

# LAW & FINANCE COMMITTEE BUDGET HEARING

**November 15, 2006 – 5:30 p.m.**

PRESENT: Chairman Barrett; Supervisors DeCerco, Hargrave, A. Johnson, M. Johnson, Peck, Wood, Gutheil; Sausville, Keyrouze, Yepsen, Thompson, Richardson, Daly, Trottier, Grattidge, Raymond, Lawler; David Wickerham, Co. Administrator; Spencer Hellwig, Mgmt. Analyst; Bill Baker, Jack Kalinkewicz, Bob Hartman, Personnel

Chairman Barrett called the meeting to order.

Mr. Baker reviewed their criteria for Personnel changes that are requested of them. He said they try to negotiate with the department heads and ask them what they want and what they are willing to give up. Sometimes, that is not appropriate in a smaller department, he said. He said they get a good sense of what the departments' needs are. He reviewed the historical analysis of position requests from 2004 through 2006. He stated for 2007, County departments have requested the following staffing: 16 full-time positions; 2 extension of hours; 7 reclassifications; 4 title changes; 2 seasonal; 1 stipend and 4 abolishments at a total cost of \$1,101,855.

Mr. Baker reviewed Personnel's recommendations for 2007 and the cost of each for a total cost of \$210,348:

## **Sheriff's Dept.**

Create 1 Deputy Sheriff – Patrol to be assigned to the local law on sex offenders - \$48,896

## **District Attorney**

Extend Typist part-time to full-time - \$27,979

Reclassify Account Clerk Typist to Principal Account Clerk - \$5,017

## **County Clerk**

Create 1 Motor Vehicle Clerk - \$47,387

Reclassify Motor Vehicle Clerk to Sr. Motor Vehicle Clerk - \$2,402

Reclassify Index Clerk to Principal Account Clerk - \$3,508

## **Social Services**

Create 2 Social Welfare Examiners - \$99,872

Create 1 Senior Social Welfare Examiner - \$54,432

(For Medicaid and Food Stamps Units)

## **Public Health**

Create 1 Director of Preventive Health (Gr. 15) - \$98,374

## **Mental Health**

Create 1 Staff Social Worker - \$70,900 (100% paid for by the State)

**Sewer District**

Create 1 Maintenance Mechanic - \$66,301

Create 2 Seasonal Laborers (May thru September) - \$22,654

Create 1 Quality Assurance Inspector - \$60,649

Create 1 Technical Services Supervisor - \$76,297

(Paid from Sewer District funds)

**Animal Shelter**

Create 2 Aides, part-time (17 ½ hours per week for each) - \$38,072

**Auditor**

Create 1 Account Clerk, part-time (17 ½ hours per week) - \$46,488

**General Services**

Extend Computer Programmer from part-time to full-time - \$39,485

**Water Committee**

Create stipend for Project Manager - \$5,000 (to be paid over the 26 pay periods)

Mr. Baker stated the original request was for \$6,000 to compensate Wes Carr back to 2004. He said \$5,000 is similar to what has been done in the past, and Supervisor Callanan is supportive of this. Mechanically, there is a problem of where this money would be coming from, but this would have to be ironed out with the Budget Officer and Law & Finance.

Mrs. Johnson said she believes the fringe benefit rate is an inflated cost. She pointed out 29% is projected for health insurance, but health insurance is a fixed cost. Yet, 29% of the salary is being taken, she said. I just feel those figures are inflated, she stated. Mr. Baker said that may be difficult, because the person you may hire may be paying for the family plan, single plan or not take any insurance. It is difficult to be that specific, he said. Mrs. Johnson said it sure does put the salaries up there.

Mr. Johnson said last year, and again this year, there has been discussion about the need for the County to create a Public Information Officer. I believe it would be helpful to at least ask Mr. Baker to research that position, what it does in other counties, the benefit of that position, qualifications, salary, etc. Mr. Baker said he did some preliminary research last year, and it is somewhat outdated. He stated he would be happy to do the research for the Committee.

Chairman Barrett said in regard to the creation of the Deputy Patrolman for the sex offender duties, being a watchful eye over the registered sex offenders in the County, he believes we made great steps last year to come forth with good solid leading legislation, and this is another great step that the Sheriff has taken, and with Mr. Baker's recommendation, to make sure the legislation we put into effect is being adhered to.

Mrs. Johnson asked what department would Mr. Carr's stipend be paid under. Mr. Wickerham stated Mr. Carr is primarily paid out of the Youth Bureau, and this could be paid out of Fund 1 which would be the appropriate place. Mr. Thompson asked what exactly the stipend is for. Mr. Wickerham stated for the additional work he has done for the Water Committee working outside of his title. He has put in a substantial number of hours, and this request is to acknowledge the additional hours outside of what he already does with the Youth Bureau. Mrs. Johnson asked what other projects has this been done for. Mr. Baker stated the Deputy County Treasurer for additional sales tax duties, years ago for the Associate Planner, and for the Animal Shelter Director for duties done outside of his existing position. This has been done before when it was appropriate, he stated.

