

**WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

**(REMOTELY)
TUESDAY, APRIL 27, 2021
3:30 P.M.**

PRESENT: Leigh J. Benton, Chairman
Mike Anagnostakis, Katie Bonelli, Janet Sutherland,
Kevin W. Hines, James M. Kulisek, Michael D. Paduch, Joseph J. Minuta

ALSO

PRESENT: L. Stephen Brescia, Chairman
Barry J. Cheney, Legislator
Thomas J. Faggione, Legislator
Kathy A. Stegenga, Legislator
John S. Vero, Legislator
Betsy N. Abraham, Legislative Counsel
Harold J. Porr, III., Deputy County Executive
Matthew J. Nothnagle, Chief Assistant County Attorney
Stacy Butler, Senior Assistant County Attorney
Alicia A. D'Amico, Deputy Commissioner of General Services/Procurement
and Compliance
Karin Hablow, Commissioner of Finance
Kerry Gallagher, Deputy Commissioner of Finance
Erik Denega, Commissioner, Dept. of Public Works
Travis Ewald, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Public Works/Engineering Div.
James S. Brooks, Commissioner of Parks, Recreation & Conservation
Deanna P. Crawford, Deputy Commissioner, Dept. of Parks, Recreation & Conservation
Craig Cherry, Deputy Commissioner, Emergency Svcs/Div. of Police Liaison Svcs
Eric Ruscher, Director, Real Property Tax Service
Deborah Slesinski, Budget Director
Gretchen Riordan, Budget Analyst
Liz Delaney, Budget Analyst
Dina Sena, Budget Analyst

Chairman Benton opened the committee meeting at 3:30 p.m. by asking everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. All committee members were present.

Ms. Sutherland moved to approve the request for supplemental appropriation to create a capital project for ongoing technology updates. This is proposed Capital Project No. 72 in the 2021 Capital Plan. Upon approval, a new capital project will be created, \$4,507,658.00 (bonding), seconded by Mr. Benton.

Ms. D'Amico stated that she is here today to request supplemental appropriation as listed (see original minutes) to create a capital project for ongoing technology updates in the amount of \$4,507,658.00. She reminded everyone about the funds that were allocated, presented, and approved last year.

Mr. Benton commented that these projects go through the Capital Committee every year which is tough because things get itemized and segmented sometimes.

Ms. D'Amico stated that is understandable and there are several things she would like to share in a separate update because a lot has changed since COVID-19. She mentioned the cyber security has made it clear that the county must put in a multi-factor authentication moving forward.

Mr. Benton pointed out that cyber security is something that cannot be delayed because there are people who hunt for gaps.

Ms. D'Amico agreed and stated that the remote workforce and what was in place has escalated. It has put people in vulnerable positions which means the county has done an incredible job with locking it down.

Mrs. Bonelli thanked Ms. D'Amico for her hard work and then asked how the county will "feel" the cybersecurity. Will we feel it financially or are we graduating into a new way of doing business?

Ms. D'Amico replied she is unsure of the financial part, but the MFA (Multi-Factor Authentication) needs to be put in place county-wide. There is a vendor in place that can make this happen. She added that 2,200 key fobs would be included in this security.

Mrs. Bonelli asked if the funds for key fobs are included in the budget she is presenting.

Ms. D'Amico replied yes.

Mrs. Bonelli then clarified that the capital project has been revamped to accommodate today's needs and moving forward.

Ms. D'Amico stated that is correct.

Mr. Faggione asked who is setting the standards for these requirements and if it is a state, federal or county law.

Ms. D'Amico replied it is cyber security liability insurance just to be covered as a county.

Mr. Faggione clarified that it is an insurance issue, so Risk Management is involved.

Ms. D'Amico stated that is correct and Risk Management is involved in the decision-making process.

Mr. Kulisek asked if there are any grant funds that can be applied toward this.

Ms. D'Amico replied no, not for the \$4.5 million.

Mr. Vero commented that everyone is aware of the cyber liability issues, therefore, it is important for the county to invest in the technology to stay ahead of the bad guys.

Mr. Minuta asked if there is reduction in play.

Ms. D'Amico replied yes.

Mr. Benton stated that he will have Mr. Castricone address the committee next month to further discuss cyber insurance premiums.

Motion carried. All in favor.

The next agenda item was a report regarding COVID Expenses for the County.

