

**EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
MINUTES
(REMOTELY)
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2020
3:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Paul Ruskiewicz, Chairman
Barry Cheney, Joseph J. Minuta, James D. O'Donnell,
Rob Sassi, Joel Sierra, Kathy A. Stegenga, Laurie R. Tautel

ALSO

PRESENT: L. Stephen Brescia, Chairman
Katie Bonelli, Majority Leader
Thomas J. Faggione, Legislator
Kevindaryan Lujan, Legislator
Peter Tuohy, Legislator
Antoinette Reed, Legislative Counsel
Harold Porr III, Deputy County Executive
J. Daniel Bloomer, Director of Operations
Michael Stanley, Dir. Weights and Measures, Consumer Affairs
Alan Sorensen, Commissioner of Planning
Kerry Gallagher, Deputy Commissioner, Finance
Dr. Kristine Young, President, Orange County Community College
Paul Martland, Vice President of Admin., Orange County Community College
Fred Brennen, Facility Project Manager, Orange County Community College
Mike Worden, Dir. of Facilities & Admin. Svcs., Orange County Community College
Rachel Wilson, Director, Youth Bureau
Susan Ambrosino, Associate Account Clerk II, Youth Bureau
Johanna Porr, County Historian
Nicole Anderson, Community Development
Lucy T. Joyce, Executive Dir., Cornell Cooperative Ext.
Amanda Dana, Director, Tourism
Stephanie Kistner, Tourism Coordinator, Tourism
Nora Martinez, Film Specialist, Tourism and Film Office
Bill Fioravanti, Director, Economic Development
Deborah Slesinski, Budget Director
Deanna Crawford, Budget Analyst
Gretchen Riordan, Budget Analyst

Chairman Ruskiewicz opened the committee meeting at 3:03 p.m. by asking everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. All committee members were present with the exception of Legislator Minuta who arrived at 3:28 p.m.

Ms. Tautel moved the request for approval of funding for the 2020 Capital Project Shepard Absorber-Chiller replacement, \$425,000.00. Bonding for one half of the cost \$212,500.00 is requested at this time, seconded by Ms. Stegenga.

Dr. Young announced that Mr. Worden, Director of Facilities, will be retiring at the end of the month. The committee members congratulated Mr. Worden on his retirement.

Mr. Martland stated that there were originally four projects, \$1.1 million worth of projects, and when asked to consolidate their list due COVID 19 and the financial situation, they reduced the request down to \$425,000. That is still a large number, but this is something they really need, the other three projects can be delayed.

Mr. Brennen explained that the chiller absorber provides climate control for cooling and humidifying large areas. This is for the George Shepard Building. The present chiller absorber is a 300 ton unit, 25 years old with a 20 year operating lifespan. He described the various issues and repeated repairs needed to this chiller absorber. He stressed the need for a new unit which would be more energy efficient.

Motion carried. All in favor with the exception of Mr. Minuta who was not yet present.

Dr. Young, Mr. Martland, Mr. Brennen and Mr. Worden presented the 2021 recommended Capital Plan for Orange County Community College.

Ms. Tautel moved to approve the 2021 recommended Capital Plan for Orange County Community College, seconded by Ms. Stegenga.

Motion carried. All in favor with the exception of Mr. Minuta who was not yet present.

Mr. Bloomer presented the 2021 recommended budget for Consumer Affairs.

Mr. Cheney moved to approve the 2021 recommended budget for Consumer Affairs, seconded by Ms. Stegenga.

Motion carried. All in favor with the exception of Mr. Minuta who was not yet present.

Ms. Stegenga moved the request to designate Orange County Tourism as the Tourism Promotion Agency of the county, seconded by Mr. Cheney.

Motion carried. All in favor with the exception of Mr. Minuta who was not yet present.

Ms. Dana presented the 2021 recommended budget for Tourism.

Ms. Stegenga moved to approve the 2021 recommended budget for Tourism, seconded by Mr. Cheney.

Ms. Dana requested a full-time Film Specialist position to be added to the 2021 Tourism Budget. Ms. Dana explained that the Tourism Office has funds for a full-time Tourism Assistant that they do not plan to fill in 2021 which has offered them additional funds they can apply elsewhere. She would like to use 20% of the available wages from the personnel services line totaling \$16,705 and take an additional \$20,000 from line 571820, consulting services. They would like to spread that out over twelve months in 2021 and reduce digital marketing. She suggested to reduce their specialty materials line 573820 by \$8,065. The overall total with these recommended changes would result in \$44,770 which would be the salary for a full-time Film Specialist (presently part-time).