Mr. DeCerce asked what the reason was for not providing back pay. I credit this individual for working excessively without pay, he stated. Mr. Baker said there is a real question of the legality of that. Normally, we do not go back, as there is a question of the appropriateness of going back, he said. Chairman Barrett said there is no doubt that Mr. Carr has gone over and above his job description.

Mr. Lawler asked what base salary was used to determine the percentages for the fringe package. Mr. Baker said 29% of anyone's existing salary. Mr. Wickerham said we determine what the total cost of our health insurance is and divide it out by payroll. At the end of the year, we make those transfers to be appropriate, he said. In order to have enough money, that's how we get the original money in.

### **Abolishments**

JTPA: 1 Stenographic Secretary  
1 Employment & Training Counselor

Public Health: 2 Home Health Aides (PT)

**On a motion by Mr. Hargrave, seconded by Mrs. Johnson, the recommendations of Personnel were approved unanimously.**

Chairman Barrett stated we asked Sam Pitcherale to give us an approximation of what the savings would be for County taxpayers with the repeal of the County cap on sales tax. On the informational sheet provided to us, we are looking at \$869,576, and it was the feeling of this Committee at the last meeting that this benefit is not going directly to consumers and that sending this equivalent tax reduction to County residents in the form of a property tax cut would be a more direct benefit to County residents, and we would also be sure they are getting the benefit, he stated. This is basically taking the tax cut from one spot and transferring it to another. We are looking for an additional .04½ cents off the levy that would be effective February, 2007 if we continued to go in that direction, he said. That is a pro-rated number based on 11 months, he added. He stated he knows there was a lot of support from this Committee to do this. **Mr. Peck moved to approve continuing in that direction. Mr. Johnson seconded. Unanimous.**

Mr. DeCerce pointed out that this would keep the money in the County. He said if he lived in another state and came over here, and would get the sales tax reduction on the

gas. This would take care of the people in this community much more readily than the gasoline tax might have, he said. Mr. Peck said due to the price of gas next year being cheaper and sales tax revenue being down, I hope we do not put ourselves in a financial pinch in December, 2007. Chairman Barrett stated that was taken into account, but it is impossible to say what the price will be.

Ms. Keyrouze said being that the average on a \$200,000 house would be around \$10, would anybody entertain the idea of putting this into the Green Infrastructure Plan? Chairman Barrett said we do have a half million dollars going into the Green Infrastructure Plan for the protection of open space. It's the Committee's feeling if we are going to repeal the gas tax on one end we should direct that tax savings somewhere else, he said. That's where we came up with the idea to put it on the property tax, he added. He stated any tax cut is a good thing.

#### OUTSIDE AGENCY RECOMMENDATIONS

Mrs. Johnson said Ms. Raymond made her aware of the report that the Committee on Not-For-Profit Funding did last year, and a resolution was passed. She mentioned that it says all outside agency funding, that's not fee for service, should be applied for annually and be presented annually to Law & Finance. She said Mr. Wickerham stated they have all applied, but did Law & Finance see any of that information. Mr. Wickerham said that was not part and parcel to the resolution that was passed. Every one who is getting funding has gone through the application process as far as providing us with their salary structure and various things, and that was the subject of the resolution, he stated. He said we have that documentation and if you want to bring them in individually, we can do that as well. Ms. Raymond said the intent was that those be reviewed annually and not once get in the budget and then disappear forever and are automatically in year after year. The Law & Finance Committee and the full Board should be aware of the extent of what they are funding, she stated. We knew we could never bind future boards to do anything, but that was the spirit of the recommendation, she said. She said for example, we give \$20,000 a year to SPAC forever. It's not to say that's not a worthy effort, it's just this Board and future Boards should know that that's there. Chairman Barrett requested Mr. Hellwig to give a list of those agencies to the Board before Saturday's Budget Workshop.

Mr. Peck stated he just received a request from Saratoga Hospital, and wondered if this was in addition to the others. Mr. Wickerham said Saratoga Hospital withdrew their original applications, and they did not meet our original requirements of which part of that must include a comprehensive salary plan. They did not wish to present that at the time, so they were eliminated. I have heard that a Supervisor would like to bring that forward on Saturday. Ms. Keyrouze said she works there, and she thought it would be a conflict of interest, and she turned it over to Supervisor Yepsen to present. She said as Supervisor, she wanted to bring this forward for the Board to look at. It was distributed to the Committee today so there would be an opportunity for the Board to look at it 642r 10before Saturday, she said. Mr. Lawler requested that copies of it be made for the rest of the Board members.

