoping the state comptroller has the ability to report to us how much was collected and remitted to the county, based on those transactions
- Have not seen anything to date

Mr. Rowley:

- When does that legislation go into effect?

Mr. Morgan:

- Now

Mr. Rowley:

- Is it in this budget?

Mr. Morgan:

- For us, it will start this year. This year, at some point, the state comptroller will take \$2.5 million, that was going to come to the county – scrape it off and give it to the towns and villages
- That will continue until the law changes again - in 2020 the same thing will happen.
- With a budget of this size in sales tax, we are assuming that the collections related to the new sales tax on the internet will offset it
- That's what we are programming for in the 2020 budget – as we get more and more information, we will make the determination if that is going to be sufficient collections for not
- At the end of the day, they are going to take that money regardless of the performance of sales tax.
- If a recession hits and sale tax takes a dive like it did previously, they are still going to take \$2.5 million from us and funnel it to the towns and villages.

Mr. Rowley:

- Pg. 2-11, revenue totals – trying to reconcile the increase in general fund revenues
- If you look at the previous page, the all fund revenue trend analysis – have property tax is going up roughly \$4 million; county sales tax portion going up about \$14 million. Understands that's a big piece of why general fund revenue is going up, but then state aid is going down \$18 million
- I don't have a breakout by fund, but assumes most state aid goes into general fund
- Wondering how you get to \$22 million when I'm looking at the big pieces and it looks flat

Mr. Morgan:

- I think the majority of that decrease in state aid is related to the anticipated grants from the state
- Can double check that for you – thinks we are anticipating a dip in grants coming in – not supporting the operating budget, but supporting the grants budget

Mr. Rowley:

- Other Finance Sources – it seems very variable over the actuals, adopted, and modified budgets

Mr. Morgan:

- Thinks that is related to refunding debt – will confirm that for you

Mr. Maturo:

- It is

Mr. Rowley:

- What is the all other line?

Mr. Morgan:

- That includes fees that the county charges, repayments from Social Services
- Will give you a further detail of that

Mr. Rowley:

- Pg. 2-5 Fund Balance – general grants negative fund balance is down from last year
- From the legislative perspective, we have harped on collecting grant monies – wondering if that is part of the effort here

Mr. Morgan:

- Absolutely. There was a fairly sizeable project in the Village of Solvay; it took quite a bit of time to get the requirements and contracts in place with the state to get that money flowing.
- We were admittedly behind in getting that cash in the door – have done a much better job of it as of late
- We are on top of it at this point.

Mr. Rowley:

- How can we appropriate a little over \$8 million when we are estimating the fund balance to be \$6.5 million?

Ms. Venditti:

- The 2019 estimate doesn't have the Oneida exclusivity funds that will come in.

Mr. Morgan:

- The money we receive from Oneida Nation, for being one of the counties that can never have a casino – this is where the money goes, but it's not in there yet
- The debt service on the amphitheater is just under \$3 million
- Those exclusivity funds will go into there to offset that debt service

Mr. Rowley:

- Library Fund Balance – wondering what the strategy or the logic is behind using all of that fund balance in this budget

Mr. Morgan:

- We have historically used and required the library to use all of the fund balance that exists.
- A big part of it is that it is general fund dollars, not for the branches, but other operations
- The other funds that are supported solely by general fund dollars – those dollars are due back to the general fund
- Instead of adjusting the interfund transfer from the general fund to support the library, we require them to use any on-hand fund balance first.
- The branches are funded by the abstract – from that perspective, any fund balance that exists will be turned back over – it's a reconciled item that will go back to the city taxpayers

Mr. Rowley:

- Insurance fund – last year in the health line fund balance was - \$9.7 million; we have had a dramatic turnaround, now positive \$4.9 million – what happened?

Mr. Morgan:

- Claims related – there was a perfect storm. We changed TPA's, there were some challenges there, and at the same time we had rash of high cost claimants – abnormal.
- We really drained the fund balance and the insurance fund – it really spiked and there was a pressure on our budget
- Soon after that we went out for competitive process like we normally would and were able to bring Excellus in, their proposal put in place claims guarantees – up to that point had been unheard of
- They actually said "we will guarantee that you won't spend a dime more than what you spent the previous year or we will write you a check"
- Not only did they meet that mark, we believe they are below that mark
- It could be the fact that the current TPA is managing that better, or the overall health of our population hopefully has improved; thinks the insurance fund is back to the road of recovery
- Will continue to manage that fund balance; use it where it makes sense, try to not have big spikes in the PER for the employees, use it reasonably and responsively

Mr. Rowley:

- Do we have stop loss for high claims?

Mr. Morgan:

- No we don't. When we had that year with a significant amount of high-cost claimants, that's not the time to go buy it.
- We didn't obviously pursue it; it's something that we have been talking about again; may see us potentially investing in that

Mr. May:

- Point of clarification – insurance fund-fund balance – those aren't reserve dollars; they are cost management dollars that we are accumulating to protect ourselves against spikes

Mr. Morgan:

- They aren't planned surpluses

Mr. May:

- But there are reserves within a plan

Mr. Morgan:

- We don't have planned reserves to support the insurance fund
- When we budget from a year to year bases, we are assuming what we are budgeting is what we are going spend

Mr. May:

- Direct claims costs

Mr. Morgan:

- Yes

Mr. May:

- Can you speak to the overall budgeting mindset with respect to obligations; are we being aggressive based on the trend; are we being conservative, are we being super conservative?

Mr. Morgan:

- We are realistic but conservative; we usually lean towards we are going to spend more than we hope
- Sometimes that results in accumulation of fund balance
- The shift to Excellus has really stabilized our shift in this area – it has allowed us to be a little bit more comfortable with projections short-term, mid-term, and long term, in where we are going in the insurance fund

Mr. May:

- Are they doing anything special in the way of claims management on the health side or any other aspect of the self-insured?

