

**Herkimer County Legislature
Ways & Means Committee Meeting
Friday, December 4, 2020
Via Zoom**

Follows Public Safety & Emergency Management and Ways & Means

Persons Attending:

Patrick E. Russell (Committee Chairman)
Kurt J. Ackerman (committee member)
Raymond Smith (committee member)
Raymond Johnson (committee member)
Frederick J. Shaw, Jr. (committee member)
John P. Stephens (committee member)
Vincent J. Bono, Chairman of the Legislature
James W. Wallace, Jr., County Administrator
Brandy Serow, Sec. to County Administrator
Lorraine Lewandrowski, County Attorney
Sheri Ferdula, Budget Officer/Purchasing Agent
Steve Billings, Personnel Officers
Beth Sadlon, Director of Real Property Tax Services
Kimberlee Enea, County Treasurer
Sylvia Rowan, County Clerk

(Non-Committee Members Signed In)

Legislator Mark Gaworecki
Legislator Robert J. Schrader
Legislator Bob D. Hollum
Legislator William E. Keeler, Sr.
Legislator John L. Brezinski
Legislator Peter F. Manno
Legislator Ray Donley
Legislator Peter Campione
Legislator William Weakley

Absent:

N/A

Mr. Russell called the meeting to order at 10:31 a.m.

Items discussed:

WAYS AND MEANS:

1. Adopt 2021 Budget
2. Appropriation Conduct of County Govt. for 2021
3. Levy Consolidated Health Taxes
4. Levy Taxes
5. Equalization Table
6. Levy for Unpaid School, Village City Taxes
7. Approve Forms and Footings
8. Levy for Town Budgets
9. Approve Dues for 2021
10. Approve Conferences for 2021
11. Contracts with Non-Profits for 2021
12. Contract with Adirondack Park Local Government Review Board
13. Contract with Mid-York Library
14. Approve Warrants

15. Chairman's and Clerk's Certificate
16. Approve minutes for 2020
17. Allow County Auditor to process refunds and corrections for 2021 - \$2,500 or less
18. Adopt Introductory Local Law E – Senior Exemption
19. Approve Mortgage Tax Semi Annual Report – April 2020 – September 2020
20. Approve transfers in the 2020 Budget
21. Approve transfer, amend budget and create project for roof repairs at HCCC
22. Approve budget amendment for consolidated Health District
23. Other – Approve CSEA renewal
24. Other – Discussion - Land Bank

Committee Vote Record:

WAYS & MEANS:

Mr. Russell: "Adopt 2021 Budget. I need a motion."

Item #1 - On motion of Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Shaw, Item #1 was voted on, approved and moved for Resolution. Unanimous.

Mr. Russell: "Appropriation Conduct of County Government for 2021."

Item #2 - On motion of Mr. Bono, seconded by Mr. Johnson, Item #2 was voted on, approved and moved for Resolution. Unanimous.

Mr. Russell: "Levy Consolidated Health Taxes. How many are there of these now?"

Jim Wallace: "We are down to one but I know Beth's on if she wanted to speak to that at all."

Beth Sadlon: "Yes. We are down to one. We just got Frankfort and German Flatts off that."

Mr. Russell: "Ok. Motion?"

Item #3 - On motion of Mr. Shaw, seconded by Mr. Stephens, Item #3 was voted on, approved and moved for Resolution. Unanimous.

Mr. Russell: "Levy Taxes."

Item #4 - On motion of Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Shaw, Item #4 was voted on, approved and moved for Resolution. Unanimous.

Mr. Russell: "Equalization Table. Has that changed since the last time we saw it?"

Jim Wallace: "No it has not."

Mr. Russell: "I need a motion."

Item #5 - On motion of Mr. Stephens, seconded by Mr. Shaw, Item #5 was voted on, approved and moved for Resolution. Unanimous.

Mr. Russell: "For any town that might be listening to get their rates up to 100%. Levy for Unpaid School, Village City Taxes."