Chairman Barrett said the first issue to be acted on is the additional money for Mechanicville. He stated Supervisor Richardson had made a presentation to the Law & Finance Committee on this issue and what the money would be for. **Mr. Johnson moved to authorize additional aid for Mechanicville (\$100,000). Mr. Peck seconded.** Discussion:

Mrs. Johnson asked if the additional matching grant from Senator Bruno would have to be funded up front. Mr. Richardson said with the County money, he would like to leave it here at the County on a need for basis. As we write grants, I would hand deliver that billing statement to Jack Murray's office. There would be oversight on that so that people wouldn't think we were spending money in other avenues, he said. Mr. Peck recommended that Mr. Richardson leave the door open for matching money for the grant.

Mr. Gutheil commended Mr. Richardson for the work he has done on trying to promote his community. He stated this is a dangerous precedent. If we are willing to do it for this once city, we should be willing to do it for 19 towns and the other city and maybe the villages, he said. He said his town has always paid to support their own grant applications. It could be very costly to the County, he said. In principle, it's dangerous to start programs like these, he added. He asked if we have ever done anything like this. Mr. Wickerham said he is not aware of anything. Mr. Richardson stated most of the communities in the County have surplus money. We do not have the money in Mechanicville to be able to write the grants up front, he said. He stated the city has a comprehensive plan, and out of that plan has come the revitalization plan that he has distributed to the Committee along with other statistics. He pointed out with taxing the citizens of Mechanicville, 40% of the homeowners within the city limits are over the age of 62, so we would have a difficult time in doing that. Basically, we are in need. We need money to prime the pump, he stated.

Mr. Peck said he is in support of this one time allocation. The position Mechanicville is in and the location of Luther Forest is a great opportunity not only for Mechanicville but for the entire County to benefit, he said.

Mrs. Johnson said we really do not know that this will be \$100,000. Mr. Richardson said this will be an on going process. This will be money spent this year and next year. He said the Mayor is trying to put a line item in his budget. We are not going to be able to revitalize the City of Mechanicville by writing a couple of grants, he said. We need a lot of work done, and it will not happen over night, he said. He stated this money is a seed fund that will get them started.

Mr. Johnson stated in the past, we have given economic development grants. Indirectly, this is economic development, he said. He stated that he sees Mechanicville a little different than the rest of us. Mr. DeCerce said being a sister community, he knows what the problems are down there. He said we put \$300,000 three or four times to the City of Saratoga Springs to build a parking garage. He said his community, through economic development, did garner something for Sysco. He said unfortunately for Mechanicville, they have a great deal of subsidized housing which reduces their income base. He said he

supports this activity just one time. Chairman Barrett said we gave grants to the villages not too long ago.

**The motion was approved by the following vote: AYES – Barrett, DeCerce, A. Johnson, M. Johnson, Peck, Wood. NOES – Hargrave, Gutheil.**

Mr. Richardson thanked the Committee for their support.

OUTSIDE AGENCY APPEALS:

**Mr. Johnson moved to authorize an increase of \$2,500 for Brookside Museum. Mr. Hargrave seconded. Unanimous.**

**Mr. DeCerce moved to authorize an additional \$30,000 for the Saratoga Center for the Family. Mr. Hargrave seconded. Unanimous.**

Mr. Wickerham said the actual increase to the budget would be \$30,000, but there will be an increase in revenue of \$13,450.

NEW OUTSIDE AGENCY REQUEST APPROVALS:::

**Mr. Hargrave moved to support the Cooperative Extension – Equine program in the amount of \$20,000. Mr. Gutheil seconded. Unanimous.**

**Mr. Johnson moved to authorize \$25,000 for the American Red Cross. Mr. DeCerce seconded.**

**Mr. Johnson offered an amendment to this motion to authorize the amount of \$15,000 for one year. Mr. Peck seconded. AYES - DeCerce, Gutheil, A. Johnson, M. Johnson, Peck, Wood. NOES – Hargrave. ABSTAIN – Barrett. (Chairman Barrett said he is on a board of the Red Cross). Motion carried.**

**Mr. Hargrave moved to authorize up to \$3,000 for the Friends of the Kayaderosseras for the disposal of tires and trash. Mr. Wood seconded. Unanimous.**

**Mr. Peck moved to authorize \$1,500 for Lakes to Locks for one year with an option to come back next year for funding. Mr. Johnson seconded. Unanimous.**

**Mr. Peck moved to authorize \$9,000 for the Saratoga Arts Council. Mr. DeCerce seconded. AYES – Barrett, DeCerce, Gutheil, A. Johnson, M. Johnson, Peck, Wood. NOES – Hargrave. Motion carried.**

On a motion by Mr. Hargrave, seconded by Mr. Johnson, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,  
Elaine M. Sodemann