

“Unapproved”
Legislative and Research Committee Minutes
October 3, 2011 – 4:00 p.m.

Present: Chairman Veitch; Supervisors Raymond, Rowland, Wright and Yepsen; Ryan Moore, Mgmt. Analyst; Jim Thompson, Senator McDonald’s Office; Press.

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

On a motion made by Ms. Yepsen, seconded by Ms. Raymond the minutes of the April 4, 2011 meeting were approved unanimously.

Mr. Veitch said the county is in the process of preparing the 2012 budget. As a county we are trying to figure out how to deliver the local services that we have in the face of dwindling revenues and higher costs for Medicaid, Public Assistance, Probation and other State mandated programs. The budget decisions were made under the constraints of the new Property Tax Cap, and one thing that was talked about was that Saratoga County supported the property tax cap, but wanted to see mandate relief on the other side of that. As of right now substantial mandate relief has not yet materialized, he said. There was a press conference several weeks ago where several Senators from the western part of the State, our region, as well as Westchester County, came through and have put forth Senate Bill 5889B. As of today there is an Assembly bill 8644 that freezes immediately the contribution that the County makes to Medicaid. Currently there is a 3% increase per year in Medicaid costs built into it, so that would be an immediate savings to the County. In an eight-year period we would gradually reduce our share and after the eight years there would be no county share to pay into Medicaid. In the County’s case it would be approximately 47% of our tax levy, which is approximately \$22 million. The State policy makers have control over this program, and so far they have requested that property payers to pay the bill. This will lead to lower property taxes in many counties, as well as enhancing New York’s economic competitiveness and improve economic opportunities for all New Yorker’s.

A motion was made by Ms. Raymond, seconded by Mr. Rowland to support Senate Bill 5889B Urging Multi-Year State takeover of the Local Share of Medicaid. Unanimous.

Ms. Raymond said this has been in and out of potential legislation for a while. Some of the earlier conversations dealt with the counties having to give up part of their sales tax. Ms. Raymond asked if that was in any way part of this bill? Mr. Thompson said, absolutely not, nor would there be income tax increases. There would be Medicaid redesign and the Affordable Care Act.

Mr. Veitch requested that an additional resolve be added to the resolution that it be sent to all the State Legislators, Governor and NYSAC.

Mr. Veitch said he received a letter from Supervisor Sausville regarding passing an Invasive Species law in Saratoga County. Warren County passed a law last month with regard to Invasive Species and at the NYSAC conference there was a program on invasive species.

Mr. Veitch said he would like to appoint a subcommittee to review the issue of Invasive Species and come back to the committee with a recommendation. The following people were appointed to the subcommittee: Mr. Veitch, Mr. Moore, Mr. Dorsey and Mr. Wood.

Mr. Veitch said he met with the New York State Horse Park where they have asked if Saratoga County would send a letter of support to the Governor's office stating that we support the idea of building a Horse Park. A fundraiser will be held on October 15th & 16th at the Saratoga Racetrack.

Mr. Veitch said he would speak to Mr. Schwerd, of Cooperative Extension, and upon his approval draft a letter of support that will then be forwarded to all committee members for their review and approval. Mr. Veitch said it would be made clear that the county will not be obligated to any monetary commitment.

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

Respectfully submitted,
Chris Sansom