Mr. Morgan:

- Can't speak to the claims management piece of it; Mr. Hummel would be better to speak to that
- Their network is wide and far; they have competitive relationships in the medical community; that speaks for itself

Mr. May:

- It probably helps in the 55-65

Mr. Morgan:

- Yes; the Medicaid eligible retirees has been a welcome source of stability, especially now that we join with the city and the school district and combined our purchasing power to drive those costs down; it's been a sense of stability as well

Mr. May:

- What is the timeline for the city and school district coming on

Mr. Morgan:

- They didn't come on; we pooled our purchasing power, but still have our own separate contracts.

Mr. May:

- Their claims are their claims?

Mr. Morgan:

- Yes; we still operate separately. There has been some discussion, and it may be something you see surface, about a potential health care consortium.
- There is only one in the state in Tompkins county, that I'm aware of; it's a whole different animal

Mr. May:

- I do not support that.

Mr. Morgan:

- We have experience in the Workers Comp arena – have some municipalities that are in our self-insured fund – we know the pros and cons of it
- There has been a little bit of discussion about villages and towns wanting in to our health insurances, but I don't think anyone truly knows what that means

Chair Cody:

- The purchase of Medicare Advantage with the city and school district—we were supposed to receive a matching payment from the state

Mr. Morgan:

- We just recently submitted the reimbursement application that covers not only that but other projects that were completed with justifiable and documented savings.
- That plan went in just recently; hopefully will hear on that soon.

Chairman Knapp:

- We have a bid out for the prescription program; when does that come back in and will it be reflected in this budget?

Mr. Morgan:

- We are still in the review process; the proposals are in; we are in the analytical stage now with our consultants
- We joined forces with the city and the County of Oswego with hopes of driving those costs down.
- Hopefully will have an analysis within a week or two

Chairman Knapp:

- How is it managed for the 2020 budget?

Mr. Morgan:

- We didn't factor in any type of pricing from that RFP considering the timing; if there is any potential savings, it will assist in us keeping a balanced budget next year

Mr. Jordan:

- Pg. 2-10 – Abstract charges are about \$600K less than budgeted last year, and about \$1.3 million less than 2018 – can you give a broad overview on why there are such a substantial decrease?

Mr. Morgan:

- Talked about this a little bit with SOCPA; sent over a detailed calculation
- The abstract items, other than the apportionment, are reconciled on a two-year lag
- You'll see the abstract bump up and down both based on the county's tax levy and apportionment to the city and also based on the reconciling items – want to make sure we are charging the city the actual costs
- The abstract going into 2020 right now is based purely on the budget; then there is reconciling to actual items that are included in that as well
- You will see an abstract that goes up and down based on that reconciliation process

Mr. Jordan:

- Presumably it reflects a decrease in the city's portion of certain costs

Mr. Morgan:

- Sometimes, and sometimes there is an increase – sometimes an item goes up and sometimes it goes down

Mr. Jordan:

- Since 2018 it's a decrease of \$28 million; do you have any idea of roughly where those decreased expenses line?

Mr. Morgan:

- Yes, we can certainly provide that for you – can pinpoint exactly where that is

Mr. May:

- Services to Other Govts.-education – chargeback revenue has been omitted from the debt service
- Does that mean the revenue is down – fewer kids are leaving the county to go

Mr. Morgan:

- We received \$300/FTE/year – money is specifically used to offset debt service
- For years we have had a running balance – that money goes into a project and we pull from it to offset debt service of OCC – it's required
- The debt service costs that hit the county's budget are offset by this revenue stream that we get from the state
- Over the years there was an accumulation – wasn't plowed in year after year
- Have drawn that down and then some

- Enrollment at OCC has decreased – the figure is in line with that; to a point now where we have a projected negative balance
- In essence, we are proposing to take a year off from this until we can get that project back to a balance level - hopefully can start infusing those dollars again in the 2021 budget

Mr. May:

- In fairness, attendance has declined in community colleges across the states

Chairman Knapp:

- On the good news side, the class that just started at OCC is actually up.

Mr. Morgan:

- Obviously we saw that spike during the recession, but now we are seeing a steady decline across the state.

Chair Cody:

- Visit Syracuse – is the film commissioner still within that budget?

Mr. Morgan:

- Yes, the film commissioner is an employee within Visit Syracuse

FINANCE BUDGET, pg. 3-80 – Steven Morgan, CFO, Tara Venditti, Deputy Director, Don Weber, Director of Real Property Tax Service, Phil Britt, Director of Financial Operations

Finance Administration:

- No major changes regarding staffing
- Implementation of eTax went live on Jan. 1, 2018 – Mr. Weber has done an excellent job of pushing that system out to towns, village and school districts free of charge
 - We pay for the maintenance and licensing costs – increase in budget related to that
 - 13 of 15 villages, 12 of 25 school districts, and 12 of 19 towns have successfully implemented the software to collect taxes in the first instance
 - Working with the city, assisting them with implementation - scheduled to go live on January 1, 2020

Mr. Weber:

- eTax – has been pretty successful so far; has exceeded expectations
- In terms of the roll out, thought it would be a slow trickle, but have seen many towns and schools jumped on board faster than anticipated
- People can pay taxes on line in the places that have opted to use the program
- Have collected approximately \$6.65 million on-line alone – both current and delinquent tax
- Allows people to get receipts on line; more information available to property owners, attorneys, relators on line

Mr. Morgan:

- If there are any towns in your districts with questions or apprehension about it, we would love to have Mr. Weber meet with the personnel and discuss the value of this system.

Division of Management and Budget

- As you know, the Budget Office is involved in the preparation, monitoring, and enforcement of the county's \$1.3 billion budget.

