

Legislative and Research Committee Minutes

May 12, 2009 – 4:30 p.m.

Present: Chairman Rowland; Supervisors Raymond, Southworth, Veitch, Wright, Yepsen, and Grattidge; Spencer Hellwig, Mgmt Analyst; Press.

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

On a motion made by Mrs. Southworth, seconded by Ms. Yepsen the minutes of the May 12, 2009 meeting were approved unanimously.

Mr. Grattidge distributed to the committee members a resolution that was passed in Albany County earlier in the year to establish a local food purchasing policy. This would encourage local producers to come forward and compete in the market. At the County level it would be primarily for Maplewood Manor and the Jail.

A list of items from the Department of Agriculture was distributed for review. The County Attorney is still pursuing a way in which to implement the policy. Some ideas have been presented such as giving a 3% incentive to local producers; however, it is a bidding process. At this time he would like to let local producers of farm products in the County know if they have products that they could supply to the County in that manner, the County would be interested in having them put in a bid. The main focus would be on Saratoga County growers.

Mr. Grattidge said he would like to explore whether there is an incentive that can be given to local producers, and to create a policy that is consistent.

Mr. Rowland said we need to have the County Attorney, County Administrator or the purchasing department develop a policy that is manageable.

Ms. Raymond said a representative of the producers should also be included in the process of developing a policy.

Mr. Grattidge said the Farm Bureau has also been involved.

Mrs. Southworth said some of the smaller producers she has spoken with are unsure as to how to go about the bid process. She suggested looking into ways of educating people about the process, i.e. through Cooperative Extension and the Farm Bureau.

Mr. Rowland said NYS DEC Tree Nursery in Saratoga Springs is a large facility consisting of approximately 250 acres. There are ten full time employees and fifty seasonal employees. This facility produces a lot of tree material for various areas including State agencies, schools and other non-profit agencies that work with them. The

concept that he would like to explore is to have the State look again at the business plan of the tree nursery and consider establishing it as a break even venture and a more responsible business for the State.

A motion was made by Mr. Veitch, seconded by Ms. Yepsen to approve a resolution in support of the continuing operation of the New York State DEC Tree Nursery in Saratoga Springs and recommending that DEC institute changes to make the operation economically viable. Unanimous.

Mr. Rowland said he received a letter from Assemblywoman Teresa Sayward stating that she had signed off on a letter to the Governor, urgently requesting immediate steps to be taken to secure the replacement of the Batchelerville Bridge in the Town of Edinburg.

Mr. Rowland said after meeting with legislators in Albany, it was very clear that we need to be very specific as to what mandates we want to see covered. The committee should prepare specific plans to be presented to the legislature when meeting with them in Albany. He also suggested that the committee meet with the legislature more than once a year.

Ms. Raymond said the committee should meet with people other than our delegation, particularly the chairs of local government committees and the leadership on both sides.

Ms. Yepsen asked how the committee would establish a short list of unfunded mandates to discuss with legislators?

Ms. Raymond requested that the Administrator's office provide a list of the unfunded mandates for the current year to the committee.

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

Respectfully submitted,
Chris Sansom