

**WESTCHESTER COUNTY BOARD OF LEGISLATORS
COMMITTEE ON BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS MEETING
MINUTES DECEMBER 11, 2009**

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

MEMBERS OF LEGISLATION: Chair William Burton; Legislators:
Bronz, Jenkins, Myers, Nonna, Oros,
Rogowsky, Ryan

MEMBERS OF GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS: Chair: Ken
Jenkins; Legislators: Bronz, Burton, Myers,
Pinto, Rogowsky, Ryan

IN ATTENDANCE: **Planned Parenthood:** Trista Naylor; **DPW:** Phil
Kruck; **DEF:** Tom Lauro; **DES:** John
Jackson, Michael Volk, Tony Sutton; **DOC:**
Joseph Spano, Justin Pruyne; **Probation:**
Jacolyn Levin; **O'Connor Davies:** Nick
DeSantis, Bob Pollman, Rob Cordero, Alan
Kassay; **Office Disabled:** Evan Latainer;
Assoc. Fire District: Adam Ochs; **Tax
Commission:** David Jackson; **LWW:**
Noreen Fisher; **WAB:** Lottie Harris; **EMS:**
Jeffrey Casas, Kelly Belnick, Joe Mazzella;
Finance: Sergio Sensi; Kathy Thorsbrg;
CEO: Bill Randolph; **TLC:** Barbara
Monohan; **Budget:** Arthur Vietro, Anne
Reasoner; **DSS:** John Belfuss, Kevin Mahon;
IT: Marguerite Beirne; **Child Care Council:**
Kathy Halas; **Hudson River Museum:**
Richard Halevy; **WW Agenda:** May Krukiel;
Citizen: Larry Fasnaught; Alfreda Williams,
Hope Corbin, Juett Christofilis; **Public Safety:**
Tom Belfiore, D. Long;

Chair Alvarado called the Committee on Budget and Appropriations
to order at 9:46 a.m.

BKS was introduced to give their final report. They reviewed the proposed budget for 2010 having logged in 1000 hours. The County budget is \$1.8 billion with 4879 full time employees, 32 less than the 2009 budget. 45-50% of the total budget is for salaries (\$390 million) plus fringe benefits. There is a \$47 million increase in the budget. The stimulus money has helped offset the sales tax loss. The auditors referred the Legislators to their Summary of Recommendations. There was a decrease in the hotel tax, a decrease in PILOT revenue and earnings on investments. There was discussion about the General Fund balance. Legislator Oros wanted to know if a negative cash flow would affect our bond rating. The auditors responded that the rating agencies should be told what the County's financial plan is and that we might have to do a short term borrowing. In May we should begin daily monitoring of the cash flow. The auditors continued discussing the Summary of Recommendations. On Health Benefits, the auditors are suggesting that the County undertake a study as to whether or not we should stay self-insured. They have discussed this with a number of other counties and they have moved from self insured back to the Empire Plan which is a statewide government plan. The auditors then discussed the Fund balance. At the end of 2009, it is projected that there will be a balance of \$123 million. Of this amount \$66 million will be used for the 2010 budget. Going into the 2011 budget, there will only be \$16 million available. There was much discussion on FMAP (Federal Medical Assistance Program). The funds are distributed by the state as an offset to Medicaid expenses.

Chair Jenkins called Government Operations to order at 11:22 a.m. C201. Bond Act RYON4 – Yonkers Recreation Enhancements in the amount of \$7,225,000. The Board had previously issued bonds in the amount of \$650,000 to fund the design and construction management of this project. This bond is to perform the construction of the project. On the motion of Legislator Alvarado, seconded by Legislator Ryan for Budget & Appropriations, the motion was carried by a vote of 8-0 (Alvarado, Jenkins, Rogowsky, Burton, Kaplowitz, Myers, Ryan, Oros) and on the motion of Legislator Jenkins, seconded by Legislator Bronz for Government Operations, the motion was carried by a vote of 7-0 (Jenkins, Rogowsky, Burton, Myers, Ryan, Pinto, Bronz).