Division of Financial Operations:

- Have almost all of the county's finance now operated out of this division
- Less than a handful left – Parks and WEP; pretty much every other department no longer has a finance office
- Allows us to streamline processes, gain efficiencies, economies of scale
- Mr. Britt has done an admirable job of making it more efficient – down 12 or more employees from when we started
- Sees things getting better down the road – continuing to harness the power of the financial system that we have in place

2020 Budget:

- Most of the budget is personnel - 81% is for wages and benefits
- The other accounts are fairly inconsequential
- Most of the rest of this budget goes for expenses tied to our tax enforcement programs—to advertise delinquent properties and the auction, pay for title searches and process serving fees, and so forth
- Staffing changes:

- Down one funded position
- Upgrade for Real Property Tax Director position – grade 36 to 37 – in line with the other directors and more than warranted
- 8 positions unfunded – 7 positions funded
- Allows for staff movement and properly align positions with functions

Mr. Rowley:

- You are down 1 funded positions and up 5 authorized positions

Mr. Morgan:

- Some of the positions that we want to use, we didn't have so we had to create them
- When we did that, at the same time, we unfunded positions
- We created a handful of account clerk 2's because we didn't have that title; at the same time we unfunded account clerk 1's.
- The authorized position page is a little misleading because it doesn't have what is funded and what is not
- I have provided (requested), behind the scenes, a comprehensive personnel file that goes through all of the personnel activity

Mr. Rowley:

- What's the big number in grants budget – \$1.9 million

Mr. Morgan:

- Anticipated reimbursement related to our shared services plan

Mr. May:

- State reimbursement

Mr. Morgan:

- Correct

Mr. Rowley:

- Is Clay on the new tax system

Mr. Weber:

- They are now – they just started with the village collection and now school tax collection – came on this year

Mr. Rowley:

- Accomplishments – ACH payments to vendors – asked how it is from an auditing perspective

Mr. Maturo:

- The whole ACH process is working well
- We are working with Ms. Pietruniak, Finance, to bring more and more vendors on it.

Mr. Rowley:

- It's less expensive, correct?

Mr. Morgan:

- Overall I think it is – anytime you aren't producing a check there is a savings
- Ms. Pietruniak has done a good job with a lot of other responsibilities trying to expand this
- You'd be surprised on how hard it is to actually get someone within a company that has the authorization to allow their company to move to this payment method
- As things slow down a little, we will continue to push hard on this; have sent notices with checks
- Have done a lot of ground work to get vendors to try to agree to go to this payment method
- The more we can reduce the production of checks, the better.
- Going to be looking at different ways to pay employees that get mileage or travel reimbursement
- Want to start looking at solutions that don't produce paper – VENMO approach or direct deposit, or in their paycheck – will be a big push from my office going into next year

Mr. Rowley:

- That's good news.

Mr. Rowley:

- Can you give an overview of the on-line ROT system?

Mr. Morgan:

- Finance is leading this with assistance from IT and the same vendor that implement the eTax system – working on a platform for on line payments for any number of items that the county charges for
- ROT is part of that, but kind of a stand-alone system; it just went live recently
- Hotel operators will be able to submit their returns and payments on line.
- DSS collects payments for a number of reasons – that is close to being live or is live already
- There are a lot of payments that the county takes in; we are going to try to expand on line payment ability to all areas of the county – people do not have to come down here or mail things in

Mr. Rowley:

- I don't know what OnWard Performance Management process is.

Mr. Morgan:

- We haven't talked about it a ton lately.
- With the staffing plateauing across the county as a whole – went through the retirement incentive, a few years where sales tax was stagnant, and we pulled back on staff
- The Division of Management and Budget is 5 people; it used to double that
- There has been a lot of value engineering with the process itself; you (Mr. Rowley) were part of that; Ms. Venditti has been invaluable – has taken the non-value stuff out of the way. It has allowed us to be very efficient in producing a budget from a technical perspective, so we can spend the time on the policy analysis and development with the executive's office.
- When we had more staff, we dedicated 4 staff to Performance Management Initiative.
- When we implemented Hyperion Links, that was the first step in coming to the ability to understand what it costs to run a program.
- We don't present the budget this way, but we budget at a granular/program level. There aren't many governments that know what it costs from a program level. We do – have been at it for a while.
- The next logical step – are they performing at the level that they are intended to perform at; are they meeting the goals, metrics that they are intended to meet – that's what this is meant to do – to assist departments in developing, envision long term goals
- From that go down to another level – identifying the metrics that we should be measuring to understand and know if a program is meeting its objectives
- If it's not – why is that; if it is and it's a great program, should we invest more money
- Where it adds value is when there is another recession and there has got to be cuts to the budget. As opposed to the traditional "we've got to save \$10 million – cut it across the board and figure it out." That's been the approach forever - it has kind of worked but it ends up weakening everything you do across the board.
- One of the main goals of this initiative is to give the decision makers the information to say this program is discretionary, it costs this; this is the people it is serving; this is the goals; are they meeting or not meeting the goals; will have some documentation/information to make a decision on whether the county is going to continue doing it or not.
- Program profiles back in the day didn't mean much because the costs weren't accurate; we are fairly comfortable now that we know the costs.
- It's meant to be not another task for a department, but a new way to manage their department – using data on a real-time basis
- It's hard to do with the resources we have; that's why we dedicated 4 people just to that – that's all they were doing
- Have been through the process with almost every department; we are poised – it's not in this budget, but maybe you'll see a budget soon with a test department that will show the budget in a different light

Mr. Rowley:

- Thank you – that's excellent.

Mr. Jordan:

- Maintenance, utilities and rents – showing an increase of roughly \$5K basically for software licensing fees
- IT was in here and a part of their budget was a fairly substantial increase relative to updates on software programs

- Is this Finance's portion of IT's software costs?"

Mr. Morgan:

- No this is for licensing fees that we pay directly for systems specific to us – mainly in Real Property Tax Services

Mr. Weber:

- Outside software programs, i.e. AutoCad for tax mapping; other software purchased to do day-to-day work

Mr. Jordan:

- These aren't programs handled through IT

Mr. Morgan:

- They probably support them, but they are licensing charges that Finance pays directly because only Finance is using them; no one else uses it so we pay for it directly; those systems that are in place to support the county as a whole all run through IT and charged out appropriately to departments
- When a software application is only used by one department, typically the cost of that will be budgeted within that department

Mr. Jordan:

- Would it be more cost effective to have all of the software programs administered and handled through IT?

