

2014 Budget Workshop
November 14, 2013 3:00 p.m.

Vice Chairman Sausville called the meeting to order.

Roll call was taken: PRESENT: Patricia Southworth, Philip C. Barrett, Anita Daly, Richard Lucia, Jean Raymond, George Hargrave, Arthur M. Wright, Paul Sausville, Thomas Richardson, Dan Lewza, Preston L. Jenkins, Jr., John Collyer, Thomas N. Wood, III, Matthew E. Veitch, Edward D. Kinowski – 15. ABSENT: Alan Grattidge, Mary Ann Johnson, Richard Rowland, Mindy Wormuth, Willard H. Peck, Joanne Dittes Yepsen, John Lawler, Arthur J. Johnson – 8.

Mr. Sausville said we are halfway through the budget process which began in August with work on the Capital Plan preparation. The Tentative Budget was submitted on October 31st. The Law and Finance had its budget hearings last week which brings us halfway through the process.

The Clerk read the rules of the Budget Workshop and reminded those in attendance that this workshop is for Supervisors to discuss and make changes to the tentative budget. There will be no public comment as the public hearing is the time for the public to speak.

Mr. Hellwig gave a general overview of the budget. The tentative budget as amended by the Law and Finance Committee now totals \$313,210,098. The changes approved by the Law and Finance Committee on November 7th have a net total of \$360,545 which will be covered through additional State and Federal Aid. There will be no increase in the property tax levy to cover those changes. Between his cuts and the cuts made by the committee, there has been \$8M cut from the Department Head requests. Departmental Budgets have been held flat or reduced from this year's amounts with the exception of fringe benefits and salary adjustments. There is no cost of living increase included in this budget for confidential, management and part time employees for the 3rd year and for the 5th year no increase for elected officials. General Fund expense increase is 1.65% over the 2013 adopted. In 2014, mandated State programs will consume \$94M or 118% of our property tax levy. Sales Tax revenue is budgeted at \$110.7M which represents a 2% growth factor. Property tax levy is set at \$52,454,500 which is an increase of \$876,821 over the levy last year. Highway Fund is up \$3M which is due primarily to bridge reconstruction projects. Maplewood Manor is up \$4M because of indirect and direct costs still paid for the General Fund. Total Capital costs are \$11.4M with a net cost of \$4.1M. Appropriated fund balance represents a decrease of about \$900,000 from the amount that was appropriated this year. This is the lowest use of fund balance since 2007.

Mr. Hellwig reviewed the amendments that were made by the Law and Finance Committee's budget hearing.

Mrs. Southworth asked if the \$33,000 under Board of Supervisors is for the Chairman's initiative. Mr. Sausville said it was. She then asked about \$500,000 is the Economic Development fund and if that included the \$200,000 that was given to SEDC and what is the other \$300,000. Mr. Hellwig said those funds are the expense side of the occupancy tax collection which the County is required to budget by Local Law. The \$200,000 is for SEDC and the rest of the funding is placed there to match the revenue. Mrs. Southworth asked how much is it compared to last year. Mr. Hellwig said it is \$100,000 more.

Mr. Wright asked Mr. Sausville to give the Board members some specifics on how exactly that \$33,000 will be spent. Mr. Sausville said the goal for using that money is to promote civility, promote good character and to set a good example for businesses and people around Saratoga County. He can't think of a better organization than the County Board of Supervisors to set that example. One way would be to use it as an incentive award for youngsters coming to the Board from each Town to speak on a character trait. Another would be to have articles written in the newspapers. He said he reads in the paper all the about incivility that occurs in public meetings/public hearings and it seems these traits should start in grade school. The ideas are open and the funds could be used for many things but mostly it would be to promote good character. He said he may kick off the initiative in January by having Jay Rifenburg come in and talk about how important good character is and this will set the stage for the new supervisors coming on board as well as the general public.

Mr. Wright stated he was against this in Law and Finance and he still has a problem spending \$33,000 on this when the County's Department Heads have requested \$8M that we have cut out of the budget and they are telling us they need this money and these people to do their jobs. We are talking about spending \$33,000 to bring somebody in here to do some kind of speech to us about character. He has a hard time spending taxpayer's money on something we really should know something about before we get into this business. He restated that he can not support this initiative. He said he supports a chairman's initiative but feels this initiative should have some kind of bang for its buck and doesn't see any bang for its buck with this one and he is going to make a resolution to oppose this amendment to the budget and will make the motion to do so.

Mrs. Southworth asked Mr. Kalinkewicz what the cost to the County would be if they were to give a 2% raise to Confidential employees and/or Department Heads. She said the confidential group is among the lowest paid in the County yet they do a considerable amount of work. Mr. Kalinkewicz said that he believed when looking at it briefly and approximately it would be \$167,000.

Mr. Collyer said he thinks the Chairman's initiative is very admirable however he feels something like this should be handled in the school district. He doesn't feel it should be from the Board of Supervisors.

Mr. Wright made a motion to strike the \$33,000 from the Board of Supervisors' budget. Mr. Collyer seconded that motion.

Mrs. Daly said she supported this at Law and Finance and she respects her colleagues' position on not supporting this because of the current economic condition. She said when she was chairman of the board she asked for up to \$50,000 to start a no smoking campaign in the schools. She said the request was up to and she doesn't believe it came close to that amount. She said after deliberations and the amount was changed she also voiced concern over the economics and had offered at that time to take a request to the Capital Resource Corporation. She said other entities and not for profits may want to partner with the county on this initiative. She said the Board of CRC may be willing to look at scholarships for students showing one of these character traits who show an interest in going to college for eventual work for one of these not for profits. She said possibly the resolution could read up to \$33,000 and each initiative could be brought before the board for approval. She said she believes there are ways to reduce this figure. She will remain committed to ask for \$5,000 from the CRC against this \$33,000.