A362. IMA with City of Mount Vernon to lease 4th Street Playground and C203 Bond Act BLA01 City of Mount Vernon 4th Street

Playground: This project is an IMA with Mt. Vernon for the County to lease the 4th Street Playground from the City and to contribute funds toward the design of improvements in the amount of \$250,000. On the motion of Legislator Alvarado, seconded by Legislator Burton for Budget & Appropriations, the motion was carried by a vote of 8-0 (Alvarado, Jenkins, Rogowsky, Burton, Kaplowitz, Oros, Myers, Ryan). On the motion of Legislator Burton, seconded by Legislator Bronz for Government Operations, the motion was carried by a vote of 7-0 (Jenkins, Rogowsky, Burton, Myers, Ryan, Pinto, Bronz).

A363 Resolution to set a Public Hearing on IMA with New Rochelle, A364 IMA with City of New Rochelle to lease City (Flowers) Park, C204 Bond Act BLA01 City (Flowers) Park: This project is for an IMA with New Rochelle for the County to lease property known as City (Flowers) Park from the City and the County will contribute funds toward the design, construction and construction management. It will be operated and maintained by the City and accessible to all County residents. The Bond is for \$9,800,000 to cover the design, construction and construction management of this project. On the motion of Legislator Myers, seconded by Legislator Jenkins for Budget & Appropriations, the motion was passed by a vote of 8-0 (Alvarado, Jenkins, Rogowsky, Burton, Kaplowitz, Myers, Ryan, Oros) and on the motion of Legislator Pinto, seconded by Legislator Myers for Government Operations, the motion was passed by a vote of 7-0 (Jenkins, Rogowsky, Burton, Myers, Ryan, Bronz, Pinto). This was signed out for all purposes.

On the motion of Legislator Rogowsky, seconded by Legislator Myers, Government Operations was adjourned at 11:29 a.m. The Legislation Committee was called to order at 11:30 a.m. by Chair Burton.

Chair Bronz of the Subcommittee on Appointments made a motion recommending three appointments as voting members to the Health Care Corporation. They are Patrick McCoy, Michael Staib, Dr. Orlando Adamson. This was seconded by Legislator Jenkins. Legislator Ryan requested that no action be taken as new names are still coming in and then interviews will begin to be sure the best

candidates are selected for the Board. Chair Burton requested Legislator Bronz withdraw her motion which she did. On the motion of Legislator Jenkins, seconded by Legislator Rogowsky, the Committee on Legislation was adjourned at 11:39 a.m. The Budget & Appropriations minutes of December 7 were approved on the motion of Legislator Jenkins, seconded by Legislator Burton.

C202 Bond Act Refund Outstanding Bonds: The interest rates are low now and there is a potential to refund all or a portion of bonds in January. On the motion of Legislator Jenkins, seconded by Legislator Alvarado for Budget & Appropriations, the motion was passed by a vote of 8-0 (Alvarado, Jenkins, Rogowsky, Burton, Myers, Ryan, Oros, Kaplowitz).

A358. Act Name Change Grodensky Law Group: The County had hired LeSchack & Grodensky of New York City to recover delinquent student accounts at the Community College. As of January 1, the firm's name will be changed to Grodensky Law Group, PLLC and they will move the offices to Port Washington, New York. On the motion of Legislator Jenkins, seconded by Legislator Rogowsky for Budget & Appropriations, the motion was carried by a vote of 8-0 (Alvarado, Jenkins, Rogowsky, Burton, Myers, Oros, Kaplowitz, Ryan).

A360 Act Payment of Mortgage Tax Receipts: This is to authorize the Commissioner of Finance to pay the mortgage tax receipts to the cities, towns and villages for the period of April 1, 2009 to September 30, 2009. On the motion of Legislator Jenkins, seconded by Legislator Myers for Budget & Appropriations, the motion was carried by a vote of 8-0 (Alvarado, Jenkins, Rogowsky, Burton, Myers, Ryan, Oros, Kaplowitz).