Mr. Morgan:

- The overarching software programs that support the county as a whole certainly run through IT.
- These are only the one-offs.

Mr. Jordan:

- Travel and training increasing by \$10K previously grant funded – what happened to the grant

Mr. Morgan:

- We used to get a grant through the state for the OSHA training, that we are not qualified to provide ourselves
- In essence the \$10K would come in from the state and we just contract it out; we are no longer receiving that grant, but still have to provide the training

Mr. Jordan:

- Is there a reason why we aren't getting that grant now?

Mr. Morgan:

- Believes a lot of it is the availability of funds at the state level along with the requirements of the grants, which were a little onerous; it is training that still has to be provided

Mr. Jordan:

- It's basically the state looking to cut their budget by not reimbursing us for a state imposed requirement

Mr. Jordan:

- Services to Other Govts – decrease of roughly \$113K due to a decrease in revenue from municipalities participating in eTax collection software system
- You have indicated that there are 13 municipalities participating; why is that revenue decreasing?

Mr. Morgan:

- As part of the carrot for municipalities to come on and use this system, not only did we offer the municipalities to use the system for free, but also said we will cut their bill in half
- We produced the tax bills for towns, villages, and school districts; we charge \$2/bill – we offered to cut that in half for any municipality that agrees to come on and use the system – that's what this is reflecting
- Was part of the shared services plan in 2017 – expect to get some matching payments from the state on that
- We cover the licensing costs of the system and charge the municipalities less for tax bills to get them to come on board. That is how valuable we think it is.

Mr. Jordan:

- All told it is about a \$175K-\$180K "bone" to municipalities that the county is assuming the cost that otherwise the towns or village would have been incurring

Mr. Morgan:

- Yes

Chairman Knapp:

- How many towns took part in that last year?

Mr. Weber:

- In January I am expecting 15 of the 19 towns to be on and 13 of the 15 villages
- School districts are a little bit harder because they have multiple collectors as they overlap so much.

Chairman Knapp:

- Is the training going well?

Mr. Weber:

- It's going pretty well
- City of Syracuse is going live -- January is a big push because they operate on a completely different set of rules than the rest of the county – they have multiple legacy systems that we are trying to bring in

Mr. May:

- Can you talk about the benefits of the eTax system – where we were; what are the benefits to Onondaga County with respect to this investment and the incentives to the towns

Mr. Weber:

- All tax collection data is in one place; it used to be housed all over the county; every town, village, school district had their own application sitting on a computer in somebody's office with no way for us to get access to that information until it became delinquent
- They would send us a file that would be in who knows what format because they are all using 10 -15 different vendors; we had to aggregate it, put it together and somehow make it available to the public on the website
- As soon as we produce a bill, it's in our system, it's live; as soon as somebody pays it we know that day who paid it, how much, if its check or cash; that night there is a receipt on line – information is available at our fingertips now

Mr. May:

- There is manpower gains at the county level, and it sounds like there are at the municipal level as well.

Mr. Weber:

- We have not seen a reduction in my staff because of this, but IT used to support the old system, which was on the mainframe.

Mr. May:

- Working smarter and in more timely way from an accounts reconciliation standpoint, which seems to make sense

Mr. Weber:

- Yes, it's much more efficient – have access to information that we never had before

Mr. May:

- Professional Svcs. - \$239K – what else is in that line?

Ms. Venditti:

- The increase is strictly for the eTax – increase in users and slight increase in monthly fee

Mr. May:

- Is the \$239K in the executive budget predominately eTax or are there other things

Ms. Venditti:

- Predominantly eTax

Mr. May:

- Revenue side – Svcs to Other Govts, \$533K, is there anything else in there or is it predominately the issuance of tax bills

Mr. Morgan:

- Issuance of tax bills

Mr. May:

- Still a pretty good equation when you compare expense vs. revenue

Mr. Morgan:

- Absolutely

Mrs. Abbott-Kenan:

- eTax – do you have any plan to try to bring school districts along with this; the efficiency for them would be the same and sometimes it is just a matter of communicating again

Mr. Weber:

- We have a fair amount of school districts that are involved; don't have a hard count off the top of my head
- Many town collectors also collect school taxes – we are catching them there; it's probably about 50% now and would assume in the next year or two that about 75% of school districts would be on as well

Mr. Morgan:

- The goal is to have all school districts, towns, and villages on

Mrs. Abbott-Kenan:

- Everybody is looking for manpower and that would be a plus

Mr. Jordan:

- Called Mr. Weber early in the year – constituents concerned that when payments were made to their tax bills, they went on line and it was shown as being outstanding
- Has that been resolved so that the problem won't reoccur this year?

Mr. Weber:

- Yes – it was part of what I alluded to earlier. When the towns are on these external systems and they are not feeding information to us, it doesn't get displayed correctly on the website
- We had a vendor program that was not giving us the information that we needed and we couldn't get it available on line, which made it look like it was unpaid
- In this particular instance, that town is now using eTax, so that information is completely up to date

Mr. Jordan:

- For the towns that have opted not to participate in the system, it might still remain for those towns?

Mr. Weber:

- We hope not; we think we have worked the problems out with the vendors, so that when they give us information it comes in a format that we are expecting; it might not be as timely; it might get updated every few weeks

At 10:40 a.m. Chair Cody called a recess until 11:00 a.m.

Chair Cody called the meeting back to order at 11:10 a.m.

BOARD OF ELECTIONS, pg. 3-73 - Dustin Czarny, Michelle Sardo, Commissioners

Ms. Sardo and Mr. Czarny presented the following:

The Onondaga County Board of Elections faces significant hurdles in 2020. 2020 is a Presidential year and the largest in scope, cost, and activity in our four year election cycle. The executive budget as presented is our best estimate based on previous Presidential elections and increased turnout expected in 2020.