Item #6 - On motion of Mr. Russell, seconded by Mr. Smith, Item #6 was voted on, approved and moved for Resolution. Unanimous.

Mr. Russell: "Approve Forms and Footings. If you need a tutorial on that I'm sure Beth can give you one"

Item #7 - On motion of Mr. Stephens, seconded by Mr. Johnson, Item #7 was voted on, approved and moved for Resolution. Unanimous.

Mr. Russell: "Levy for Town Budgets."

Item #8 - On motion of Mr. Shaw, seconded by Mr. Bono, Item #8 was voted on, approved and moved for Resolution. Unanimous.

Mr. Russell: "Approve Dues for 2021."

Item #9 - On motion of Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Shaw, Item #9 was voted on, approved and moved for Resolution. Unanimous.

Mr. Russell: "Approve Conferences for 2021."

Mr. Johnson: "Mr. Chairman, are they down with COVID and conferences?"

Mr. Russell: "I was just going to actually ask Mr. Wallace that same question."

Jim Wallace: "This year, not many people attended. Almost everything for us through NYSAC was on the phone and there was no cost there. We are anticipating probably middle of the year you will start to see conferences again."

Item #10 - On motion of Mr. Bono, seconded by Mr. Stephens, Item #10 was voted on, approved and moved for Resolution. Unanimous.

Mr. Russell: "Contracts with Non-Profits for 2021."

Item #11 - On motion of Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Russell, Item #11 was voted on, approved and moved for Resolution. Unanimous.

Mr. Russell: "Contract with Adirondack Park Local Government Review Board."

Item #12 - On motion of Mr. Russell, seconded by Mr. Stephens, Item #12 was voted on, approved and moved for Resolution. Unanimous.

Mr. Russell: "Contract with Mid-York Library. This is the associated libraries too right?"

Jim Wallace: "Correct."

Item #13 - On motion of Mr. Stephens, seconded by Mr. Russell, Item #13 was voted on, approved and moved for Resolution. Unanimous.

Mr. Russell: "We need to approve the Warrants."

Item #14 - On motion of Mr. Shaw, seconded by Mr. Smith, Item #14 was voted on, approved and moved for Resolution. Unanimous.

Mr. Russell: "Number fifteen Chairman's and Clerk's Certificate."

Item #15 - On motion of Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Bono, Item #15 was voted on, approved and moved for Resolution. Unanimous.

Mr. Russell: "Number sixteen approve minutes for 2020."

Item #16 - On motion of Mr. Stephens, seconded by Mr. Johnson, Item #16 was voted on, approved and moved for Resolution. Unanimous.

Mr. Russell: "Number seventeen allow County Auditor to process refunds and corrections for 2021 - \$2,500 or less."

Item #17 - On motion of Mr. Shaw, seconded by Mr. Stephens, Item #17 was voted on, approved and moved for Resolution. Unanimous.

Mr. Russell: "Number eighteen adopt Introductory Local Law E – Senior Exemption. I see that there are some people on the phone. Mr. Wallace, if you could give a brief explanation of what the County Legislature did."

Jim Wallace: "Sure. Beth jump in and correct me if I am wrong. Mr. Shaw and Mr. Russell asked us to take a look at what we have done with the senior exemption over the last several years. Concerned about trying to keep people in their households. We worked with two county planning, going through all of the census data to see how many people might be affected if we were able to increase this from \$15,000 to \$18,000. We think there is at least an additional 480 homes that could take advantage of the credit. The Legislature looked at that and passed that. We think it's a good thing to try and keep people in homes."

Item #18 - On motion of Mr. Bono, seconded by Mr. Shaw, Item #18 was voted on, approved and moved for Resolution. Unanimous.

Mr. Russell: "Approve Mortgage Tax Semi Annual Report from April 2020 to September 2020. Motion?"