The Budget & Appropriations Committee had invited several commissioners in to discuss the possibility of consolidating different departments. The first discussion was with the Corrections Department and Probation. Commissioner Sano pointed out that in 2009 Corrections will be \$9 million under budget and in 2008 they were \$6 million under budget. The jail is the 2nd largest in the state with a prison population of approximately 1450 and employs 900 people. He does not believe it is feasible to run the jail with a part

time commissioner. The Commissioner is working on cost saving initiatives and his 2010 budget is below the 2009 tax levy. He does not believe it makes fiscal sense to remove a commissioner at a savings of \$142,000. Legislator Kaplowitz mentioned two line items – one was the drug treatment plan from \$600,000 to \$1.4 million and the other item was the over-time line from \$7.6 million to \$11.6 million. Presently there are 50 inmates on a list for the Solutions Program which is an eight week drug treatment program. The recidivism rate is low for the inmates that have gone through the program. The overtime depends on the number of inmates. They presently do share services with Probation. Corrections and Probation believe there is a state law that does not allow the merging of the two departments and the legislators asked for a copy of that statute.

Next was Emergency Services and Public Safety. Deputy Commissioner Long said New York City has merged some departments but that was done after analyzing the situation. It does work in some places but he does not know if it would work in Westchester. Research has to be done and studied. Commissioner Sutton has heard the residents that costs need to be curbed, expenses cut and the tax levy needs to be lowered but that doesn't mean compromising public safety. Emergency Services was created ten years ago by consolidating functions from other departments and one department was public safety. To remove a commissioner from a department in less than sixty days and combine a department with another department that has no expertise or institutional knowledge about the department doesn't make sense. Emergency Services is responsible for 50 fire departments made up of volunteers and paid personnel, 40 EMS agencies and the tax levy is less than the overtime of other departments. Much of their department is grant funded. They are willing to review the various lines to see if services can be combined. In 2001 there were 40,000 dispatches with 26 operators and in 2009 there will be 91,000 with the same number of operators. He feels there has been no respect shown to the commissioners. That the Board should have requested a meeting with them to determine what could be done. His feeling is that all his life he has been bringing chaos to order but this is bringing order to chaos. Deputy Commissioner Long requested that Public Safety be told how much needed to be cut from their budget and allow them to

determine where the cuts would be. Commissioner Sutton agreed with Deputy Commissioner Long.

Next was DEF and Public Works. Commissioner Lauro said that Commissioner Sutton echoed the Commissioners' sentiments. DEF was originally part of Public Works but because of the complexity and the Clean Water Act in the '70's, it was separated. Technical background in wastewater is needed at DEF and Public Works requires a knowledge of engineering and contracting. The two positions that were eliminated took out over seventy years of experience. Because DEF consists of all districts, the funds can't be comingled and record keeping is more detailed. Public Works is presently working with NYPA on 23 projects to reduce the cost of utilities. Mr. Kruck is working with a consultant on turning off the lights in the garage which have been on 24-7 for 35 years.

Deputy Commissioner John Befus from Social Services. The discussion centered on day care. The tax levy is going from \$7 million to \$10 million because of a tremendous growth in child care. This is due to the economy. They expect there will be a waiting list in 2010. Presently there are 3220 slots and they are allocating 3877 for 2010. There was much discussion on raising the co-pay from 10 percent to 15 percent. If this is done would the scholarship program need to be increased. Budget recessed at 1:36 p.m. At 3:12 p.m. Budget went back into session. Mr. Befus said the consensus of the advocacy groups was to stay at the 15 percent as the parent's share and not lose the 100 slots.

On the motion of Legislator Kaplowitz, seconded by Legislator Burton, Budget & Appropriations was adjourned at 3:20 p.m.