

Westchester Charter Revision Commission
Budget and Finance Focus Group
Minutes of November 14, 2011, Meeting

A meeting of the Budget and Finance Focus Group of the Westchester Charter Revision Commission was held on November 14, 2011, at the offices of Jeffrey Binder, 68 East Post Road, White Plains, New York. Present were focus group members Jeffrey Binder (Focus Group Chair), Ann McAndrews, and Paul Windels (physically) and Paul Meissner (Focus Group Vice Chair), Julie Killian, Derrickson Lawrence, and Matthew Thomas (by telephone). Also attending were Commission Chair Richard Wishnie and Stacey Dolgin-Kmetz, Legislative Counsel to the Board of Legislators.

After the meeting was called to order, the minutes of the November 3, 2011, meeting were approved as submitted and Paul Windels volunteered to serve as secretary for this meeting. It was agreed that the Focus Group should next meet on November 28, 2011, at Mr. Binder's office at 9:30 a.m.

Mr. Binder reported that he had met with Olivia Rhodes, Director of Fiscal Affairs, and Ann Reasoner, Deputy Director of Fiscal Affairs of the Board of Legislators, both of whom previously served on the staff of former County Executive Spano, regarding the budget process. He recommended that the Focus Group should meet with them as well at a mutually convenient date. As reported by Mr. Binder, Ms. Reasoner and Ms. Rose recommended focusing on the flow of information between the County Executive and the Board and whether the County Executive was supplying adequate supporting information to the Board.

It was further noted that the Budget Director is required to report to both the County Executive and the Board but serves at the pleasure of the County Executive. One possible issue for consideration is whether the Board should have the power to dismiss the Budget Director. In

connection with this issue, the Board's power to subpoena and the process for issuing subpoenas were noted, as was the institutional need for the County Executive to have adequate bargaining power as collective bargaining agent for the County.

The Group also reviewed the upcoming meetings regarding the 2012 Budget and the availability of members of the Group to attend some of those meetings. The role of the accounting firm of Bennett, Storch & Kielsen in auditing the proposed budget and reporting to the Board was reviewed, and it was proposed that the Group meet with BKS after the completion of the 2012 Budget to obtain BKS's feedback on the budget process.

The Group also discussed the process of approving the capital budget and the interrelation of Charter Sections 167.21 and 167.81 with respect to the ability of the Board to increase proposals in the capital budget. The amount of the budget subject to the control by the County Executive and the extent and history of mandated items

The meeting was then adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Paul Windels III
Acting Secretary