Item #19 - On motion of Mr. Ackerman, seconded by Mr. Shaw, Item #19 was voted on, approved and moved for Resolution. Unanimous.

Mr. Russell: "Approve transfers in the 2020 Budget."

Item #20 - On motion of Mr. Stephens, seconded by Mr. Bono, Item #20 was voted on, approved and moved for Resolution. Unanimous.

Mr. Russell: "Approve transfer, amend budget and create project for roof repairs at Herkimer College."

Item #21 - On motion of Mr. Shaw, seconded by Mr. Johnson, Item #21 was voted on, approved and moved for Resolution. Unanimous.

Mr. Russell: "Number twenty-two approve budget amendment for consolidated Health District. I need a motion for that. Is there anything that needs to be said on this?"

Item #22 - On motion of Mr. Stephens, seconded by Mr. Shaw, Item #22 was voted on, approved and moved for Resolution. Unanimous.

Mr. Russell: "Now we are going to other and I just have one question. How is the jail coming?"

Mr. Bono: "It's progressing. We had another little hiccup in that one of the hydrants on the property needed to have a bypass installed in order to pass the test. Ray Johnson, I don't know if you wanted to speak on it, Jim or somebody?"

Mr. Johnson: "There is a cost to it already I guess. They want to bypass one agency over another agency and then we will have to have an independent test I guess because they are ours. There's a few more."

Sheri says we are looking to see if we can move our floors along to get those taken care of and just a couple other little things. Other than that, that's about it."

Mr. Russell: "When do we anticipate it opening besides June of this past year?"

Jim Wallace: "As Ray and Jimmy stated we will be looking at probably a two week process for that installation so we are hoping that that will be done two weeks from today. Sheri is coordinating a meeting as we speak on several issues. They are minor issues but they are important to the building. A \$38 million dollar building shouldn't have some of these issues we are dealing with so she has been sheparding that and hopefully we will have an answer from Jersen pretty fast."

Mr. Russell: "Anybody have any other questions on that topic?"

Mr. Schrader: "Do we have any cost on that Jim?"

Jim Wallace: "The rest is more clean-up stuff but we are guessing about \$20,000 more."

Mr. Russell: "Was it put in incorrectly?"

Jim Wallace: "No. It wasn't put in. It's one of those things that the difference between certain code officers of what they want and what they don't want."

Mr. Schrader: "Is this a hit that LaBella is going to swallow or are we going to swallow?"

Jim Wallace: "I think it's an omission so it will be a discussion."

Mr. Stephens: "It's going to be a huge discussion on my part because we didn't omit anything. We didn't remove this. This was in the original plan and somehow for whatever reason it got overlooked. That in my opinion is not on us. I won't approve any more money towards this at all."

Mr. Russell: "I guess it sound like a discussion for another day."

Mr. Stephens: "Probably yes."

Jim Wallace: "I think the key is to get this done and then we will have this discussion."

Mr. Shaw: "Do we get an inspection before we take possession?"

Jim Wallace: "Yes. Sheri and Carl are doing kind of a walk through, right Sheri, on Tuesday. Sheri has good controls of the issues we are talking about. And that's just step one of that process. Pat just don't want to forget the last thing we needed to do. Approve the CSEA contract."

Mr. Russell: "CSEA voted for the \$600 that we are going to give for next year. Correct Jim?"

Jim Wallace: "Yes and one year contract with no other changes."

Mr. Russell: "Any other questions on that?"

Mr. Schrader: "Is that quarterly or a onetime payout?"

Jim Wallace: "Hey Steve, I don't want to miss say it, it's a onetime payout. You have to be on the payroll on that date. Can you touch on that Steve?"

Steve Billings: “Yes. We are going to pay it out in one lump sum of \$600 that will be paid out in the fourth pay period of 2021 and it will be for those that are still employed with us during that pay period.”

Mr. Wallace: “Thank you gentlemen.”

