

**WESTCHESTER COUNTY BOARD OF LEGISLATORS
COMMITTEE ON BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS MEETING
MINUTES JANUARY 25, 2010**

MEMBERS B&A: Chair: Jose Alvarado, Legislators:
Burton, Myers, Pinto, Ryan, Spreckman

IN ATTENDANCE: **CBAC, LWVW:** Barbara Strauss; **CEO:**
Katy Delgado; **Law:** Stacey Dolgin-Kmetz;
Budget: Arthur Vietro, Lawrence Soule;
Finance: Sergio Sensi, Ann Marie Berg

Chair Alvarado called the first meeting of the Budget & Appropriations Committee to order at 10:17 a.m.

The quorum to call a meeting to order was set at four legislators and the quorum for committee action was set at five legislators. The meetings will begin on Mondays at 10 a.m. unless there is a Board meeting and then there will not be a meeting. On the motion of Legislator Pinto, seconded by Legislator Burton, the motion was carried by a vote of 6-0 (Alvarado, Burton, Myers, Pinto, Ryan, Spreckman).

The resolution to approve a Citizens' Budget Advisory Committee for the year 2010/2011 was approved on the motion of Legislator Myers, seconded by Legislator Burton by a vote of 6-0 (Alvarado, Burton, Myers, Pinto, Ryan, Spreckman).

Chair Alvarado has appointed Legislator Nonna to Chair the sub-committee on Litigation, Legislator Rogowsky to Chair the sub-committee on Real Estate and Legislator Williams to Chair the sub-committee on Capital Projects. If anyone is interested in serving on any of the sub-committees, they should contact the chair of that sub-committee. There is no set number of legislators on any of the committees.

Chair Alvarado then presented an act concerning health insurance asking non-represented-managerial employees and retirees under the jurisdiction of the County Executive to contribute 15% of the overall cost of the premium rate of the basic county health insurance.

There was much discussion as to who is presenting it, where is the transmittal letter, what does "under the jurisdiction of the County Executive" mean, should Health Maintenance Organization be capitalized, is the D.A., the Board of Elections, the Clerk and the College exempt. The Committee felt they could not act on this due to the many unanswered questions.

Chair Alvarado was asked about a Vice Chair for the Committee. Inasmuch as he just received the list of the members on the committee he has not decided on a vice-chair but will do so in the near future.

On the motion of Legislator Burton seconded by Legislator Pinto, the minutes of December 21, 2009 were accepted with some changes.

The Finance Commissioner Anne Marie Berg and her Deputy Sergio Sensi were introduced. The Commissioner said she has a strong background in government and from her previous experience knows most of the companies she would be dealing with. Legislator Myers wanted to know on the health insurance if most municipalities ask that their employees contribute to the plan. The Commissioner said in Eastchester since 1995 the employees contribute 12-1/2% and in Mt. Pleasant they contribute 25% but not the police. The older employees were grandfathered in. Legislator Myers asked for preliminary numbers. Legislator Ryan asked about Build America Bonds and working capital expenditures for bonding. The Commissioner replied that we are currently bonding approximately \$174 million and of that number to date \$100 million is to repay the general fund for capital projects that have begun with expenditures up to that number. Build America Bonds is a federal program that will subsidize payment of the interest on our bonds. There is a presumption that there is a market for other than tax exempt bonds. She said it is complex and it is new and different and she is not sure how receptive the market is to this. The Commissioner was asked about the County running out of cash. The problem was the Capital and spending \$100 million on projects from the general fund. This issue will be addressed in February. This has been done this way because the County only bonds once a year usually in November but it is being changed to January. Also the state is slower to reimburse us and we want to be solvent. The Commissioner was asked what

categories are payable from the state, what is the backlog and what is the amount of money.

Budget Commissioner Lawrence Soule and Deputy Commissioner Arthur Vietro were introduced. The Commissioner most recently was Deputy Secretary of Finance for the New York State Senate. Some of the issues they will be looking at are the impact of the state budget, mandate relief items, the year end closing – setting reserves and encumbrances, the cash balances and one of the issues that the rating agencies were concerned about was the hospital and the County's interaction with them, health insurance and workers compensation. Legislator Ryan asked if the response from the rating agencies was all uniform, was there anything new? The Commissioner said no.

Legislator Ryan asked the Chair to request the staff to compile the opinions of the rating agencies.

On the motion of Legislator Pinto, seconded by Legislator Burton, the Committee was adjourned at 11:27 a.m.