Ms. Slesinski explained that the changes were manageable and there would be no change in the gross amount of the budget. It is really a matter of moving lines around.

Ms. Stegenga made the motion to add \$44,770 for a full-time Film Specialist position, reduce Personnel Services by \$16,705, reduce consulting services line 571820 by \$20,000 and reduce specialty materials line 573820 by \$8,065, seconded by Mr. Cheney.

Mr. Cheney asked what the COVID 19 impact has been on the amount of filming in the Hudson Valley.

Ms. Dana stated that the Hudson Valley was ahead of New York City with the phases by about five weeks and as a result it pushed production out of New York City and into the Hudson Valley, and they are still here. They are extremely busy and those who relocated here, have not gone back. This is happening not only in Orange County but also in Dutchess County, Westchester County and Ulster County.

Mr. Cheney stated that he heard rumors that the state might do away with the tax credit for filming and asked if Ms. Dana heard anything about that and what would that mean for the need for a full-time position.

Ms. Dana replied that they heard the same rumor, but they also heard that it would not be totally eliminated.

Mr. O'Donnell asked why the changes were not already made when Tourism met with the County Executive.

Ms. Dana stated that all departments are trying not to spend and there are to be no additions to staff. She is coming to the Legislature with the argument that this is a revenue source for the county.

Mr. O'Donnell asked if the argument was made with the County Executive and what was the reasoning as to why the changes were not made.

Mr. Porr explained that they have about a \$35 million revenue gap for 2020. As a result, they did not make any additions to the budget because they cannot afford it.

Mr. O'Donnell asked if the County Executive was okay with the suggested changes being requested by Tourism.

Mr. Porr explained that they do not know what the future holds for 2021. It is unlikely that they will fill the position. The County Executive's position is to avoid layoffs, they do not hire.

Mr. Ruskiewicz commented that they did not want to hire someone, they want to take a part-time position and make it full-time without adding anything to the budget.

Mr. Porr stated it was all dollars.

Mr. O'Donnell stated they were adding money to lines and adding full-time from part-time. He supported the motion.

Mr. Porr reiterated they do not know what 2021 will bring, what the economy will be like, they do not know if they will change part-time to full-time or bring more people on board. No one will be laid off and that is how they are making it through.

Ms. Dana stated that one production would pay for any full-time Film Specialist. She strongly felt this was a resource for the county.

Chairman Brescia stated that he did not think this minor addition would affect the bottom line of the budget, although he appreciated Deputy County Executive Porr's concern.

Mr. Minuta joined the meeting at 3:38 p.m.

Ms. Tautel stated that she saw that money was removed and added to different lines. She asked if the fringe benefits that would be affiliated to this position has been taken into account.

Ms. Dana replied yes.

Mr. Minuta fully supported the position and felt it was a huge benefit to the county.

Mr. Lujan was happy to hear there was so much support for the full-time position.

Motion carried, as amended.
All in favor.

Ms. Dana presented the 2021 recommended budget for Promotion of Industries.

Mr. Minuta moved to approve the
2021 recommended budget for
Promotion of Industries, seconded
by Ms. Tautel.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Ms. Tautel moved the request for supplemental appropriation for funding received from "The Friends of the Orange County Youth Bureau" in the amount of \$13,635, seconded by Mr. Minuta.

Ms. Wilson explained that the request is based on the new year for the Orange County Workforce program through a grant they have from the Accelerator and the IDA.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Ms. Wilson presented the 2021 recommended budget for the Youth Bureau.

Mr. Minuta moved to approve the 2021 recommended budget for the Youth Bureau, seconded by Ms. Stegenga.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Ms. Porr presented the 2021 recommended budget for the Historian.

Ms. Tautel moved to approve the 2021 recommended budget for the Historian, seconded by Mr. Cheney.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Mr. O'Donnell moved the request authorizing the County Executive to apply for, accept and appropriate an additional \$1,945,203.00 of CDBG-CV funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development authorized through the CARES Act to prevent, prepare for, and respond to COVID-19, seconded by Ms. Tautel.

