

COMMITTEE TO REVIEW INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY CONTRACTS
MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2023
1:00 P.M.

PRESENT: Kevin W. Hines, Chairman
Thomas J. Faggione, **Kevindaryán Luján**, Robert C. Sassi

ALSO

PRESENT: Katherine E. Bonelli, Chairwoman
Michael D. Paduch, Minority Leader
L. Stephen Brescia, Legislator
Kathy A. Stegenga, Legislator
Peter V. Tuohy, Legislator
Betsy N. Abraham, Esq., Legislative Counsel
Richard B. Golden, County Attorney
Carol C. Pierce, Esq., Deputy County Attorney
Langdon Chapman, Commissioner of Human Resources
Paul Wiley, Director, Real Property Tax Service
John S. Vero, Former Legislator

Mr. Hines called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m. and asked everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. All committee members were present.

Mr. Hines opened the meeting by stating that this committee was empowered by a vote of the Legislature 17 to 0, and he read the title of the resolution:
"RESOLUTION OF THE ORANGE COUNTY LEGISLATURE, PURSUANT TO ORANGE COUNTY CHARTER ARTICLE II, SECT. 2.02(q) AUTHORIZING THE ORANGE COUNTY LEGISLATURE TO CONDUCT A REVIEW OF RECORDS AND DOCUMENTS, OBTAIN TESTIMONY, AND REVIEW SUCH OTHER AND FURTHER EVIDENCE AS MAY BE DEEMED NECESSARY RELATIVE TO THE RECENT RETENTION OF AN INTERIM FRACTIONAL CIO."

Mr. Hines explained that the purpose of the meeting is to come up with a plan as to how to proceed, select a date for their next meeting and they need to decide who they want to hear from. He has a tentative list of who they would like to interview. If someone goes before them and suggests that they should speak to someone else based on what they say, they can expand on the list. He named the individuals that the committee would like to take testimony from; Richard B. Golden, County Attorney; Samantha Sweikata, Commissioner of General Services; Alicia D'Amico, Director of Operations; Langdon Chapman, Commissioner of Human Resources; Harry Porr, Deputy County Executive; and Steve Neuhaus, County Executive. There were some Legislators who attended the press conference that was held, and he would like to hear from them as well, they are Michael Paduch, Mike Anagnostakis, Genesis Ramos and Laurie Tautel. The thought process was there were a lot of people involved, and some signed the contracts. The committee was provided a book by Legislative Counsel that contained a letter from Legislators Genesis Ramos, Laurie Tautel and Minority Leader Paduch, to the County Executive asking for information. There is a response letter from County Attorney Richard Golden, there is a copy of a few contracts, financial transactions, and a copy of the County's Procurement Policy. He suggested that they all have the books with them during the meetings to use as a reference.

Mr. **Luján** commented that he was not sure if this would be something Senator Skoufis would be interested in, he seemed to have a lot of information that he shared with the public.

Mr. Hines shared that his thought was that they would hear from our own people first, but he would leave it up to the committee.

Mr. Sassi agreed with Mr. Hines, he would rather keep politics out of it if they can, it isn't a Democratic answer or Republican answer, they want the right answer. He would not rule it out but not right now.

Mr. Faggione concurred with Mr. Sassi and Mr. Hines. He pointed out that the committee is to review Information Technology contracts and they should focus on that. If it warrants additional people to come before them, then they will address it if it is needed.

Mr. Hines recommended that the questions should come from the four committee members. Normally with other committee meetings they open it up to other Legislators, this is not to exclude them, it is to keep everything focused. If there are any Legislators that have questions, they can send it through one of the four committee members. He would imagine that everyone has the same questions. It all comes down to the contracts. The committee selected two future meeting dates; November 14, 2023 at 9:00 a.m. and November 20, 2023 at 9:00 a.m.

Mr. Paduch commented that he sent a letter to Mr. Hines suggesting other people come in and speak.

Mr. Hines pointed out that the people that he suggested were not for round one. They have the initial list, and they can expand it if someone brings them to a different level as to where they feel they would like to speak to those people.

Mr. Luján mentioned that there was a name on Minority Leader Paduch's list which was the former Commissioner of General Services, Jim Burpoe. It might be good to get an idea as to how things were done versus how they are currently being done, to see if there was a change.

Mr. Hines stated that it might be something to consider but that would be after the first group of people come in because they might be able to handle it. Mr. Golden was here prior to that transition so he is aware how it was under each commissioner. He noted that he has Mr. Paduch's list, and he was not against it, but he would like to start off with a starting point.

Mr. Paduch pointed out that it was not just his list, it was put together with those involved in the conference.

Mr. Hines mentioned to Mr. Paduch that when he goes before the committee for an interview and he says he has information that leads the committee in that direction, they can consider doing that.

Mr. Golden interjected that when they decide on the individuals that they plan to ask to come before the committee to be interviewed, please advise Ms. Pierce and himself so that they are there to represent them during the interview process. He pointed out that it is highly unusual in a government with two branches, for one branch to bring in the head of the other branch for testimony. It is not normally done, and he wanted to note it was an extraordinary step to bring in the County Executive to interview and take testimony.

Mr. Hines stated that he did not consider it testimony, Mr. Golden is a lawyer, he is not.

Mr. Golden responded that he was not aware of how this was going to play out or what the plan was.

Mr. Hines stressed that he did not anticipate anyone raising their right hand if that was what Mr. Golden was suggesting. This was going to be a committee meeting like what they have every month. This is a different group of Legislators who want to be told the process. The reason County Executive Neuhaus is on the list is because he signed the third contract.

Mr. Golden thanked Mr. Hines for his comments, which provided more clarity.

Mr. Luján asked that as they move forward and some information may become more sensitive, would they need to enter executive session, what would it look like, what would be the reasons to go into executive session.

Mr. Hines responded that it would be up to Mr. Golden and our Legislative Counsel, Ms. Abraham. If they keep it to the contracts, it is all public information.

Ms. Abraham stated that those matters will be dealt with as they come up. Executive sessions are dictated by Public Officer's Law section 105. Anything that falls in that criteria that would require executive session, and if it is necessary, they can enter executive session.

Mr. Hines noted that this was a housekeeping meeting, and they would like to get as many people as they can to come in on the 14th, because if they need to expand the list, they can add those people to the 20th if they are available. If a third meeting is required, they will do that.

Chairwoman Bonelli commented that at the end of this process the committee will be required to prepare a written report, that Legislative Counsel will help with, and then submitted to the Rules, Enactments and Intergovernmental Relations Committee, like what they did in the past.

On the motion of Mr. Faggione, seconded by Mr. Sassi, the meeting adjourned at 1:25 p.m.