We face three major elections in 2020: The Presidential Primary in April, the Local Primary in June, and the General Election in November. The consolidation of the local and federal primary has helped us save some costs, however the mandate to open primary elections at 6am instead of noon has kept us from realizing those savings in full. In addition we are unsure of the status of the Aids to Localities Grant for 2020 and the costs for Early Voting in those three elections have been budgeted as local dollars until the NYS budget process has finished in April of 2020.

Our County Board remains one of the trimmest within NY State. Our full time staff of 16 works very hard each year to meet the needs of our 290k voters. Our full time employee to voter ration (1:18k) is the largest ratio in the state with other boards averaging closer to one full time staff for every 10k voters). We are able to accomplish this through dedicated staff and the incorporation of technology. However we have seen a record increase in registration the last three years and expect 2020 to surpass all records. We have already processed over 56,821 forms which is well past the 2015 mark of 20,987 forms (last comparable year) and will come close to our record in 2018 of 67,001.

Our Electronic Poll Book conversion funding will help lower local dollar costs. In 2020 we will be able to field less inspectors and save on printing of poll books as well as thousands of post-election staff hours. By implementing it in 2019 we will be able to perfect its operations and be ready for 2020. We have been able to pay for the conversion by utilizing the 2019 Aid to Localities and Capital grants as well as some of the ShoeBox grant we have saved for this purpose.

Lastly as we wrap up the 2019 Election year we are projecting we will either be under or on budget for 2019.

Mr. Jordan:

- Sizeable increase in your 2020 budget – it appears from your explanation that it is primarily due to the change in the elections law, extended voting hours, etc.
- I thought the additional cost for expanded hours was going to be picked up by the state.

Mr. Czarny:

- No – that was a governor’s bill in the budget, but it never came with attached state funding for it
- The major increase in cost from 2019 to 2020 is an extra election – presidential primary in April 2020
- Only have 2 major elections in 2019 – June primary and general election
- Normally in presidential years, we have four elections – used to have a local primary and federal primary – that is now being combined
- There is some savings from that, but it has not been realized to the fullest extent because of the expanded hours from 6:00 a.m. – 12:00 in the two primaries

Ms. Sardo:

- There may also be a 4th election – a special election for the 50th Senate – we are unsure of that

Mr. Czarny:

- That is not reflected in our budget – if the 50th Senate seat becomes open because the current occupant is running for another office, then the governor could call an election in March
- It’s unsure whether he will or not and may decide to roll that into another primary, which would add no cost – nothing reflected in the budget for that

Mr. Rowley:

- How does 3 elections in 2020 compare to 2018 elections

Mr. Czarny:

- We had 3 elections in 2018 as well

Mr. Rowley:

- We are going up 25% of the costs for running 3 elections?

Mr. Czarny:

- Sure – the 2018 primary elections did not run from 6:00 a.m. until noon; they started at noon – there is significant cost to that
- There are also more costs to presidential elections because of the sheer volume of turnout
- While 2018 was an incredible year for a turnout for a midterm, it pales in comparison to a presidential election
- 2018 turnout was 62%; a normal presidential election is 75%; 2020 is expected to break all of those records

Mr. Rowley:

- You’re the expert at running elections; the volume in and of itself translates to higher costs, but I’m not sure it translates to a 25% increase.

Mr. Czarny:

- It’s not just the volume, it’s the extended hours that we have to do for the primary—increases the 103 line, which is where inspectors are paid – have to pay them full day versus partial day prices

Mr. Rowley:

- I know, but you are alluding to increased volume as also part of the reason

Mr. Czarny:

- It is part of the reason because we have to have extra staff on hand, in the polling places; have to have seasonal staff to come in and help with the volume of registration
- In 2018 if we had anticipated the turnout, we would have had seasonal staff in; not anticipating that turnout, we did not have that and it caused our office to work 12-hr days from Sept. 20th on just to meet our registration deadlines

Mr. Rowley:

- We modified your grants budget for the new voting requirements; nothing happened in your operating budget?

Mr. Czarny:

- That's correct.

Mr. Rowley:

- Next year there is a grants budget of \$1 million; is that just a placeholder?

Mr. Czarny:

- That's our ShoeBox.

Mr. Morgan:

- We anticipate that money being spent, so we need to appropriate it.

Mr. Czarny:

- Out ShoeBox fund is for our capital--voting machines-- that money is old at this point, originally awarded back in 2007
- Have been notified by the state that we should look at spending that grant money as soon as possible because if we don't spend it, it could be targeted for reclamation by the federal government
- We are looking at upgrading some of our fleet of machines next year – 100% reimbursable through the ShoeBox grant; no local dollars

Mr. Rowley:

- ShoeBox money is only for hardware?

Mr. Czarny:

- Yes, and can cover some training for the hardware
- Have been able to use HAVA grants to offset costs for training inspectors
- Once HAVA is depleted, which is expected next year, we will be able to use ShoeBox money for training inspectors once we are training them on the electronic poll books

Chair Cody:

- Can you give an update on the training (electronic poll books)?

Ms. Sardo:

- It's going very, very well; there is positive feedback with all of the inspectors and trainers.

Chair Cody:

- Are we complete – do we have enough staff at this point?