Ms. Anderson explained that this was funding received through the CARES Act. There was some funding in the beginning of the year and now the total for CDBG-CV is \$3,016,102. She has worked with local communities to determine the most effective and efficient use of the funding. They have been working hard to see any unmet needs and then plan to amend their action plan to put this funding out to the communities.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Ms. Stegenga moved the request authorizing the County Executive to submit the Fiscal Year 2021 Annual Action Plan to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the purposes of applying for, accepting and appropriating federal funds for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program, the HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) Program, and the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Program (Estimates for the FY2021 awards are; \$1,820,431.00 for CBDG; \$1,173,990.00 for HOME, and \$154,659.00 for ESG, seconded by Ms. Tautel.

Ms. Anderson explained that they held public hearings on their action plan. They have reviewed and approved the plan, now it needs to be approved by the Legislature.

Mr. Cheney asked how many applications were received.

Ms. Anderson replied that they received about \$3.2 million in applications. The application process started at the end of January and were due at the end of June. They allowed a longer time period due to COVID 19.

Ms. Bonelli commended Ms. Anderson on her work and noted that they were doing funding very differently. The ability for a municipality to get a project done in a timely fashion is a problem they run into but are trying to work through. They need to look at multi-year projects. They made many adjustments this year and she thanked Ms. Anderson for moving them forward.

Motion carried. All in favor with the exception of Mr. Minuta who abstained.

Ms. Anderson presented the 2021 recommended budget for Community Development.

Ms. Tautel moved to approve the 2021 recommended budget for Community Development, seconded by Ms. Stegenga.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Ms. Joyce presented the 2021 recommended budget for Cornell Cooperative Extension.

Mr. Ruszkiewicz moved to approve the 2021 recommended budget for Cornell Cooperative Extension, seconded by Mr. Cheney.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Mr. Fioravanti gave a brief monthly update on Economic Development in the county. He stated that over the last month he spent a lot of time on proposals for the sale of the Grand Street properties. The other project is Camp LaGuardia which they received one formal submission which is very exciting.

Mr. Fioravanti presented the 2021 recommended budget for Economic Development.

Mr. Cheney moved to approve the 2021 recommended budget for Economic Development, seconded by Ms. Tautel.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Mr. Fioravanti presented the 2021 recommended budget for Foreign Trade Zone.

Ms. Tautel moved to approve the 2021 recommended budget for Foreign Trade Zone, seconded by Ms. Stegenga.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Mr. Cheney moved the Annual and 8-Year Review SEQRAS (2 EAF's for Annual Review & 1 EAF for 8-Year Review), seconded by Ms. Stegenga.

Mr. Sorensen explained that there were two Environmental Assessment Forms (EAF) for the annual review and one for the eight-year review. The annual review was a property in the Town of Wallkill consisting of 125 acres which was recommended to be added after review from the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board. The other parcel was in the Town of Montgomery which was 42.7 acres and that was vetted by the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board. The third EAF was for the eight-year review. They held a public hearing on September 3, 2020 and the Legislature has authorized revisions through November 4, 2020. This is will provide for a negative declaration including the merger of districts 1 and 2 along with the consolidation.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Mr. Cheney moved the Annual Review resolution of the Orange County Legislature authorizing the inclusion of certain real property in Orange County Agricultural Districts Nos. 1 and 2, seconded by Ms. Tautel.

Mr. Sorensen explained that these were the parcels being added to the district which were vetted by the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Mr. O'Donnell moved the 8-YEAR REVIEW resolution of the Orange County Legislature adopting a plan for continuance, modification and consolidation of Orange County Agricultural Districts Nos. 1 and 2, seconded by Mr. Cheney.

Mr. Sorensen stated that following the public hearing held on September 3, 2020, they were directed by the Legislature to entertain requests from property owners to be included in the district. They amended the report to reflect the changes. The Legislature requested that they allow property owners to be added to the district until November 4, 2020 ("the final revisions"). The recommendation is to adopt the plan. The update is very thorough, and he pointed out that during the review they are consolidating districts one and two.

Motion carried. All in favor.

On the motion of Ms. Tautel, seconded by Mr. Cheney, the meeting adjourned at 4:49 p.m.