

**WESTCHESTER COUNTY BOARD OF LEGISLATORS
COMMITTEE ON BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS MEETING
MINUTES NOVEMBER 30, 2009**

MEMBERS B&A: Chair: Jose Alvarado, Legislators:
Jenkins, Myers, Oros, Harckham, Kaplowitz,
Abinanti, Burton

OTHER LEGISLATORS: Vito Pinto, John Nonna

IN ATTENDANCE: **Human Rights:** D. Brathwaite, Paul Ryan,
Barry Kramer, **LWVW:** N. Fisher, Barbara
Strauss, Janet Zagoria; **TVCC:** Jacqueline
Irwin; **Tourism:** Kim Sinistore, Lydia Ruth;
Budget: Mark Medwid, Johnny Chandy,
Arthur Vietro, Anne Reasoner, Fran
Piskorowski, John Delaney, Angela Owens,
Mayo Bartlett, Patricia Haggerty, Joy Mathai;
SG Risk- Acting: Jim Stergiony; **Child Care:**
Council: Kathy Halas; **Arts:** Judy Matson,
Janet Langsam, Joanne Mongeli;
NYSSCPA's: Spencer Barback, Denise
Stefano; **CEO:** Bill Randolph, Andrew
Neuman; **CBAC:** Bill Kay; **Legal Aid Society:**
Stephen Pittari, John Ryan; **Transition:** Don
Sandford, Kay Carsky; **WCA:** Cora
Greenberg; **Open Door:** Lindsay Farrell, Ken
Ford; **Finance:** Dennis Kelly, Kathy
Thorsberg, Sergio Sensio; **WCC:** Anne
D'Orazio; Gregory Kane; Alfreda Williams

On the motion of Chair Alvarado, Budget and Appropriations was called to order at 9:43 a.m.

The Budget Department's presentation was first. Staffing is unchanged, the bulk of their budget is for salaries. They have introduced a number of initiatives. They are very strict with travel requests which they constantly monitor. They have junior staff that they are bringing up through the ranks. They were asked if having a person in Budget to handle all grants for all departments would save money and would it be more efficient than the present system. Legislator Jenkins requested a list of items that are programmatic activities that were mentioned by the Budget Director. He also asked if all grants were given over to Budget, how many people would Budget need. Legislator Harckham asked if our

capital budget is audited. Bennett Kielson audits our operating budget and debt service as it relates to the operating budget. Legislator Harckham would like auditing capital projects put on an agenda for policy issues. Chair Alvarado wanted to know if Finance and Budget could be combined. The Budget Director did not think it was a good idea. There should be separate departments for checks and balances. Legislator Kaplowitz wanted to know why the difference in debt service. It was due to refinancing of bonds. There was much discussion on the fund balance. Catastrophic was discussed. There are many severely ill people –end stage renal disease, congestive heart failure, etc. Should we be self-insured? The miscellaneous budget was discussed in depth. Budget was asked for the total of the miscellaneous budget without the mandated items. The Medical Center was discussed. Contract agencies were reduced which were the Board's adds. Legislator Nonna will work on property insurance. 6N and 6J were discussed.

The presentation of the Finance Department was next. The Director was asked about merging Budget and Finance. She said it would be possible but would require a law change as Budget reports to the Legislators and the C.E. and Finance reports only to the C.E. They are down two positions, tax levy of \$66,000. It would be difficult for her department to reduce her budget by 10 percent as it would result in the elimination of personnel. Internal audits were done by Finance approximately ten years ago.

The minutes of November 24 were approved by a motion of Legislator Jenkins, seconded by Legislator Harckham.

There was discussion as to where to invest the County's money. How much stimulus money have we received to date?

The last presentation was the Board of Legislators. The budget is the same as the 2009 adopted. The Chairman discussed the various line items. It was suggested deleting a newsletter, saving approximately \$134,500, and using e-news. There are two staff positions that need to be eliminated – one is executive secretary and the other is Chief Advisor to the Chairman. Assistant to the Chairman needs to be added by a resolution. Staffing remains at 57 – 40 plus 17 legislators. Two vacancies exist. The membership fee account of \$500 includes GFOA and our Fiscal Department felt it was not necessary to rejoin. Legislator Pinto suggested cutting our budget by ten percent in keeping in line with asking other departments to cut theirs. Chair Ryan said in order to effectuate this, personnel would have to be shared. Legislator Oros is concerned about sharing as he only has three people working for him but he suggested that some committees do not warrant having one person working on it. Legislator Nonna is not in favor of cutting the newsletter as there are some seniors that do not have

computers. He felt a reorganization of the staff and committees would be in order. He said health care costs should be shared by the legislators on down. Of the \$850,000 paid to the legislators for staffing he wanted to know how much has been used.

Not used is \$134,000. Chair Ryan said some committees need additional assistance.

On the motion of Legislator Myers, seconded by Legislator Oros, Budget & Appropriations was adjourned at 1:37 p.m.