Mr. Czarny:

- We just completed our first half of the training, the certification training
- Start the machine, BSS, and chairperson training starting next week
- Gotten good feedback from inspector, even from people who haven't used a computer before
- Very intuitive machines; have backups in place – believe we will have a really good team in place and will be very beneficial to the county and campaigns
- Will be able to get turnout throughout the day, and voter history throughout the day – campaigns can use to determine who they are contacting and getting out the vote
- Will have ability to shrink some of our polling sites by a number of inspectors – estimate 40 less
- No longer servicing on an election site basis – will be on poll site basis – will save confusion for voters going in

Chair Cody:

- I voted in the Salina referendum, where the electronic poll books were rolled out – an experimental system for folks to check it out
- The inspectors were very happy with the technology

Mr. Czarny:

- There was a senior lunch in the building, and we were able to process over 200 voters in the first 2 hours with just 2 poll pads
- It was a trial by fire, but it worked really well

Mr. May:

- Would like to get a sense for the incremental costs for economies associated with the changes that have taken place this year; need to look at the last 5 years; look at the accounts or budget lines that are affected probably all other expenses and the 103; by election year, which positions are up your costs are going to vary

- A 5 year retrospective pro forma from what is going on along with overall costs and incremental local dollar costs

Mr. Czarny:

- Based much of our budgeting on the 2016 budget, but the biggest increase was the 6:00 a.m. – noon, a 35% increase in inspector costs for those elections and is what is driving a lot of that

Mr. May:

- It would be nice to see the ebb and flow of resource requirements – staffing, or whatever, as we move through the different election cycles

Mr. Sardo:

- Every presidential year we always have extra staff – bring temporaries in

Mr. Ryan:

- Staffing ratios?

Mr. Czarny:

- We are 1 for every 18,000; the state outside of NYC averages 1 for every 10,000 of permanent, full-time staff

Mr. Ryan:

- There's nothing in this budget to increase that?

Ms. Sardo:

- Other than the temporary staff, no.

Mr. Czarny:

- It's what we get every presidential election to help with the triple increase in registration; temporary staff is pretty much dedicated to that

Mr. Ryan:

- What about increased voter registration trends – on a national level it's been going up – can you talk about it on a county level?

Mr. Czarny:

- It has been quite a burden the last 3 years; there are many reasons for it
- In 2018 we processed 67,000 registration forms; in the presidential election of 2016 we only processed 56,000 registration forms; in the last midterm we processed 25,000 registration forms
- Seeing the increase this year – already at 56,000 for a local year; the last local year with the county executive up was 25,000
- Saw it in 2017 with the mayoral year in Syracuse with a little bit of an uptick and well surpassed the 2013 one
- Much of that is the mood of the electorate; there are more people registering to vote over the last 3 years
- Some of it this year is the Universal Transfer Law – allows people to transport their registrations to the new county that they live in easier and quicker
- These forms are now being sent to us from other Boards of Elections.
- The rolls are more accurate than they have ever have been before, and higher than ever before.
- It's good for democracy, but a burden for our staff.
- Upgrading to NTS Suite later this month – supposed to help with some of the added burden, especially next year, because it's a better processing system
- Increase in registration is something that Boards of Elections are seeing throughout the state

Mr. Ryan:

- The good news is that we are increasing civic participation.
- Concerned that the increase in salary on the 101 line is going to be enough

Mr. Czarny:

- We are bring in temporary staff for the presidential election; we will meet the needs for 2020 in terms of general staff
- In 2021 a serious conversation has to be made about whether some of those people will become permanent staff.

Mr. Ryan:

- If we are going to have this increase, going to have additional elections, early voting, have additional hours and we are not going to add staff – is there enough money to potentially cover the overtime costs that are existing and BOE employees are going to have to incur?

Ms. Sardo:

- I think we will cover enough; I think there will be enough to cover the overtime

Mr. Czarny:

- There's no money in the overtime budget.

Ms. Sardo:

- Correct; we don't get paid for overtime; it is all comp time

Mr. Czarny:

- Last year the staff was on mandatory 12-hr. days and this year they are starting mandatory 12-hr. days
- It is creating a large amount of comp time; it's something that I have come before this body and said that there should be a way for some of the employees to choose whether they use comp time; some of them want to be paid
- Our overtime is mandatory; it's not voluntary – we have to get the job done – have to get the voter registration done by Oct. 22nd to get early voting done on Oct. 26th
- At end of the year almost always in mandatory overtime, and in the seven years that I've been there we have not had the budget to pay overtime
- 12 of our 14 employees have over 2-3 weeks of built up comp time already – expect that to increase over the next couple of weeks
- It makes staffing in the off months hard, because nobody is there because they are using some of that comp time?
- They are getting that comp time now and maybe getting it paid out when they retire when they are making more money; that is actually hurting the county's bottom line.
- We are hopeful that we might have some money left over in 2019 budget to be able to offer some payout, but won't know that until after Nov. or Dec. when done with the elections

Mr. Ryan:

- How does the comp time work

Ms. Sardo:

- A few years back we did do half pay – they could get 35 hrs. of pay and the rest would be comp time, then the budget was cut and we were no longer allowed to do that
- Some other departments in the county do this
- We do have a lot of overtime with our staff, to let them have any time off and use this overtime--they just keep collecting their overtime; we need the staff
- They have their vacation time and personal time that they need to take, but with some of them having over 200 compensation hours, it's hard to keep them in there

Mr. May:

- Did you include overtime in your requested budget?

Ms. Sardo:

- Yes we did

Mr. Czarny:

- \$27,500 was requested – has been a part of our draft for the last 3 budgets

Mr. Ryan:

- I get the mandatory hours – it's part of the job – employees spend a lot of extra hours up to the general election getting ready for it
- Worried that if the amount of compensation hours are where they are and if some employees there are OK with that then that's OK. At the same time, if they are not, and we are telling them when they have to take them-- now telling them when they have to take them when they don't want to. It's a lifestyle, and giving people a choice is something we might want to consider

Mr. Czarny:

- It is getting harder to even find times when it is acceptable to even take them because the new calendar is great, but no longer is the fall the major time of year with a June primary; we have deadlines in May; with the April presidential primary we are going to have deadlines in March and February for party changes
- I expect to be busy all year next year.

