

**EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

**FRIDAY, JANUARY 19, 2018
4:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Paul Ruskiewicz, Chairman
Leigh J. Benton, Barry J. Cheney, Thomas Faggione,
Kevindaryan Lujan, Joseph Minuta, James D. O'Donnell
Rob Sassi, Laurie R. Tautel

ALSO

PRESENT: L. Stephen Brescia, Chairman
Katie Bonelli, Majority Leader
Michael D. Paduch, Minority Leader
Kathy A. Stegenga, Legislator
John S. Vero, Legislator
Antoinette Reed, Legislative Counsel
Wayne C. Booth, Deputy County Executive
Harry Porr, Director of Operations
Langdon Chapman, County Attorney
Steve Gross, Commissioner, Human Resources
Donna McCarey, Deputy Commissioner, Human Resources
Alison Tyack, Director of Personnel Management, Human Resources
Michael Ventre, Budget Analyst
Lucy T. Joyce, Executive Dir., Cornell Cooperative Extension

Chairman Ruskiewicz opened the committee at 4:00 p.m. by asking everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. All committee members were present.

Mrs. Joyce provided an overview and update on Cornell Cooperative Extension. She shared that the County Legislature provides great support and she thanked everyone. Mrs. Joyce explained that their mission is to enable people to improve their lives and communities through research and practical knowledge. She provided a power point presentation to the committee. She explained that they have two agreements, one with Cornell University and one with Orange County. They are unincorporated, they formed into an organization and they can be a county or a regional based association. They are tax exempt, they are a public entity so they are subject to open meetings law and they are subject to Freedom of Information Act Law (FOIL). They are part of a commercial horticulture program that runs along the eastern part of New York State and county dollars support that. It is based on the number of farms, revenue and gross sales of farms. The 4-H Youth Program is divided into three major areas. They are heavily involved in national, state and local level. They focus especially in the three cities with underserved youth and have programs related to different organizations of clubs with staff. They also have Partners in Youth Development and they work closely with the Youth Bureau and train the workers in youth fields for example the YMCA and the Boys and Girls Club. Mrs. Joyce addressed childcare and explained that a child that requires special foster care, especially institutional, will cost about \$54,000 per year. A child in a regular family foster care situation where the family might be able to have several or a few kids in their care would cost about \$23,000. The funding from the state which is minimal for them and the caregivers but to have three kids stay in this program and keeping

them with family pays for the entire program and there is the emotional benefit that they are with family. Mrs. Joyce mentioned that obesity is an epidemic in the nation and in Orange County although there has been some improvement with the various programs and workshops that are offered. It is offered to the public and they spend a lot of time in schools. The Master Gardeners Program has about 110 volunteers and they are great. They are out in the community, all around the state helping people and giving advice. They had good luck with connecting Valley View and local farmers who provide food to them and to the jail. They collect food that is either not harvested or went to a market, came back and is still edible, the farmer does not want it back again so they put it in their refrigerated truck and deliver it to food pantries and soup kitchens throughout the county. This works out great because most food pantries cannot handle fresh product. When it goes to the food bank in Cornwall they can put onions, apples and squash in there but any of the more perishable products will wilt. This is a regional program and they are teaching other counties how to do these programs. She boasted about the Education Center at 4-H Park and invited everyone to come out and have fun. She advised that they are in the Town of Mount Hope, on the edge of Otisville. They purchased it with the money through the hard work of the Orange County Funding Corporation so now they own it. They are focusing on green infrastructure and buildings. She offered her services to the Legislature and noted that they can discuss any of the programs in more detail if they would like.

Chairman Ruszkiewicz mentioned they took a tour about four years ago and noted it was well attended. Mrs. Joyce acknowledged Chairman Ruszkiewicz and said she would be happy to do that again.

Mr. Faggione moved the request to create one
Director of Tourism, Management Grade 25,
seconded by Mr. Benton.

