

SPECIAL SESSION

July 21, 2021

The Legislature convened in Special Session at 5:02 p.m. today.

The Legislature was called to order by Chairman Brescia with a moment of silence and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

On roll call, all members were present with the exception of Legislators Luján, O'Donnell and Sierra who were absent.

The Deputy Clerk read the Notice of Special Meeting. On motion the same was received and ordered placed on file.

RULES, ENACTMENTS AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE:

Sponsors: Bonelli, Paduch, Amo

Co-Sponsors: Anagnostakis, Benton, Cheney, Faggione, Hines, Kulisek, Minuta, Ruskiewicz, Sassi, Stegenga, Sutherland, Tuohy, Tautel, Vero, Brescia

RESOLUTION NO. 174 OF 2021

RESOLUTION OF THE ORANGE COUNTY LEGISLATURE, PURSUANT TO ORANGE COUNTY CHARTER ARTICLE II, SECT. 2.02(q) AUTHORIZING THE ORANGE COUNTY LEGISLATURE TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION AND THE ISSUANCE OF SUBPOENAS TO WITNESSES, THE ADMINISTRATION OF OATHS AND REQUIRING THE PRODUCTION OF BOOKS, PAPERS AND OTHER EVIDENCE NECESSARY OR MATERIAL WITH RESPECT TO THE ORANGE COUNTY INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY AND THE ORANGE COUNTY FUNDING CORPORATION.

Seconded by Mr. Vero.

Mr. Anagnostakis stated that he has been through this before during his tenure as a Legislator. It was eight or nine years ago they had a Special Investigative Committee on a different subject. There were tens of millions of dollars in question as opposed to a million in this situation. Every penny is important when it is taxpayer dollars. He was shocked back then that many of his colleagues on the Legislature would not vote for the committee. He was hopeful that every Legislator will move forward on this resolution. He recalled when they did the previous investigative committee and they issued subpoenas, who would believe that people who were not telling the truth, or lying or deceiving, who would believe that they would not testify under oath. In order to get them to do that they had to go to a judge to get him or her to testify under oath. He was also shocked that some Legislators did not show up for the vote to get testimony from people who were issued subpoenas. If you plan to place a vote today to do this, keep in mind that you will probably have to take a vote one day to bring this before a judge to compel those people to testify under oath. If you are not willing to do that, then why move forward at all. He was in support and hoped everyone else was.

Mr. Hines recalled those hearings and it was quite shocking because one of the same individuals from the previous investigation is on the resolution. They are not the oversight of the IDA, it is the IDA Board, but on behalf of the taxpayers they owe this to them to do an investigation and hopefully help the IDA. He believed that there was still millions of dollars missing. Mr. O'Donnell was right, and he was the one who brought this all out and he knew it and said it all along that money was missing. Mr. O'Donnell used to be involved with the IDA and he was aware and he knew money was disappearing fast. He congratulated Mr. O'Donnell and mentioned that the District Attorney retrieved \$1.3 million back. Although they are not the board with oversight, he felt they owed it to the current IDA Board that we put in place to help them with their mission to move forward and handle economic development with the funds that are probably missing, but we do not necessarily know that.

Mr. Faggione stated that he mentioned earlier during the Rules, Enactments and Intergovernmental Relations Committee, his opening statement was that they returned to the people's room and their job is to do the people's work. If the resolution is passed today, it would be their duty to do the people's work and he intended to work with all of his colleagues. He commended Legislative Counsel Abraham for preparing him on legal matters and helping him bring forth through committee this very important resolution.

Ms. Bonelli commented that the resolution presents an opportunity to demonstrate that they are exercising their due diligence when it comes to wrong doings and mismanagement from the organizations that they oversee. They met with resistance from the former IDA as far as information forthcoming. Now with the new IDA Board moving forward and trying to restructure things, she wanted to commend all of the new members of the IDA. She recognized Legislator Ruzkiewicz who has been working with them. It is something that will help them in their process as they continue to proceed. This resolution was a result of resistance from the IDA, therefore they needed to step in and take action, which is what this resolution is doing. It is entrusting the Rules, Enactments and Intergovernmental Relations Committee to proceed so they can aid the IDA and their efforts to possibly recoup the money that Mr. Hines alluded to. She urged everyone to support the resolution. She thanked Legislative Counsel Abraham for a remarkable job in advising them throughout the entire process.

Mr. Amo stated that when he first read the resolution he felt it was right but he had many questions. During the committee process, he entered executive session and everything was laid out. He thanked Ms. Abraham, Mr. Chapman and members of the committee. He was in 100% support of the resolution.

Mr. Paduch stated that he thought this was one of the most important bipartisan issues they ever had. He represents 19,000 taxpayers who are not satisfied and until they resolve this, they owe this to all the taxpayers. Let's all work together to make sure this never happens again.

Mr. Ruskiewicz recommended everyone to support the resolution. They had their monthly IDA Board meeting last night and they were briefed on the action that they are considering today, and they are supportive and appreciative of it. He thanked everyone for bringing it forward.

Mr. Brescia supports the current IDA members and the reforms they are trying to implement. He wished they had those reforms when he served on the board. He supports the resolution.

The vote resulted as follows:

Ayes: Bonelli, Paduch, Amo, Anagnostakis, Benton, Cheney, Faggione, Hines, Kulisek, **Luján**, Minuta, O'Donnell, Ruskiewicz, Sassi, Sierra, Stegenga, Sutherland, Tautel, Tuohy, Vero, Brescia

Absent: Luján, O'Donnell, Sierra

Ayes 18;

Noes 0;

Absent 3;

ADOPTED.

On motion of Mr. Faggione, seconded by Mr. Cheney, the Legislature adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

ADJOURNED.

Jean M. Ramppen, Clerk