

## Final As Amended

WESTCHESTER COUNTY CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION  
**LOCAL GOVERNMENTS FOCUS GROUP MINUTES**  
February 23, 2012

Attendance: Richard Wishnie, Raymond Belair, Derickson Lawrence,  
Anne McAndrews, Florence McCue, Paul Meissner,  
Vincenza Restiano, Gary Zuckerman

County Staff in Attendance: Christopher Crane

Guests: Lester Steinman

### MINUTES

Focus Group Chairwoman Restiano called the meeting to order at 5:45 PM.

V. Restiano reported that David Menkin, Focus Group Vice-Chair, was out of town and that after he returned, the finalized questions for local government officials would be distributed.

V. Restiano reported that she had spoken with Maria Luisa LaDeLuca who is available to intern with the focus group. Maria had completed a dissertation on local governments and consolidations to relieve tax burdens. The group agreed that hearing from Maria would be very helpful. Her attendance will be sought for our next meeting.

V. Restiano led us in editing the wording of the **Focus Group Mandate** (Mission.) It was decided to make the following changes:

1. Change the second bullet to read: “to study which level of government is most efficient in producing services.” A discussion was had as to whether efficiency is the only goal to be sought.
2. Change the third bullet to add the word *county* after *to* and before *planning*, and add *the potential for* between *and* and *assessment*.
3. Change *determine* in the fifth bullet to *identify the*.
4. The sixth bullet was discussed at length, ie. the burden county tax collection by local municipalities.
  - i. Local municipalities are required to borrow (bond) any county tax portion they are unable to collect. They are required to submit to the county 100% of the taxes billed regardless of whether they are actually collected.
  - ii. The focus group thought it was important to determine how much has to be borrowed by each of the municipalities in order for them to pay the county tax bills in full.
  - iii. It was agreed that CRC Chairman Wishnie would send a letter to each municipality requesting this information.

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**The Focus Group Mandate was approved as amended.**

Motion to incorporate Mandate in minutes by Gary Zuckerman and seconded by David Menken.

### Mandate of the Focus Group

- To study the County relationship with Local municipalities for services as it relates to the charter and determine what kinds of improvements and efficiencies are appropriate.
- To review Westchester 2000 and include a discussion of Westchester 2025 as it pertains to towns and villages as a means of aiding in the improvements and efficiencies of services.
- To study the costs involved and determine savings to local governments and any additional cost to the County with the improvements and efficiencies that are appropriate.
- To study issues pertaining to planning and assessment.
- To study sales tax issues.
- To determine services that the County requires local governments to maintain.
- To review burden shifting of non-collection of county taxes from the municipalities to the County.
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- To review areas of common ground to facilitate shared services.

The Focus Group discussed its next task, which is to take our amended list of questions and to visit a variety of local government officials to obtain information. It was decided that Village/City Managers, rather than the chief executives, would be the best one to interview in each location.

The following Managers will be contacted and asked if they will attend a focus group meeting: New Rochelle, Mamaroneck, Tarrytown, Pelham, New Rochelle, Scarsdale. It was decided to invite them one at a time.

The intern, Maria Luisa LaDeLuca, will be invited to the Focus Group's March Meeting and Chuck Strong, New Rochelle City Manager will be invited to the April meeting.

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Gary Zuckerman brought up the County/Village Report as well as the Westchester 2000 Report and encouraged us to review them. They are located in the dropbox.

Chris Crane provided us with a current list of IMAs. (Inter-municipal Agreements from the county database) These are agreements entered into between an individual municipality and the county. There are 43 municipal and 2 town/village agreements represented in this list of IMAs.

Chairwoman Restiano stated that the next meeting of the Focus Group will be on March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2012 at 5:30 pm on the 8<sup>th</sup> floor of the county office building.

Focus Group meeting adjourned at 6:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Florence McCue