

**WESTCHESTER COUNTY BOARD OF LEGISLATORS
COMMITTEE ON BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS MEETING
MINUTES MARCH 15, 2010**

MEMBERS B&A: **VICE Chair:** Martin Rogowsky, **Legislators:**
Abinanti, Burton, Harckham, Myers, Pinto,
Ryan, Williams, Jenkins

OTHER LEGISLATORS: John Nonna

IN ATTENDANCE: **Westchester Children's Association:** Cora
Greenberg; **Finance:** Sergio Sensi, Anne
Marie Berg; **Intern:** Hope Corbin; **Child Care
Council:** Kathy Halas; **C.E.:** George Oros,
Kathy Delgado; **Budget:** Arthur Vietro, Larry
Soule; **Journal News:** Gerald McKistry

The meeting was called to order at 10:15 a.m. by Vice Chair Rogowsky.

A31. Act Resource Allocation Plan OCFS: This would authorize the County to submit to the State a resource allocation plan which would qualify the County for certain State reimbursements through the Office of Children and Family Services. The Vice Chair asked if there was someone from the Executive's office to speak on this item. There was no one present so the item was tabled.

Budget Director Larry Soule, Assistant Budget Director Arthur Vietro and Sergio Sensi from Finance were invited to the table. Legislator Rogowsky said based on the County Executive's short term and long term projections, budget and finance were invited to discuss what plans were being developed. Legislator Jenkins pointed out before anything could be done, it had to be modified and/or approved by the Board of Legislators. Also, if there was a reduction in an expense that was allocated by the Board, it would also have to be approved by the Board. The Budget Department handed out information as to where the approximately \$16 million in savings would come from. The first department was Planning with a savings of \$129,850. How many vacancies are involved – are they anticipated and known? They are both. These positions will not be filled but Budget was

asked if there are any other positions that cannot be filled. Does this include benefits? Next was Social Services with a savings of \$5,826,618. \$3.3 million was to lower foster care costs and \$1.5 million was to lower optional daycare subsidies for families with incomes over 200% of the Federal poverty level. Legislator Jenkins pointed out that during the Budget hearings, DSS removed this money and the Board added it back in and it is not the prerogative of the Department nor the County Executive to remove it. It was suggested that the Commissioner needed to discuss this in person. Legislator Jenkins also wanted to know how the Department could remove \$3.3 million when during the budget hearings, the Board asked the various departments to cut their budgets by 10% and DSS said they could not. The total proposed net tax savings was listed as \$5,826,618 but the amount listed in savings was \$4.8. What is the difference? The Board of Legislators will determine whether any reductions will be accepted. I.T. reduction of \$2,715,468. - \$900,000 delay filling vacant positions and cut back on overtime, \$775,645 reduce IT consultant budget and \$874,350 defer and eliminate maintenance contracts and hardware purchases. It was requested that all the details of these reductions from all departments be given to the Board. Legislator Jenkins said he is in receipt of a letter from the County Attorney stating that the County Executive does not have the authority to take action on an item after the Board has signed off on it. Public Works would have a saving of \$539,488. Temporarily delaying filling vacant positions and reducing the overtime would save \$279,000 and a reduction in discretionary building repairs would save \$260,000. Legislator Rogowsky asked what percentage of the operating budget is the \$260,000. We are in the construction season and Legislator Jenkins said the Board might have to advance several capital projects if nothing is forthcoming from the County Executive. Digressing for a moment, Legislator Rogowsky said at an energy meeting he was told that there is \$7.7 million in interest free bonds and this needs to be acted upon by April 1. Public Safety is proposing a savings of \$905,000 - \$500,000 to delay filling vacant positions and reduce overtime and \$100,000 to disband the mounted unit. Again there is a discrepancy between the proposed savings and the savings listed. There were questions about disbanding the mounted unit and were the horses a gift. If they were, can they just be given away or sold. Transportation savings \$1,366,922 - \$1,266,922 eliminate Bx M4C Express bus route connecting Central

Avenue corridor and \$100,000 temporarily delay filling vacant position in DOT. Has anyone consulted with the bus company? Are there issues as to who controls the routes? Will there be a loss of revenue to the County? Our STOA aid is being cut. Probation savings will be \$602,455 - \$284,100 to replace electronic monitoring with curfew voice recognition, includes reduced overtime costs and \$179,100 temporarily delay filling vacant position and retirement. Legislator Harckham feels we need to invest in probation because in the long run we will save money by not having to use corrections, the courts, and public safety. It is important to have Commissioner Pozzi in. Labs & Research savings of \$165,135 by postponing replacing the van \$20,000, reducing purchasing lab supplies \$70,000, reducing equipment service contracts by 10% (\$35,135) and reducing contractual services in the amount of \$40,000. During the process, there was discussion of a marketing plan that would generate revenue. Legislator Harckham asked that we be kept informed of the progress of this plan. Legislator Jenkins pointed out that during the budget process, the Board made the decision to leave the \$20,000 in Labs budget for the van. Parks savings of \$1,620,000. Temporarily delay in filling vacant positions \$1,400,000, close Croton Park pool \$25,000 and open Playland one hour later each day \$90,000. Increasing fees will amount to new revenues of \$350,000. Legislator Jenkins felt the Croton Pool should not be closed because we have spent so much money on the sea wall, the shed, etc. and insofar as opening Playland one hour later, the Board was told that that hour is used for training the employees, for safety inspections, drug testing, etc. Legislator Abinanti wanted to know if the new fee is working out at Playland. District Attorney savings of \$110,000 based on reduction in equipment, travel, expert witness fees, etc. Legislator Burton and Legislator Rogowsky both stressed that the Board would like the facts and that we all have responsibilities and we all need to work together. What is happening with the consolidation of Health and Mental Health. Legislator Jenkins said it is in Community Services with a report from Dr. Grant Mitchell and GOES will also be discussing this. Legislator Jenkins pointed out that the Charter does not give the County Executive the authority to create or abolish departments. It is given to the Board of Legislators.

Legislator Ryan pointed out that on the agenda for the February 22 Board meeting, he reintroduced "Westchester Renewed," and it was

referred to Budget and Legislation. He stressed that it is important for those two committees to move ahead with the Charter Review Committee.

On the motion of Legislator Harckham, seconded by Legislator Abinanti, the minutes of March 1 and March 4 were accepted. On the motion of Legislator Pinto, seconded by Legislator Myers, A16 was received and filed and on the motion of Legislator Pinto, seconded by legislator Harckham, the Committee was adjourned at 12:21 p.m.