

RULES, ENACTMENTS AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE
MINUTES
(REMOTELY)
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2021
3:30 P.M.

PRESENT: Thomas J. Faggione, Chairman
Michael Amo, Katie Bonelli, Barry J. Cheney, Kevin W. Hines, James M. Kulisek,
Michael D. Paduch, John S. Vero

ALSO

PRESENT: L. Stephen Brescia, Chairman
Leigh J. Benton, Legislator
Kevindaryán Luján, Legislator
Paul Ruskiewicz, Legislator
Peter V. Tuohy, Legislator
Betsy N. Abraham, Legislative Counsel
Karin E. Hablow, Commissioner, Department of Finance
Louise Vandemark, Commissioner, Board of Elections
Courtney Canfield Greene, Commissioner, Board of Elections
Deborah Slesinski, Deputy Budget Director
Deanna Crawford, Budget Analyst
Lane Hunt, Director of Systems Integration, Information Technology,
Department of General Services
Jonathan Drapkin, President & CEO, Mid-Hudson Pattern for Progress, Inc.
Joshua Weiss, Ph.D., President, Negotiation Works, Inc.

Mr. Faggione opened the meeting at 3:30 p.m. and requested everyone stand for the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. All members were present.

Mr. Amo moved Local Law to continue the imposition of tax under Local Law No. 13 of 2009, known as the "Orange County Hotel and Motel Room Occupancy Tax Local Law" for an additional three years, seconded by Mr. Cheney.

Ms. Hablow explained that the local law would extend the existing Orange County Hotel and Motel Room Occupancy Tax Local Law for an additional three years.

Mr. Kulisek asked if the occupancy for Airbnb has been enforced. Ms. Hablow replied yes, they have a contract with Airbnb and all taxes are collected and remitted to them in the aggregate on a monthly basis through the Airbnb application.

Mr. Kulisek asked if there were agreements with VRBO and HomeAway. Ms. Hablow replied no, there was talk at the state level about entering into agreements with those operators; however, she was unsure as to the status of those negotiations with the state. They do have many registered VRBO homeowners that are registered with the county directly, but she is sure there are homeowners that have not done the right thing and registered with the county and collected and

remitted the occupancy tax; however, it is the responsibility of the homeowner to know the local laws and adhere to them.

Mr. Kulisek asked if they have anyone enforcing this by going through the registry and he would assume that there are many Bed and Breakfasts that are not registered. Ms. Hablow replied that she would be surprised if there was a Bed and Breakfast that was not registered with them as they do a great deal of crosschecking to locate vendors that are not registered.

Mr. Kulisek commented that anyone renting a room through those services or a private residence should be paying this tax.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Mr. Vero moved request to accept and appropriate Elections Cybersecurity Remediation Grant Program funds from the State of New York, \$158,289.00, seconded by Ms. Bonelli.

Ms. Greene stated that election integrity is of the utmost importance to the Orange County Board of Elections and she and Ms. Vandemark thanked the Legislature and the Information Technology department for all their assistance last year.

Ms. Vandemark thanked the Information Technology department for their assistance in the grant process.

Mr. Hunt emphasized that cybersecurity is the top priority this year and the efforts made by the Board of Elections to appropriate this grant will help to assist with that.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Mr. Faggione asked for an update on the upcoming 2021 election season. Ms. Vandemark replied that the number of signatures required for designating petitions has been decreased by 1.5% of the active enrolled voter in a political party.

Ms. Greene added that the first day to sign a designating petition would be March 2, 2021 and filing between March 22, 2021 and March 25, 2021. The first day to sign a designating petition would be March 2, 2021 and filing between March 22, 2021 and March 25, 2021. The 2021 Primary Election will be held on Tuesday, June 22, 2021 and the General Election on Tuesday, November 2, 2021. Early voting for the Primary Election will be held from Saturday, June 12, 2021 to Sunday, June 20, 2021 and for the General Election from Saturday, October 23, 2021 to Sunday, October 31, 2021.

Ms. Greene added that the Board of Elections Annual Report will be emailed to all legislators following the meeting.

Mr. Paduch asked if any early voting sites have been or will be changed. Ms. Vandemark replied that nothing has been changed at this point.

Update on Diversity Intervention Initiative.

Mr. Drapkin explained that at the end of December a memo was sent to all legislators seeking suggestions for potential projects that could fit within the framework of this contract. The concept is about having an opportunity to try and resolve conflicts without resorting to litigation, anger, hostility and/or frustration in the community. Five ideas/projects were submitted, and they were able to interview all five legislators and, in some cases, additional people in order to understand the conflict. Their hope is that it will become a model and scaled up to take on a number of conflicts within the county. They are pleased to announce that they are currently ready to move forward with one in the Town of Woodbury which involves a water dispute. They can clearly articulate the parties involved but a lot of research still needs to be done as there is a great deal of history with this project and dispute. The door is not closed on a second project, they are still looking for a project potentially in the Newburgh area that centers on issues of social justice; however, currently there is not a defined project that meets the parameters for the model. They are where they hoped to be as of February 17, 2021 and are ready to start on the first project. Their hope is that the second project will become clearer within the next 30 to 60 days but if that happens before they have the opportunity to update the Rules, Enactments and Intergovernmental Relations committee, they will go to the steering committee.

Mr. Weiss added that during their discussions with these individuals they tried to listen for the "do ability factor" because they only have a snippet of time to do this and they wanted to pick conflicts that could essentially be addressed in that time period.

Mr. Faggione thanked them for reaching out to those legislators that submitted ideas. He looks forward to taking what they learn from them back to his community.

Mr. Paduch asked for the number of people that would be working on each project. Mr. Drapkin replied that Pattern for Progress will supply Mr. Weiss with case information with Mr. Weiss taking the lead on mediation.

Mr. Weiss clarified that generally having between three and four people from each side is preferable as bigger groups tend to get distracted and off topic. Part of the goal of this process will be the training component and to leave them with a model on a problem-solving process and to empower them with the skills they will need. They have seen that when people have a hand in creating the solution to a problem, they are far more likely to follow through with it.

Mr. Drapkin emphasized that he and Mr. Weiss are consultants and when the contract ends, they want to leave the legislature with the tools that will benefit them.

Mr. Amo stated that he was looking forward to the rollout of this initiative.

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.