Mr. Kinowski said he respects everyone's position. If someone at our level in government makes a stand on what is important in social issues and funds are put forward for this, he feels it is a viable issue. This would be a good initiative on the Board's behalf to recognize good character, how we treat one another and how we approach life and set up a program. There is a social need for this initiative. He said he is in favor of it but it does need more development.

Mr. Barrett said there is no doubt that initiatives such as these need a push and someone to get them started. He started a 'character counts' program in Clifton Park and ran it for a few years until eventually Shen took it over. Programs like this need to be established and started. He thinks the program is worthwhile and suggested to the Vice Chairman to scale back the amount of funds he is looking for based on some of the comments made today. He said he doesn't think its right to take money and give scholarships necessarily giving government money for these scholarships. Perhaps to get support for this initiative the amount should be scaled back further from the \$33,000. There are a lot of things that can be done with partnerships with the Towns to promote a program such as this without spending a lot of money.

Ms. Raymond said she comes at this with a different approach and thinks there have been some very good comments made all the way around. She respects the incoming Chairman's ability to have an initiative but when she hears, which she hadn't heard a lot about it, she thinks to support and promote character is a good thing to have. People coming to the Board Meetings and talking to Supervisors about it, she sees it an implication that the Board doesn't have character and needs to be taught how to have character. She thinks this Board is probably one of the most civilized, civil groups of bipartisan politicians that exist. We set an example by our behavior here. In her own town they are civil, they are friends and they respect each other's differences and doesn't feel the need to do anything locally at her town level. As it stands she can not support it. If it came back as mini-grant program, partnering with not for profits to write grants for the funding to put together a

program, she could be more supportive. The Town she comes from people don't look well on the board spending money on anything that's not plowing the roads or a sheriff's car.

Mr. Kinowski said he agreed with Ms. Raymond. The program needs tweaks and certainly granting would be a wonderful idea. With more knowledge of what it could be and reducing the amount would be a reasonable thing to do to have it be more accepting.

Mrs. Southworth said as she sits and listens she thinks of other programs the Board has done, it seems like we could partner at several different levels with the school districts to do things such as essay contests without it costing this kind of funding. She has a hard time supporting this kind of funding when the County's confidentials and department heads haven't had a raise in 3 years. As much as she thinks character is important and as much as she develops it in her community, she finds it hard to spend that kind of money when she is asking employees to do more and not get a raise.

Mr. Richardson said he has been in support of this since the beginning. He said Mr. Sausville only mentioned a couple of things that he was interested in. There is a wider base of things that could happen. He thought different supervisors could bring ideas to the Board. The up to language that Supervisor Daly said is a good idea.

Mr. Sausville said that the intent was for the program would be up to.

Mrs. Daly asked when it would be appropriate to offer an amendment to this. She said what is being debated right now is to take it off. Mr. Hellwig said the motion on the table now is to remove it. That motion will be voted on first and then other motions can be entertained.

On a motion by Mr. Wright, seconded by Mr. Collyer the motion to remove the \$33,000 from the Board of Supervisors' budget FAILED by the following vote: AYES (58,189.5): Patricia Southworth (9,776), Philip C. Barrett (18,352.5), Richard Lucia (6,531), Jean Raymond (1,214), George Hargrave (3,545), Arthur M. Wright (2,048), Preston L. Jenkins (14,728), John Collyer (1,995). NO'S (161,417.5): Alan Grattidge (4,133), Anita Daly (18,352.5), Mary Ann Johnson (856), Richard Rowland (7,775), Mindy Wormuth (21,535), Paul Sausville (14,765), Thomas Richardson (5,196), Dan Lewza (18,575), Willard H. Peck (5,087), Thomas N. Wood, III (5,674), Joanne Dittes Yepsen (13,293), Matthew E. Veitch (13,293), Edward D. Kinowski (8,287), John Lawler (8,423), Arthur J. Johnson (16,173).

On a motion by Mr. Lewza, seconded Mr. Hargrave the motion was made to reduce the \$33,000 funding in the Board of Supervisors' budget to \$10,000. The motion PASSED by the following vote: AYES (127,044): Patricia Southworth (9,776), Philip C. Barrett (18,352.5), Anita Daly (18,352.5), Richard Lucia (6,531), Jean Raymond (1,214), George Hargrave (3,545), Arthur M. Wright (2,048), Paul Sausville (14,765), Thomas Richardson (5,196), Dan Lewza (18,575), Preston L. Jenkins (14,728), Thomas N. Wood, III (5,674), Edward D. Kinowski (8,287). NO'S (92,563): Alan Grattidge (4,133), Mary Ann Johnson (856), Richard Rowland (7,775), Mindy Wormuth (21,535), Willard H. Peck (5,087), John Collyer (1,995), Joanne Dittes Yepsen (13,293), Matthew E. Veitch (13,293), John Lawler (8,423), Arthur J. Johnson (16,173).

Mr. Sausville said the remaining budget schedule was for a public hearing on December 3rd at 5:30 p.m. in the County Board Rooms and then the final adoption at a special board meeting on December 11th at 4:45 p.m.

With there being no other business and on a motion by Mr. Barrett, seconded by Mr. Lucia the meeting was unanimously adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Pamela Hargrave, Clerk