Mr. Minuta noted that he understood from the previous meeting what the positions are and why they are being created. He was concerned about the entities that are already out there promoting the county. The economic development is booming in Orange County and that is with or without this position however he believed they need to take the position in a more direct path. We need an entity within the county, someone at the helm of how we are growing our county so we can see the expansion of economic growth in every community. He mentioned the airbnb's and how it is a booming business. There is a safety concern because you have some homeowners with a single occupancy residence that are renting out their homes. They live there and know where the exits are if something goes wrong. If you own a bed and breakfast you have that kind of signage, the exit signs, the smoke detectors. They do not have that in a regular single-family home. We need to look at that and see if we are going to allow that, if we can allow it and does the Legislature have a say in this. He was hopeful that any of the entities that are doing a great job presently will not be affected by these positions but from what he understood that was not the case.

Mr. Booth confirmed with Mr. Minuta that it was not the case.

Mr. Benton informed Mr. Minuta that about four years ago there was an article in the National County News to try and move forward with similar contracts or negotiations with

the bnbs. They have been working on this with the organizations in the state for probably three and a half years.

Mr. Lujan shared his concerns and noted that over the past 8 or 9 months he has been able to see a lot of what the Partnership does and he thought it seemed like there was a lot of overlap. His big concern was duplication of services and he does not want to create a position that has a six-figure salary if there is an entity that is already doing a great job at economic development. He questioned if this position is really necessary. He felt the six figure salary was too large and he wanted his fellow Legislators to consider that when they are pushing for a position with six figures at any level.

Mr. Ruszkiewicz commented that he did not see this as a duplication of services, he saw it more like a coordination of services. He added that the IDA and the Partnership are organizations that come in to provide the Legislature updates but they do not report to the them. They need someone in the county to coordinate that and he expects the new Director of Economic Development to come to the Education and Economic Development Committee.

Mr. Porr added that the Chamber of Commerce and the IDA endorsed this position.

Mr. Lujan stated that if they approve the position that means they are also approving the range of salary.

Mr. Gross commented that the ranges of salaries are prescribed by the Condry Study which has been in effect since 2003. It defines the entire management salary structure for all management positions in the county which is roughly 150. There are 29 grades within that salary schedule and there is a range. The Director of Economic Development has a grade of 26 with a salary range of \$70,345 to \$120,220. He pointed out that Mr. Porr mentioned he wanted to get the best candidate for the least amount.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Mr. O'Donnell moved the request to create one Director of Economic Development, Management Grade 26, seconded by Mr. Cheney.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Mr. Lujan moved to create one (1) Senior Secretary and Administrative Assistant, grade 10, seconded by Mr. Minuta.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Mr. Faggione moved to transfer \$140,000 from Contingency to Tourism for costs associated with the Director of Tourism position, seconded by Mr. O'Donnell.

Mr. Lujan stated that this money was to be used toward the positions and his concern was what if they needed something down the road.

Mr. Booth explained that is not the case. The Legislature transferred the money, not into contingency, so taking the money out does not reduce the million dollar contingency.

Mr. Porr added that the money was parked there.

Mr. O'Donnell moved the request to transfer \$153,000 from contingency to the County Executive for costs associated with the new positions of Director of Economic Development and Senior Secretary and Administrative Assistant, seconded by Mr. Lujan.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Mr. Minuta moved the request for a resolution for the Reappointment of L. Stephen Brescia to the Orange County Industrial Development Agency and the Orange County Funding Corporation, seconded by Mr. Benton.

Mr. Brescia stated that his term is for two years and he has been on the IDA for sixteen years. Leigh mentioned at the recent Roundtable meeting that if a Legislator has concerns with the IDA, they should bring it to him and he can bring it forward to the IDA because the IDA should be separate from government as per the ABO.

Mr. Paduch mentioned that he was at the IDA with Chairman Brescia and he did a great job. He even voted against something that he did not like and he commended Mr. Brescia for doing so.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Mr. O'Donnell shared his pet peeve that the IDA does not come before this committee enough. He put a motion forward last year to have them come in every other month. There are so many new Legislators on board now he wanted to propose the motion again. The IDA came to committee six times in the last fifty months. To ask them to come every other month was not unreasonable, and the same for the Partnership.

Mr. O'Donnell made a motion to have the IDA and the Orange County Partnership come before the Education and Economic Development Committee every other month, seconded by Mr. Lujan.

Mr. Benton stated that he would support Mr. O'Donnell's motion if it is put at the end of the agenda.