Mr. Benton pointed out that the report is very generic and included \$4,535,382.00 aggregate services and commodities purchased, \$112,574.00 in Emergency Services overtime from 3/2020 to 8/2020 and \$21,940.00 in Emergency Services overtime related to vaccine POD's in 2021. He stated that the basically handling of the numbers was by the County Executive's Office and Ms. Slesinski.

Mr. Porr explained that being this all happened suddenly, they did everything they could to help the county employees as well as the different partners throughout the county which included, hospitals and nursing homes. They provided PPE to a lot of people early on and the legislature approved uses of contingency funds in the amount of \$2 million. He added everything was scrutinized and nothing was purchased without approval from the County Executive.

Ms. Slesinski mentioned that some of the costs were more inflated during the summertime months because there were shortages of PPE and at times, they were fighting to get supplies.

Ms. Hablow stated that although this is the aggregate total as they know right now, it will certainly get larger because the pandemic is not over. This is the resource that will be used to ask for FEMA reimbursement for those expenses. In addition, there are other departments that accrued overtime, so those numbers are not incorporated, not because they did not occur, they were not provided in time to incorporate into the report. She reiterated that this is not the full effect of the pandemic expense for Orange County.

Mr. Benton commented that he did not want to review a report every month, but thought it was time since there may be a light at the end of the tunnel.

Mr. Hines moved to approve the request to reappropriate the previously accepted grant funding received from NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services from Orange County District Attorney's Budget to Capital Funding (to be added to Capital Project No. 71 in the 2021 Proposed Capital Plan) in conjunction with the Emergency Services funding to finance the Law Records Data Sharing project, \$1,685,928.00, seconded by Ms. Sutherland.

Mr. Cherry stated that in 2007 they started a county-wide Records Management System which has been a good program for 14 years, but like any other technology things have moved forward especially the police management. For the 2021 budget, the department put in funding to fix several issues with the system. There have been a few takeovers of the company they do business with as they have been bought out by conglomerates and the product has lost the ability to get them the service needed; therefore, he is looking for a way to come up with a better solution. In the interim Mr. Hoovler came up with an opportunity to get some funds through the state. These funds were taken from the Manhattan District Attorney's Office by the State and \$40 million dollars was given to the upstate communities. Orange County received \$1.6 million which will be used for Discovery Reform to get a new records management system to replace the impact system for all the local municipalities purchased through a company called Niche. This system will allow uniformity for all police departments to receive the same records and reports.

Mr. Kulisek clarified that this is state-aid funding.

Mr. Cherry stated yes, \$1.6 million is state-aid funding.

Mr. Hines pointed out that there will be a cost to the county. The District Attorney informed the Public Safety Committee meeting members last week that there is another \$1.4 million that is associated with this project, but it will not happen for another year or two. He stated the new system will put everyone on the same page and it is a cost well spent.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Mr. Kulisek moved to approve the request to accept and appropriate the Proposed 2021 Capital Project No. 71 for \$750,000.00 to finance the Law Records Data Sharing Project (bonding), seconded by Mr. Hines.

Mr. Cherry explained that they need more than the \$1.6 million to accomplish their goals and will be using a vendor supply service through the IT Department to do a lot of the infrastructure, server work and installation of hardware. There is a lot of work even after buying the software, so they need to make sure they have enough funds to cover what is needed. He added that this new system will not only help the District Attorney's Office, but it will also help the Probation Department by allowing them to have access to police records.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Mr. Minuta moved to approve the request for supplemental appropriation to the capital projects budget for Parks Historic Structures Initiative. Upon approval, a new capital project will be created for various projects under the Parks Historic Structures Initiative at various Parks locations, \$150,000.00 (bonding), seconded by Mr. Kulisek.

Mr. Brooks stated this request is the continued efforts to improve the conditions at historic sites in the parks within the county. There are currently three projects, Algonquin, Plum Point and the D&H Canal which is the biggest one.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Mr. Paduch moved the request to approve and endorse the application for a NYS Hudson River Valley Greenway Trails Grant for \$20,000.00 under the Greenway Conservancy Trail Grant Program. The grant will be used to repave the section of the Heritage Trail from Chester (railroad station) to Monroe (Airplane Park). A 50% match is required and the cost to the County will be \$20,000.00, seconded by Mr. Benton.