Mr. Ryan:

- Theoretically, there could be a March special, a presidential primary, a general primary, and then a general – all the while getting ready for increased participation, early voting, potential record voter turnout, and universal transfers

Dr. Chase:

- This is not an new issue – it has been coming up for every budget that I've been here; it's not working
- Especially with looking at next year – we've already got comp time that people can't use – they're not getting paid for it; now looking at 3 big elections in 2020
- In the fall we will be back here with the same kind of issues.
- We need to stop this and put a line in the budget that allows these people to be paid for the work they are doing.
- I can't believe that somewhere in the laws that we aren't supposed to be paying people if they don't want to take comp time.
- We shouldn't be having to deal with this again – it's only fair that when people go to work that they should be paid for the work that they do. If they want to do the comp time, that's fine, but we have already heard from them.
- As a nurse, I know that giving comp time to people was terrible because you needed them every minute that the FTE was allowed to be there – this isn't really any different.
- It's not 24/7, but it's pretty close, especially when looking at election time.
- Is there something we can do to put another line in here and give them some overtime?

Mr. Czarny:

- The last couple of years has been a struggle with the staffing – increases in the amount of comp time; it is something that I don't expect to get better

Chairman Knapp:

- For 2020, if there is a special election will that be just one day?

Ms. Sardo:

- No – we will have early voting for that

Mr. Czarny:

- I would imagine, for a comparable budget line, that the June numbers for the June primary would be comparable in adding to that
- It's only about 2/3rds of the county so we will have some cost savings there – we won't have to open up 6 early voting sites – maybe we open up 4; won't have to open up all 180 polling stations, maybe only 140.
- About 2/3rds of the June primary budget
- We don't know what the election is going to be this year; we don't even know if the governor is going to call for a special election – he has been reluctant to do that in the past. He has put them on other election days, and the earliest statutorily that he could call for it is sometime in the middle of March.
- He may decide to do it on April 28th – the presidential primary; then there would be no added cost for us - we will be open anyway for every polling site.
- We just won't know until January 1st.

Chairman Knapp:

- What about the primaries next year – will the presidential primary have early voting?

Ms. Sardo:

- Every election will have early voting

Mr. Czarny:

- If there was not a congressional primary or countywide primary, if there was only a city-wide primary, then we would have less early voting sites. If it was not a major party primary, then we could get away with no early voting or early voting only at the BOE.

Ms. Sardo:

- It would be at our discretion.

Chairman Knapp:

- We have the ability locally to decide on early voting or not?

Ms. Sardo:

- If it's not a major party.

Chairman Knapp:

- If there is a congressional primary, it would be on the same day as a local primary – i.e. state assembly?

Mr. Czarny:

- Yes

Chairman Knapp:

- This year for early voting, to help with the training, are you going to try to cycle as many people through as possible at those early voting sites, to give them a little bit of experience before the general election?

Ms. Sardo:

- Yes – they are setting those positions up now

Chairman Knapp:

- So it won't be the same people every day

Ms. Sardo:

- No; it may be for 2 days in a row so that they can transition

Mr. Czarny:

- Have had incredible interest from the inspectors to staff those early voting times, so we couldn't keep it to just a few people

Mr. May:

- In anticipation of a budget amendment from Legislator Chase on overtime, do you maintain a formal system for comp time tracking?

Ms. Sardo:

- Yes

Mr. Czarny:

- It's in the Kronos system – all staff are in Kronos except for the Commissioners

Mr. May:

- Can you give a real sense for what is going on from a comp time perspective

Mr. Czarny:

- I'm sure we could figure out what the comp time earned was for the last couple of years

Mr. May:

- Maybe you want to trend it the same way

Mr. Morgan:

- As of PP 14, there is 974 hours of comp time for the department; it could have changed since PP 14

Ms. Sardo:

- Overtime now is ramping up.

Ms. Williams:

- If someone leaves your department, we have to pay them their comp time out?

Mr. Hummel:

- That would be handled under the terminal leave process, so if someone leaves for another job they have a max of 21 days of terminal leave, vacation, personal, and comp time.
- That does not include FLSA comp time, which has to be paid out by federal statute

Ms. Williams:

- I could be a person who has more than 21 days of comp time, and you're telling me that I wouldn't be paid for the extra, but you mandated me to stay; and then we keep it?

Mr. Hummel:

- That's correct

Mr. Morgan:

- What a lot of people do is take time off and use it.

Ms. Williams:

- I understand that, but this is a department that has very little time to take off

Mr. Morgan:

- If you are on your way out the door, I don't know what they could do to you if you take time off.
- That's typically what people do – they take that time that is going to be over the 21 days

Ms. Williams:

- I don't even know if this legal what we are doing, because you are mandating someone to stay.
- In the world that I come from, when you mandate me, that's kinda like against my will – it's not like I want to stay
- Then you are not paying me; you are giving me a comp day and there is a potential where I might not be able to use that comp day. Furthermore, there still is a potential where I may never get that comp day.
- To Legislator May's point, I will be joining Legislator Chase on an amendment
- Something tells me this doesn't seem legal

Mr. Czarny:

- Our staff is incredible, when we ask them to stay, they stay. We never get any complaints from them. They know that the mission of the Board needs to get done, and they do whatever they need to do to make sure the election gets done.

Ms. Williams:

- Kudos to them – a lot of respect for your team there, because I can tell you something, that if you had me there, it would be very hard to make me stay – I'm going to want to be paid

Ms. Sardo:

- We have an incredible staff that understands.

Mr. Ryan:

- I'll be joining my two colleagues – we are getting to a point which is potential for people leaving and accruing hours that we aren't going to pay people for
- In addition to that we are getting to a point where we could have a special, early voting, there are 1,000 hrs. of accrued comp time and basically you are going to start telling people "don't bother to take it now; you can take it some other time."
- When are we going to take it next year? This is my biggest problem.

Ms. Sardo:

- Next year is going to be a very difficult time to take comp time

Mr. Czarny:

- Or even regular time off

Mr. Ryan:

- How many more hours will have to be accrued after Nov. 6th of 7th?