Mr. Minuta commented that the organizations do updates quarterly so it might behoove them to do it quarterly instead of every other month.

Mr. Ruskiewicz shared the history of the same motion made last year. It was discussed and he, as Chairman of the committee, agreed to have the IDA and Partnership in quarterly. He felt it was plenty of reporting for both organizations. He would like the new Director of Economic Development to come in every month and that person will be coordinating with both the IDA and the Partnership and all the other organizations.

Mr. O'Donnell stated that the IDA did not live up to the quarterly updates. To their credit, both the IDA and the Partnership said they would come in every month.

Mr. Lujan mentioned that if it turns out that there is a lot of repetition and they do not need them in every other month, they can change that. He added that they want to make sure that they have a relationship with them.

Mr. Ruskiewicz responded to Mr. Lujan's comments and noted that they do have a relationship with them and Chairman Brescia is the liaison and the IDA is coming in on Monday to give an orientation to the new Legislators and all Legislators are invited. He added that the only relationship they have with the IDA is they appoint the board members, they do not provide funding or direct any of their staff. He added that some of the directors are not comfortable with them coming every other month.

Mr. O'Donnell noted that the director does not come to the meetings. He added that Mrs. Halahan and Mr. Cozzolino both said they would come whenever they are asked. They can review the minutes.

Mr. Cheney commented that he felt they had a very good response from both organizations and the committee oversees many departments and organization. The best way from his point of view, because he did it, is to go to their meetings and see their space and see what they are doing which will give you a better understanding what happens with the IDA in particular.

Mr. O'Donnell stressed that the IDA works for them. They have a lot of responsibility and they oversee a lot of people. Asking them to come every other month is not

unreasonable. The economy is booming so to ask them to wait three months for them to show up is not right. They should come at least every other month although he would love for them to come every month. They report to us. Do they know about their audit besides that sheet they sent over. We do not because that is the month they missed, right after the audit, that raised a red flag. They need to be kept up to speed with their constituents.

Mr. Minuta questioned the IDA missing a meeting that they were scheduled to come to.

Mr. O'Donnell clarified. He shared that he made a motion last year but it was defeated 5 to 2. To their credit they have volunteered to be here every month which is in the minutes. This goes for the IDA and the Partnership.

Mr. Minuta requested clarification that if this is voted on then these organizations are mandated to be here but he was told no because they answer to their board, not to the Legislature.

Mr. O'Donnell pointed out that the IDA would sort of be mandated because if the IDA did not appear then there would be new board members. They will come. The Partnership likes to come because they like the opportunity to boast about all the great work they do. We do not even give them enough time because it seems they rush through presentations.

Chairman Brescia did not agree. He felt quarterly was sufficient and if they come more than that then there will be a lot of duplication. Any Legislator can call over to the IDA and ask what is going on. The Partnership will come in and give updates on the projects which they also report to the IDA every month. We will get inundated with too much information and he felt quarterly was fine.

Mr. Lujan added that this does benefit them and like Mr. O'Donnell just stated, sometimes the Partnership does not get to finish their presentations and they rush through.

Mr. Faggione stated that the IDA will be in on Monday for the orientation so they should ask them what works. Is it feasible for them to print a monthly report or is it more feasible to come in on a monthly basis. Let's talk to them about it.

Mr. Cheney stated that there is a lot of repetition and about 60% of what was said when they came in last was stuff that they already knew. They will find out that it is not very important to hear the repetition and if they stagger it out on a quarterly basis then they will see it is better use of time.

Mr. O'Donnell advised Mr. Cheney that his statement was inaccurate. It is repetition with the project but it is an update on the project. They should come in and give updates on the projects. There are a lot of things going on in the county and there is a lot of

business going on so they need more interaction with them. To come in six times in fifty months is ridiculous.

Mr. Ruskiewicz did not see the need for it.

Motion failed with Legislators Benton, Lujan
O'Donnell and Sassi voting in favor of the motion
and Legislators Cheney, Faggione, Minuta,
Ruskiewicz and Chairman Brescia voting no.

Mr. Paduch asked if the IDA can bring the answers to the questions they have been asked about three or four times already. He was hoping they would come in November, then it was December but now they will be here in January.

On the motion of Mr. Lujan, seconded by Mr. Cheney, the meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.