Mr. Brooks explained that this grant was brought to his attention by the Planning Department. It will cover the parking lot in Chester south from the train station which was the original section of the trail done in the 1990's.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Ms. Sutherland moved to approve the request for supplemental appropriation to the capital projects budget in the amount of \$800,000.00 for Fleet Replacement. Funding is from the State Consolidated Local Street and Highway Improvement Program (CHIPS) in the amount of \$700,000.00 and \$100,000.00 is from County borrowing. This project has been approved under the 2021 Capital Plan as Project No. 44 (bonding), seconded by Mr. Kulisek.

Mr. Denega stated this request is for fleet replacement for the Highway Division. He referred to the back-up documentation which is attached to the legislative request (see original minutes) and pointed out that four of the items are CHIPS reimbursable.

Mr. Benton asked the ages of the equipment being replaced.

Mr. Ewald replied the badger is from 1999, the tractor is a 1984 international tractor, and the two dump trucks are 1990 international and a 1999 Chevrolet.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Mrs. Bonelli moved to approve the request to accept and affirm the Orange County Debt Management Policy, seconded by Mr. Kulisek.

Ms. Hablow reviewed the three changes to the policy (see original minutes) which were on page 5, page 11 (Appendix A) and page 12 (Appendix B).

Motion carried. All in favor.

Mrs. Bonelli moved to approve the request to accept and affirm the Orange County Investment Policy, seconded by Mr. Kulisek.

Ms. Hablow stated there was one change in the policy (see original minutes) which is on page 4 (Exhibit A).

Motion carried. All in favor.

Ms. Hablow addressed the next agenda item was a monthly update regarding the County of Orange Sales Tax Received Year-To-Date, County Portion Only (see original minutes).

The next agenda item was a Budget update. Ms. Slesinski stated that the department is starting to prepare the 2022 operating budget. They will be doing the final updates in the Budget Department in the next two to three weeks and will have it available to the departments to begin their requests on May 24th. All requests will be due back a month later. The most current inflation growth factor that was issued for was 1.18% (for the October – September period). She pointed out that the inflation factor for the calendar year of 2022 will be issued in July and she is hopeful that it will increase, but the county is still in a very tenuous economic situation, so one never knows what the outcome will be. As a reminder, the 2021 inflation factor was 1.56%. In 2019 and 2020 the county did get the full 2%. She mentioned that she is in the midst of completing the financial forecast which is required by charter and due to the legislature on May 10th. The department will be finishing up first quarter fiscal meetings this week as well as reviewing how departments ended the 2020 year. Discussions have taken place regarding issues with current expenses and revenues as well as a year-end projection. Furthermore, the department is still making clear to departments that the county is not out of the woods yet and are asking that they be conservative in their purchasing. Capital Projects are due back to the Budget Department on Friday, so she will be contacting Chairman Brescia to set up meetings to review the proposed projects in June. As of April 23rd, there are 328 full and part-time vacant positions with a year-to-date savings of \$7.6 million. All departments are currently on track to meet their required austerity.

Mr. Porr asked that Ms. Slesinski talk a little bit about how the Budget Department will be running two programs because one is outdated and the other is new.

Ms. Slesinski stated that her department has a new program that they are implementing called Hyperion. It is the preferred source for the replacement of the Oracle PSB module that is currently used. They are working forward on the new system, but it will not be completely ready to use, so they will run parallel. She added that departments will utilize the PSB module to put in their workforce as well as their requests for contractual numbers and then she will ask some departments to help input that into a new program, so that the Budget Department can prepare reports.

Mr. Paduch asked Mr. Porr if the retirement incentive will be available for employees this year.

Mr. Porr replied the County Executive's Office is watching the State Legislature who are considering an early retirement bill that would allow for people 50 years old with 25 years of service to retire. If the bill passes, it will be up to the County Executive on whether he would like to pass it locally for county employees.

Mr. Paduch clarified that if it passes locally there would not be an incentive to go with it.

Mr. Porr stated that he would recommend the county adopts the State incentive which is much more attractive to the employees because it gives them time as well as a cash incentive.

Mr. Paduch then asked how soon they will see to this.

Mr. Porr replied the bill has passed one house, but has not yet passed both, so there should be a decision by the end of the state session. After that it would go before the Personnel and Compensation Committee for review and approval.

Mr. Kulisek moved to discuss deed sale parcels, seconded by Ms. Sutherland.

