

**WESTCHESTER COUNTY BOARD OF LEGISLATORS
COMMITTEE ON BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS MEETING
MINUTES March 5, 2009**

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

IN ATTENDANCE: **DSS:** John Befus; **Planning:** Larry Kelly, Deborah DeLong; **Food Bank:** C. Rohatyknsky; **DPW:** Ralph Butler; **Related Companies:** Matt Finkle; **CE:** Bill Randolph, Andrew Neuman; **DES:** Tony Sutton; **Budget:** Arthur Vietro; **CBAC:** Fran MacEachron; **City of Yonkers:** Lou Kirven; **BOL:** Daysi Briones; Larry Goldstein, Katy Delgado; Susan Kirkpatrick, Ray Indelicato, Chris Crane, Sally Schecter

With a quorum present, Chair Alvarado called the meeting to order at 10:20 a.m.

A162 Capital Budget Amendment for BES07 and C100 Bond Act Amendment for BES07 Food Storage Warehouse: Andrew Neuman explained that these items were discussed last week in the Community Services Committee and in Public Safety. There has been discussion with the State and Federal governments how to respond to an emergency and how to have a central facility where food, water and medical supplies are available to distribute throughout the county. There is also the opportunity to use shared services with a food distribution organization that could save the County a lot of money by having them operate the building when there is no emergency. They would provide equipment, utility costs and insurance. There have been questions about the traffic. The Federal stimulus package has \$100 million for emergency food and shelter.

Legislator Burton wanted to know what sort of contractual arrangement has been made with the Food Bank. The bond is only for the design and once that is completed then discussion can begin on a food distribution organization. There will be a need for a business plan and what the County expects from a partner should an emergency arise – the labor will be expected to help, that utilities will be covered, some maintenance and upkeep will be expected and there has been discussion of the partner paying rent. Food Bank has approached the County that they are interested in partnering on this project. Legislator Burton wanted to know if an RFP would be forthcoming and he was assured it would be once the

design is completed. Commissioner Butler pointed out that to apply for stimulus money, the project has to be shovel ready by February 27 2010. This means design, bid and awarded. Commissioner Sutton said this is the only food facility that is under way in the State and it would be a model program. Legislator Jenkins stressed that an RFP is a must after the design. Legislator Harckham wanted to know if we could stress that Westchester contractors be used. Commissioner Butler said we could not restrict contractors but 90 percent of our projects are union contracts and the contractor has to go to the local unions for workers. Mr. Neuman said the County is working on inserting language that our One Stop has to be approached first for workers. Legislator Rogowsky was concerned about the size. Originally Food Bank approached the county because they had outgrown their 13,000 square feet and were looking at 40,000 sq. feet. The County is talking about 20,000 square feet with 6,000 for office space. Will this space meet our needs for the next few years? He then questioned the cost. The Board was told that government construction is plus \$300 or more per square feet. This building is less than \$200 square feet. How come? Commissioner Butler said it depends on the requirements of the building. Legislator Rogowsky said his biggest concern was about space and would it be large enough and Mr. Neuman said this would be a distribution center not a storage center.

On the motion of Legislator Alvarado, seconded by Legislator Myers for Budget & Appropriation, the motion was carried by a vote of 9-0 with Legislator Oros signing without prejudice (Alvarado, Burton, Myers, Harckham, Williams, Oros – without prejudice, Jenkins, Rogowsky, Kaplowitz – Abinanti did not sign the act). This was previously signed out of Community Services on February 24 by a vote of 4-1 (Bronz, Pinto, Jenkins, Myers, Abinanti – no).

A201 Property Purchase NHLA Act 47 Riverdale Avenue and C110 Bond Act BPL10 for 47 Riverdale Avenue: The existing development was a Mitchell Lama development. There are 343 units which have deteriorated. The new owners have already spent \$11 million in renovations – elevators, power plants, lighting, hallways, etc. When the developer took over the buildings, there were a good number of vacancies. Now there is a waiting list. There are 1, 2, and 3 bedroom apartments with some duplexes. This is a \$53 million project with \$30 million as the purchase price. The units will be rented to households with annual incomes at or below 60 percent of Westchester County's area median income. Legislator Jenkins mentioned that Section 8 would be picking up a portion of the rent for 12 units but their utility bills are exceeding the amount that they are being subsidized by. Mr. Finkle from Related Companies said the apartments are heated by electricity. They have been working with NYSEDA to receive an energy star certification. In order to receive this, a reduction of 20% in energy is required. The company has replaced the windows, the roof and have put in new electric

heaters in every unit. The tenants have received a utility allowance of \$200 which the Yonkers Housing Authority has determined is a reasonable amount. The company has been holding meetings with the tenants and bringing in NYSERDA to explain about energy reduction. There were questions as to whether or not the building could be converted to either gas or oil but it would involve opening every wall in all the buildings, costing millions of dollars and inasmuch as the renovations are about 95% completed, it is not feasible.

Legislator Abinanti wanted to know why the County was involved in this project. He had been told that the new homes land acquisition fund was to stimulate new projects not to reward people on their own. The developer had a deadline and they needed County funding. Legislator Abinanti would like to know what the County policy is because there was another project that wanted funding and they were told they could not have it because they already owned the property. That project had the land and buildings donated to them. Legislator Abinanti believes this is a change in policy. He does not object to this but he wants it on the record. Secondly, this is going from the owner to the County back to the same owner. There is no change in ownership. In the past, the County had requested a change of ownership. Next he wanted to know if there can be tax credits at the same time as IDA financing and he was told yes.

On the motion of Legislator Jenkins, seconded by Legislator Alvarado the motion was passed by a vote of 8-0 (Harckham, Abinanti, Rogowsky, Alvarado, Jenkins, Burton, Kaplowitz, Williams). This was passed by the Committee on Government Operations on February 24 by a vote of 6-0 (Jenkins, Burrows, Myers, Pinto, Bronz, Rogowsky).

On the motion of Legislator Jenkins, seconded by Legislator Burton, the minutes of February 23 were approved.

On the motion of Legislator Rogowsky, seconded by Legislator Burton, the meeting was adjourned at 12 noon.