

Special Law and Finance Committee Meeting

February 15, 2011 – 3:30 p.m.

Present: Chairman Thompson; Supervisors Daly, Grattidge, Peck, Veitch, Wormuth, Southworth, Collyer, Richardson, Jenkins, Kinowski, Wright, Yepsen, Hargrave, M. Johnson, Lawler; Sam Pitcherale, Treasurer; League of Women Voters.

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

Mr. Hellwig said **the first item is to approve the 2011 Saratoga County Legislative Program**. There was a Legislative and Research Committee meeting held yesterday where this package was reviewed. The Board will travel to Albany sometime in March to meet with State representatives to discuss the items. There were some minor changes made as follows:

Item 7: A dollar amount was added of \$5.3 million to identify the deficit in the regulating district budget.

Item 10: This was an addition to the list

Mr. Hellwig said the second item was brought to the Legislative and Research Committee by Supervisor Grattidge relating to funding provided by the State for the Farmland Protection Program and the Environmental Protection Fund. Essentially, we are asking that the State keep that money in its budget because farming is such a big industry in this county.

Mr. Grattidge said this was a resolution that was passed last year supporting the Farmland Protection Program. The last Governor swept quite a bit of money out of the Environmental Protection Fund that was dedicated toward Farmland Protection. **He is requesting a resolution of support to ask the State to keep this program going, as it is a high priority program for Saratoga County.**

Mr. Peck said the Environmental Protection Fund which is a dedicated fund is really a separate dedicated fund that was setup years ago and now has been used as a way to balance other shortfalls by dipping into the Environmental Protection Fund. Not only should it be used for what it was legislatively setup to be used for, but it has gotten to the point where the Farmland Protection Grants that were approved by the State two or three years ago have no funding.

Mr. Grattidge said they have done this over the years with the dedicated highway funds as well. It is definitely a problem when these funds have been setup dedicated for particular purposes and with dedicated funding streams and then the State changes the rules of the game.

Ms. Daly asked if the proposed legislation wiped it all out? Mr. Grattidge said from the initial budget that the Governor proposed they put \$12 million back into the program. Last year the Governor had only allocated \$5 million, and as recent as three years ago there was \$28 million in the program. There are over \$75 million worth of contracts that the state has agreed to, resulting in a big shortfall.

A motion was made by Mr. Veitch, seconded by Mr. Grattidge to approve both resolutions. Unanimous.

On a motion made by Mr. Veitch, seconded by Mr. Peck the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Chris Sansom