On page one of the deed sale parcels, parcels one through five are all located in the Town of Blooming Grove. Mr. Ruscher stated that parcel 3A and 3B (28-3-5) are the same piece of property with two bidders. He recommends that the committee approve 3A because the minimum bid is \$6,000.00 and the amount if bid is \$7,000.00. Deed sale parcels 5A and 5B are also the same piece of property with two bidders located in the Town of Blooming Grove (29-1-20.1). Mr. Ruscher explained that the amount bid does not meet the minimum bid, so he recommends they both be denied.

Ms. Sutherland moved to accept Mr. Ruscher's recommendations to approve deed sale parcels Nos. 2, 3A, and 4 and deny parcels Nos. 1, 3B, 5A, and 5B, seconded by Mr. Kulisek.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Mr. Ruscher stated that deed sale parcels six and seven on page two are in the Town of Blooming Grove (30-3-25, 32-5-34). He recommends that the committee approve parcel number six because the amount bid is higher than the minimum and this was the fourth bid on the property. The eighth and ninth parcel are in the Town of Hamptonburgh (13-1-13.1, 13-1-14.22). Mr. Ruscher recommends that the committee approve parcel number eight and deny parcel number nine. Deed sale parcels ten and eleven are both in the Town of Montgomery (109-1-6, 5-3-6). The amount if bid on both parcels do not meet the minimum bids, therefore, he recommends they be denied.

Mrs. Bonelli moved to accept Mr. Ruscher's recommendations to approve deed sale parcels Nos. 6 and 8 and deny parcels Nos. 7, 9, 10, and 11, seconded by Mr. Minuta.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Deed sale parcel number twelve on page 3 is in the Town of Mount Hope (2-1-42). The minimum bid is \$2,500.00 and the amount bid is \$1,520.00. Mr. Ruscher recommends that the committee deny the parcel, so he can ask for more money. The thirteenth parcel is in the Town of New Windsor (55-1-86) and has a minimum bid of \$1,000.00 and amount bid of \$1,100.00, therefore, Mr. Ruscher recommends that it be approved. Deed sale parcels 14A, 14B, and 14C (11-1-37.1) are the same piece of property in the Town of Newburgh with three different bidders. The minimum bid is \$5,500.00. After researching the lot, Mr. Ruscher found that the property came from a 1988 subdivision that does meet the minimum lot requirements for the zoning in the area. He believes the lot is worth a lot more, so he will be adjusting the minimum bid and recommends that they all be denied. The last parcel on the page is also in the Town of Newburgh (17-1-18.1), has a minimum bod of \$5,500.00 and an amount bid of \$3,520.00. He recommends it be denied because the property is worth more money.

Mr. Kulisek moved to accept Mr. Ruscher's recommendations to approve deed sale parcels No. 13 and deny parcels Nos. 12, 13A, 14A, 14B, 14C, and 15, seconded by Ms. Sutherland.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Mr. Ruscher stated that there are four parcels on the last page. Deed sale parcels 16A and 16B are the same piece of property in the Town of Newburgh (95-1-43.2) and has a minimum bid of \$3,500.00. He recommends the committee approve 16A because it is an adjacent property owner. The seventeenth parcel is in the Town of Wallkill (6-1-59), has a minimum bid of \$3,000.00 and an amount bid of \$3,000.00, so Mr. Ruscher recommends it be approved. Deed sale parcel number eighteen is in the Town of Warwick (8-1-28.1, 8-2-1). The minimum bid is \$5,000.00 and the amount bid is \$2,000.00. Mr. Ruscher explained that the bidder and the surveyor enclosed a letter (see attached) stating that the property in front of the house was purchased for \$180,000.00. In hindsight these lots should have been included as a package with the house. He recommends that it be approved. The last parcel is in the Town of Wawayanda (21-1-42.1) and has a minimum bid of \$350.00 and an amount bid of \$360.00. Mr. Ruscher recommends that it be approved.

Mr. Benton stated that as Chairman of this committee, he is going to remove deed parcels 16A and 16B in the Town of Newburgh because it is a good idea to request more money to make up for other deficiencies.

Mrs. Bonelli moved to accept Mr. Ruscher's recommendation to accept deed sale parcels Nos. 17, 18, and 19 and deny parcels 16A and 16B, seconded by Ms. Sutherland.

Motion carried. All in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.