

**WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

**TUESDAY, AUGUST 24, 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
Betsy N. Abraham, Legislative Counsel
Matthew J. Nothnagle, Chief Assistant County Attorney
Karin Hablow, Commissioner of Finance
Erik Denega, Commissioner, Dept. of Public Works
Travis Ewald, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Public Works/Engineering Div.
Robert Gray, Deputy Commissioner, Dept. of Public Works/EF&S
Eric Ruscher, Director, Real Property Tax Service
Deborah Slesinski, Budget Director

Chairman Benton opened the committee meeting at 3:45 p.m. by asking everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. All committee members were present with the exception of Legislator Kulisek who was absent and Minority Leader Paduch who was excused.

Mrs. Bonelli moved to approve the request for supplemental appropriation to the capital projects budget for preliminary engineering and design of Gardnertown Bridge Rehabilitation in the Town of Newburgh. This project has been approved under the 2021 Capital Plan as Project No. 45. Upon approval, a new capital project will be created, \$35,000.00 (bonding), seconded by Mr. Minuta.

Mr. Denega explained that this request is for a bridge deck replacement project (design only) in the Town of Newburgh on Gardnertown Road and was built in 1973 over the Quassaick Creek. It is 42 feet long and has 2,100 average daily traffic trips. He added that the design will be done in-house.

Mr. Minuta clarified that the bridge also serves the Gardnertown School.

Mr. Benton stated no, the school is before the bridge.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Mr. Minuta moved to approve the request for supplemental appropriation to the capital projects budget for the Public Works Garage Reconstruction of Garage Floor. This project

has been approved under the 2021 Capital Plan as Project No. 66. Upon approval, the funds will increase existing Capital Project No. 129, \$200,000.00 (bonding), seconded by Ms. Sutherland.

Mr. Denega stated this is the final phase of the garage floor project at the Department of Public Works in Goshen. The garage is 4,500 square feet and the total project cost is \$600,000.00. There is \$400,000.00 in the existing budget, so these funds that are being requested will cover the rest of it.

Mr. Benton pointed out that this is the original garage floor and another reason why a fleet wash is needed.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Ms. Sutherland moved to approve the request to return any unspent funding back to its originating source for Valley View Capital Project Nos. 154-18 and 150-20, seconded by Mrs. Bonelli.

Ms. Hablow stated this request is to return unspent funding back to the fund balance for Valley View in reference to the two projects which were small. She added that the purchases have been complete and in aggregate the expenses came in below what was budgeted by \$35.99.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Ms. Hablow addressed the committee with 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). With no questions asked, Mr. Benton moved on to the next agenda item which was an update regarding the Budget Department.

Ms. Slesinski explained that the County Executive budget hearings are completed and they are in the final stages of balancing the budget. While there are still austerities in the budget, they are nowhere near as severe as we have in the 2021 budget. She is seeing extremely positive sales tax numbers but will use a fairly conservative number in the 2022 budget for two reasons. The first being we are not out of COVID yet because once we begin seeing positive signs, we have a back fall. Reason number two is that much of this explosive sales tax has to do with people spending stimulus money and we do not know what is going to happen once that dries up and if the monthly child tax credit is discontinued; therefore, there are still a lot of unknowns. Our indicators on casino revenue, hotel tax, and money from the marijuana dispensaries are also very encouraging. As she mentioned last month, she will provide the three-year average on department spending as done in the past. The department is also in the final stages of calculating lost revenues for the ARPA funds. There are certain numbers that must be excluded from the calculation, but the descriptions are a bit vague, as is much of the guidance that has been received. As of August 13th, there are 334 full-time and 26 part-time vacant positions, for a total of 360 positions, with a year-to-date savings of \$16 million. Lastly, the department continues to evaluate and authorize hiring requests, but the process does take some time to see a decrease in this number.

Mr. Benton clarified the casinos would get closer to the commitment they have made.

Ms. Slesinski stated that is correct. The second payment was \$150,000.00 higher than the first payment of this year.

Mr. Hines asked if overtime costs are calculated into the savings with the vacancies.

Ms. Slesinski replied it is factored in and there are several departments who are over their overtime budget, but with the savings from the vacant positions, it will cover the cost.

Regarding overtime at the Sheriff's Office and Orange County Jail, Mr. Hines clarified that the \$16 million is a real number is considered with the overtime costs.

Ms. Slesinski explained the \$16 million is the vacant positions, but overall \$16 million was budgeted in austerity and she is expecting another \$10 million in savings, so it will cover the overage.

Mr. Minuta asked if benefits are considered in the \$16 million.

Ms. Slesinski replied yes.

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

Mr. Ruscher stated the first parcel is in the Town of Blooming Grove (34-4-17) and has a minimum bid of \$4,250.00 and amount bid of \$4,250.00. He recommends it be approved. The second parcel is in the Town of Chester (111-2-11.2). Mr. Ruscher recommends that it be approved because the minimum bid of \$1,300.00 meets the amount bid. Parcel number three in the Town of Goshen (14-26-9) has a minimum bid of \$2,500.00 and amount bid of \$2,500.00. therefore, he recommends it be approved. The fourth and fifth deed sale parcels are in the Town of Mount Hope (11-5-2.2, 11-8-7). Mr. Ruscher pointed out that the bidders are both parcels are the same and he recommends they be approved since they both meet the minimum bid. Parcels six and seven are in the Town of New Windsor (55-1-76, 55-1-80) and do not meet the minimum bid, therefore, Mr. Ruscher recommends they be denied.

Motion carried. All in favor of Mr. Ruscher's
recommendation to approve deed sale parcels
Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 and deny Nos. 6 and 7.

On the second page, Mr. Ruscher pointed out that deed sale parcel number eight is in the Town of New Windsor (55-1-82). The minimum bid is \$4,000.00 and the amount of bid is \$500.00, so he recommends it not be approved. Parcels nine, ten, and eleven are in the Town of Newburgh (4-1-69.2, 17-1-97, 105-1-6) and all meet the minimum bid. Mr. Ruscher recommends they be approved.

Motion carried. All in favor of Mr. Ruscher's
recommendation to approve deed sale parcels
Nos. 9, 10, and 11 and deny parcel No. 8.

The meeting adjourned at 4:25 p.m.