Ms. Sardo:

- In a presidential year, we have done 15 -16 hr. days that includes Saturdays and Sundays.
- Don't know what is going to happen next year – won't know until the election starts to take place, but they will accrue a lot more comp time.

Ms. Ervin:

- Say I'm a single mother with children and have to pay for child care, you mandate me to work, then I get comp time that I can't take – so those ancillary expenses are not covered anywhere
- So then I leave your employment all together, and I still can't cash those hours in – I've essentially spent money to come to work, I can't get the money I'm supposed to get because that's the way it works.

Ms. Czarny:

- That seems to be correct – yes.

Ms. Ervin:

- That makes no sense to me; I'm going to join my colleagues on this because there has to be a way to mitigate this
- There might be some employees who are fine with that, but if I were that mother, I'd be looking for another job. It's a good thing your people are good about staying with us, because they are being short changed.

Ms. Abbott-Kenan:

- We are talking about scenarios, but is there actual data behind any of this? How often does that happen where people leave and don't get their money or are unable to use comp time.

Mr. Czarny:

- We had one employee this last year who was terminated, who did lose out on some comp time.
- We are a small office; I think the scenario of people leaving unexpectedly does not happen all that often, but we have had people leave
- I think there was a Republican clerk who left last year that had some comp time left.

Ms. Sardo:

- We were able to give her at least a week to take off, and I believe she lost a week of time.

Mr. Czarny:

- It doesn't happen every time an employee leaves, but it has happened twice with a department of 14 staffers in the last 2 years. I think that is significant.

Mr. May:

- We have identified an issue that is going to take a little more work; I think some of that work is beyond the context of this session. We need to understand policy; we need to understand the data.
- We have some work to do from here, but I think we have pretty much established the issue at this point.

Mr. Hummel:

- As you do that, understand that the terminal leave is governed by the various contracts. If you need any assistance in understanding the contracts and interpretation, rules of the applications, because the Personnel Dept. applies the terminal leave, and how that all works, please reach out to us and we can give you information.
- To Legislator Abbott-Kenan's question, we do not track that – we don't have any data on how often that happens.

Mr. Rowley:

- The employee benefits' line is up because the 103 line is up – it's really FICA and retirement benefits, correct?

Mr. Morgan:

- Right – payroll taxes

Mr. Rowley:

- The investments we have been making in technology, electronic poll books or anything we are doing with registrations, isn't really increasing our ability to be more efficient
- In other words, you mentioned, that at some point we have to have a discussion about temporary employees and making them permanent.

Mr. Czarny:

- I think it is making us more efficient, unfortunately, the law is changing to a point where we are getting these deluge of voter registration forms that has gone beyond that efficiency
- Just the fact that we are able to meet the goals now with the triple amount of registrations – our investment in technology is going to save us in printing cost for poll books; it's going to save in the number of inspectors for the poll pads; it's not going to help us on registration.
- The NTS Suite and the ScanFlow done over the last few years have mitigated some of the problems – being one of the lowest ratio voter registration board of elections in the state – it's been able to help us keep up with all of these changes. However, if the increase continues, which is good for Democracy, it is adding more work flow for us.
- I'm not sure the level of staffing after 2020, because we are bringing in temps, if we may need to invest in a couple more clerks to help with the registration data. That could be seen in a reflection of lower comp time because we would have more people and would be able to keep up with it through the year – we wouldn't have overtime and comp time. There could be a savings there.
- This is all generalities; something we were planning to talk to the legislature about in 2021, not in 2020.

Mr. Rowley:

- I don't recognize the demographics in the county changing that much that it is driving registration.
- I understand people are interested in participating in the electoral process, but at some point, it's got to peek – I don't see the demographics in the county keeping up with the registrations.

Ms. Sardo:

- We do, but I'll be honest, we are getting a lot of duplicate registrations from the DMV and everything, but we still have to process them. They are all uploaded into our files. It is more of a step to do this.

Mr. Czarny:

- When the census data comes back, it may be able to help us figure out whether those demographic changes are something that we are seeing as an increase.
- Anecdotally, I believe it is – I think we are seeing an increase in population – we have a huge new American community on the north side that is growing. That has kept the city of Syracuse voter population, and general population stable, if not growing over the last few years.

Chair Cody:

- The village elections –you have 3 additional villages that have moved; do they typically have theirs in June or is it at different times?

Mr. Czarny:

- March or June

Chair Cody:

- Which 3 have come on?

Mr. Czarny:

- East Syracuse, Solway, and Tully switched to November
- Each year we send out a letter to encourage villages to do that
- There is several reasons for that: they save on their costs substantially because it rolls into our elections; it saves on our staff having to work on those elections; those 3 villages saw upwards of 100% voter turnout increase. Tully saw 900% voter turnout.
- Nobody is voting in their March elections, but everyone votes in November
- I personally believe it is good for democracy to have less elections, and we can easily fit these on the ballots.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah L. Maturo

DEBORAH L. MATURO, Clerk
Onondaga County Legislature

2020 Budget Review ATTENDANCE
COMMITTEE: Ways & Means Review of Ways & Means Depts
DATE: 9/18/19

NAME	DEPARTMENT/AGENCY
PLEASE PRINT	
Jessica Allen	DMB
JAVIA JACIOWSKI	Fin OPS
Don Weber	RPTS
Sandy Miller Martens	Fin OPS
Colleen Price	Comptroller
Lori Pichel	Finance
Maegen Murphy	DMB
Andrew Kauer	DMB
Susan Dean	SUB
Julie Cook	Board of Elections
Allison Wright	Board of Elections

2020 Budget Review ATTENDANCE
COMMITTEE: Ways & Means Review of Ways & Means Depts
DATE: 9/18/19

NAME	DEPARTMENT/AGENCY
PLEASE PRINT	
Mark Matt	
Yvette Velasco	Law
Matt Beardsell	Comptroller
Vin Maturo	Comptroller
Michelle Scardis	Michelle Scardis
Carrie Clemens	Carrie Clemens
Mary Luber	Mary Luber