

**SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON HEALTH INSURANCE SAVINGS
MINUTES: FEBRUARY 16, 2010**

HEALTH INSURANCE SAVINGS

MEMBERS: Co-Chairs: J. Myers, L. Williams; Legislators: J. Nonna, J. Testa, A. Williams, K. Jenkins

IN ATTENDANCE: **BOL STAFF:** S. Bass

With a quorum present, the Special Committee on Health Insurance Savings was called to order at 3:41 p.m.

MINUTES

(Testa, Nonna). Move to approve the Minutes of February 6, 2010 as amended. At the request of Legislator Testa the minutes we're amended to reflect his suggestion to discuss the 15% health care contribution proposal separately from revamping the entire health insurance plan. Motion approved 4-0.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY

District Attorney Janet DiFiore spoke about what the impacts of the proposed health care contribution legislation will have on her office. (Copy of her full statement is on file). She stated that the unintended consequences of this bill disproportionately will affect the career prosecutors in her office and will eliminate, at one time, in one fell swoop, the entire top level of her staff. This will have a devastating effect on public safety in Westchester County. The unilateral changes which have been proposed are not the right way to go. She expressed her willingness to meet and discuss the ways cost savings can be achieved with minimal impact on public safety.

Co-Chairman Williams stated that this legislature was given a proposal several weeks ago. We took the position that we need to look carefully at any plan. We do not believe in a plan that demonizes government employees. He agreed that there are career prosecutors in the DA's office that would be affected tremendously and we need to look into it. He expressed that he was very much delighted the District Attorney brought to our attention these issues that actually were not considered in the process and ought to be. He stated that we in the legislature have a responsibility to consider them.

Legislators asked questions of the District Attorney about what she see's the impact will be under various circumstances and the type of things she may support. She stated she is not opposed to health insurance contributions but her office can not sustain the loss of the top staff as will occur under the current proposal. She said she is willing to sit down with the Legislators and the County Executive to find a way to achieve cost savings without negatively impacting the District Attorney's office.

Information was provided about what District Attorney's offices in other counties are doing.

Board Chairman Jenkins asked the District Attorney's Office to provide the Committee with a break out of the management salary levels, level ten & higher, so they can understand, of the 125 employees how many people would be excluded.

POMCO

Jennifer Zando, Director of Account Management for POMCO and Vanessa Flynn, Vice President of Client Services for POMCO gave the history and overview of Westchester's current health insurance plan. Ms. Zando has primary oversight for Westchester County and has for several years. POMCO is a third party administrator that administers self funded programs. They monitor our plans from a financial perspective, look at industry trends and analyze and provide options to the County on a consistent basis. Westchester's plan was originally designed eighteen years ago and is reviewed every quarter. Ms. Zando told the committee that the cost of the POMCO health plan is about \$19,000 per year.

Finance Commissioner Ann Marie Berg talked to the committee about the fiscal impacts of the counties health insurance plan including the premiums and deductibles. Ms. Berg stated that \$22,000 is the budgetary number for the cost of the family plan which also includes dental and vision. It is based on an estimated number of enrollees.

The Committee requested from the Finance Department a copy of the POMCO report on how the County can best achieve cost savings and for a copy of the last audit report of POMCO.

There was a discussion of the most recent changes in health benefits since the last round of bargaining agreements. They include increased co-pay amounts, prescription drug formulary, and several phases of implementation for complex care management, disease management and health risk assessments. Co-chair Williams requested a copy of the audit which shows the cost savings from these modifications. Co-Chair Williams asked that POMCO provide suggestions of how the County can best handle this transition period while we consider long term alternative health benefit packages.

The Committee requested Commissioner Berg provide them with information on how much the County will save with the 15% contribution on Social Security pre tax and the breakdown of premiums on dental and vision plans.

The Committee asked POMCO to provide a comparison of our plan to the Empire Plan and a chart of payments paid out over the last three years.

(A. Williams, Nonna) Move to adjourn the Committee on Health Insurance Savings. Motion approved 5-0. The Special Committee on Health Insurance Savings adjourned at 5:41 p.m.

AUDIO RECORDING ON FILE FOR REVIEW UPON REQUEST