

Legislative and Research Committee Minutes
January 6, 2015 - 4:00 p.m.

Present: Chairman Raymond; Supervisors Ziegler, Wright, Grattidge, Barrett and Lunde; Ryan Moore, Deputy Administrator; Steve Dorsey, County Attorney.

Chairman Raymond called the meeting to order and welcomed all in attendance.

On a motion made by Mr. Lunde, seconded by Mr. Barrett the minutes of the May 7, 2014 meeting were approved unanimously.

Chairman Raymond announced the appointment of Tom Richardson as Committee Vice Chair.

Mr. Moore gave a brief overview of the 2014 Legislative Program as follows:

1. Urging a Full State Takeover of all local cost of the Medicaid program. **The State did not take over an increase portion, they kept with the freeze schedule that they had. They also claim that because of the federal healthcare reform, those costs should be going down.**
2. Urging reforms to Early Intervention and Preschool Special Education to increase accountability to the children served and achieve savings for county taxpayers. **There wasn't a lot of action on early intervention with the last State budget. The State has taken over the administration and there have been glitches along the way. The county has fought any attempt to make the county lay out more money to cover for parts of the state program that weren't working. In Preschool Special Education the State enacted what the county called for with the Special Education Itinerant Teacher Services, which is happening now. They did not do what the county asked in terms of the Universal Pre-K.**
3. Supporting a Constitutional amendment banning new Unfunded State Mandates and additional measure to provide mandate relief. **No meaningful action.**
4. Calling for the Governor and State Legislature to fully restore VLT Host Benefits to their pre-2009 level. **In 2011 and 2012 there was a 45% restoration; 2013 55% and 2014 70%.**
5. Opposing the closure of the Mt. McGregor Correctional Facility, and calling for reform to the prison closure process and economic development aid for affected communities. **Mt. McGregor closed and there was economic development aid. The initial amount that was in the Governor's budget doubled as a result of counties calling for more of an impact. The radius has been broadened to potentially include more towns.**
6. Supporting efforts to provide veteran-owned businesses with increased opportunities in state contracting. **The Governor did include this in the final budget.**

7. Urging the NYS Department of Labor to immediately fill Saratoga County's vacant Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialist position. **This position was never filled. This was a position that was funded by Federal money and due to a state hiring freeze this position was not restored. Mr. Moore said the role of this position has changed beginning January 2015, with only serving the most severely disabled veterans; therefore, the work that this position used to do on a Veterans population is going to instead be done by existing staff in the Employment and Training department, as well as a full time Labor Services Representative who works full time in that office.**

8. Requesting reimbursement of the costs associated with holding a third primary in 2012, and calling for the consolidation of state and federal primaries on the same day. **The third primary reimbursement has not happened.**

9. Requesting a more equitable share of the New York State Public Safety surcharge to support statewide interoperable public safety communications. **In status-quo.**

10. Supporting the extension of design-build contracting to local governments and urging the repeal of the Wicks Law. **Neither of these items happened. The Legislature made the Governor take the design build contracting out of the budget.**

11. Supporting the Executive Budget's commitment to organ donation, and encouraging New Yorkers to register as organ donors. **The organ donation was successful.**

Ms. Raymond requested Mr. Moore to schedule a meeting with the State Legislature in late February or early March depending on their schedules.

Ms. Raymond said legislation was passed in the last session in Albany that re-wrote the wording on fireworks. Ms. Raymond said if the county wants to support this and have it happen in Saratoga County a local law will need to be passed. A fact sheet was distributed to all committee members for their review as well as a proposed Local Law allowing for common, safe items to be excluded from the dangerous fireworks definition as permitted by New York State Penal Law Section 405(5)(b).

Mr. Dorsey said New York State is now the 47th state to allow the sale of sparklers. The penal law and general business law has been amended to now permit the sale of sparkling devices as described in the local law, which includes fireworks that are handheld or ground based and do not explode.

Mr. Dorsey said this is an opt in legislation that the counties, if they wish, have to pass a local law, opting in, to exclude the sale of sparkling devices from the penal law statute which makes it a criminal offense. Through State law, sales will be allowed between June 1st through July 5th and December 26th and January 2nd of each calendar year.

Mr. Dorsey suggested setting a Public Hearing for February 11, 2015 at 4:55p.m.

A motion was made by Mr. Lunde, seconded by Mr. Ziegler to forward a request for a local law and public hearing on to the Law and Finance Committee. Unanimous.

On a motion made by Mr. Wright, seconded by Mr. Lunde the meeting was adjourned unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Chris Sansom