Mr. Russell: “Yes. Thank you.”

Mr. Shaw: “And they are doing a one year extension on the rest of the contract, right as is?”

Jim Wallace: “Correct.”

Item #23 – On motion of Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Shaw, Item #23 was voted on, approved and moved for Resolution. Unanimous.

Mr. Russell: “We will get to the committee in regards to anything else that might be happening with the contracts for employees. Union I guess I should say. Is there anything else under other?”

Mr. Stephens: “Do you want to talk about that now or do you want to wait?”

Mr. Bono: “Yeah, I think wait.”

Mr. Russell: “Well, apparently I got a letter or something. Is that correct?”

Mr. Stephens: “I think a couple of us did Pat in regards to 911. If that’s not something you want to do now...”

Mr. Russell: “I have not seen it so therefor it is not on the agenda. We will have to look at it at a different time.”

Mr. Stephens: “OK. Well I just want to let everybody know to be aware that the issue that is coming up is very time sensitive.”

Mr. Russell: “Well, it’s a negotiating issue apparently.”

Mr. Stephens: “It is and it isn’t. I mean you have a staff to place. Apparently that’s in question right now. I understand the union ramifications but we’ve also got to have people to work there.”

Mr. Russell: “I will talk with Mr. Wallace later. If we have to have a special meeting or something we can but normally these things are taken care of in August when we go through the budgetary process.”

Mr. Stephens: “I understand that Pat but you can’t control who leaves after August.”

Mr. Russell: “I understand that and I can’t control who they hire either. Anything else under other? I need a motion to adjourn”

On motion of Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Shaw, the Ways & Means committee adjourned at 10:31 a.m.

Mr. Russell called the Ways & Means Committee back to order at 10:55 a.m.

Mr. Bono: “The Treasurer’s found out that the prior owner had cut a deal with the Town of Herkimer where the prior owner was making payments on the past due water and sewer bills. At the same time, the County made the Town whole for the same water bill. The town is willing to refund us \$8,400, roughly what they have collected so far. This would reduce the amount, the base plus interest and penalties

\$38,805. If we deduct the \$8,400 in water and sewer bills that the town has collected and is willing to reimburse us.”

Mr. Russell: “Well, I’ve been dealing with this the last couple of days. I didn’t realize, I thought it was taxes and was a Ways and Means issue. Sorry. But I told them I wanted to get everything we are due.”

Mr. Bono: “I agree.”

Mr. Shaw: “I agree.”

Mr. Bono: “What do the other committee people think?”

Mr. Schrader: “So is this Properties and Ways and Means or just a Ways and Means because I will make a motion in Properties if that is the case.”

Mr. Bono: “That committee is not in session right now.”

Mr. Johnson: “So Jim we are looking at the total they are going to get the \$38,000 and the \$8,300 together, right? We are talking \$46,000, something like that or am I doing that wrong?”

Mr. Bono: “The way I am reading it, Jim Wallace, is that your take?”

Jim Wallace: “Yes. I thought it was a better deal than what we had. We had \$40,000 and now we are up to \$46,000. I thought that was good news. Again, that’s just the way I took it.”

The rest of the committee is in agreement.

Mr. Schrader: “What are you looking for, the ok to give Lorraine?”

Jim Wallace: “We’ve already had the agreement for \$40,000 so I think we are good. Unless you guys say no, we want another couple hundred bucks.”

Mr. Bono: “She just wants to know what to ask for, that’s all. So we will direct her. Is that ok Pat?”

Mr. Russell: “Yeah, I mean Kim has already sent information to Dominick to get the check from him for the \$8,000 plus or whatever is owed. Then we get the rest from the Land Bank through the State. Am I saying that correctly?”

Jim Wallace: “Yes you are.”

Item #24 – Discussion only. No vote taken.

On motion of Mr. Stephens, seconded by Mr. Johnson the Ways & Means committee adjourned at 11:01 a.m.