

Law and Finance Budget Hearing  
November 7, 2013 – 4:00 p.m.

Present: Chairman Sausville; Supervisors Daly, Rowland, Wood, Veitch, Wright, Hargrave, Southworth, Barrett, Lewza, Yepsen, Grattidge, Kinowski, and Raymond; Spencer Hellwig, Administrator; Ryan Moore, Mgmt. Analyst; Sam Pitcherelle, Treasurer; Jack Kalinkewicz, Personnel, Marcy McNamara, Personnel; Peter Martin, County Clerk; Robert Hartman, Safety Officer; Press.

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

Mr. Hellwig read the Rules for Approving Amendments to the 2014 Budget as follows:

1. The Budget Committee will review all requests for budget amendments during their hearings, and will not vote on those amendments until all presentations have been made.
2. Each member of the Law and Finance Committee and the Chairman of the Board shall have one vote. For an amendment to the budget to be approved, it must receive the affirmative vote of at least four committee members and win a majority of the members voting. Members may not cast a vote unless they were present for the discussion or have reviewed a transcript of the proceedings. If a member was present for the discussion but is unable to stay for the actual vote, he or she may leave a sealed vote to be cast by the Chairman.
3. The Tentative budget, along with the amendments approved at the Law and Finance hearing(s), will be presented to the full Board of Supervisors at the Thursday Workshop meeting on November 14<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 P.M. Any changes to that document will require action by a majority of the weighted vote of the entire Board (109,804 votes).
4. The 2014 Tentative Budget, as amended at the Thursday Workshop and the Law and Finance Hearings, will be presented to the public at a public hearing on December 3<sup>rd</sup> at 5:30 P.M. in the County Board Room.

**On a motion made by Mr. Wood, seconded by Mr. Rowland, the Rules for approving Amendments to the 2014 Budget were approved unanimously.**

Mr. Hellwig said the county has faced a number of costly financial challenges over the past three years, which have depleted the once healthy fund balance. Over the past several months, beginning with the submission of the requests from department heads we have continued to take advantage of every opportunity to reduce the costs of county services for residents. Since the Tentative Budget already contains a detailed budget message covering appropriations and

revenues, a thumbnail sketch will be given of the budget highlights, which includes the following:

- General fund expenses are up by 1.65%, and if the court ordered \$980,000 payment is taken out for the Hudson River/Black River Regulating District, then we are only up by 1.2% more than the 2013 adopted budget
- Sales tax is budgeted at \$110.7 million, which is a 2% growth over the projected year-end total of \$108.5 million this year.
- Property tax is at \$52,454,500 which is an increase of just over \$876,000. This represents a tax rate of \$2.28 per thousand, which is one cent more than the 2013 rate of \$2.27 per thousand.
- The total mandates in the tentative budget are \$94.5 million with a net cost to the county of just over \$62 million, which represents 118% of the property tax levy. This means that the county has to come up with another \$9.5 million above what is collected through property taxes.
- The highway fund is up \$3 million from the 2013 total, due primarily to a change to bridge reconstruction projects, in particular, one in Mechanicville.
- Maplewood is up \$4 million from 2013 due primarily to the covering of indirect and direct costs still paid for in the general fund. Approximately \$12 million of Maplewood's total revenue will come from a combination of IGT, Bonding and Sale Proceeds.
- Total appropriations of \$312.9 million represent all the county's funds and that is an increase of just over 4% over the 2013 adopted budget which was \$300.4 million for all the funds combined, which includes Maplewood Manor, Highway, Sewer District, Employment and Training and the General Fund. The total capital costs next year are budgeted at \$11.4 million which is an increase of \$4.1 million for 2013. The appropriated fund balance for next year will be \$1 million, which will be a decrease of \$900,000 from the \$1.9 million that was originally appropriated this year to balance the budget.

Ms. Daly said the county funds Tourism with the Saratoga County Chamber of Commerce, and last year a gap was identified where some of the communities have various activities going on that are not being capitalized on. Last year the Economic Development Committee approved a Community Development Plan with the Southern Chamber of Commerce, where they set forth a number of deliverables, in particular in Waterford, Charlton and Ballston Spa, with Brookside Museum and work with Lock 9. The Southern Chamber was able to put together a program on immigration, understanding the diversity of our population in the county, particularly with

Global Foundries locating here. They have requested the opportunity to move forward and expand on some of the work that they have done which includes work in Mechanicville. A report was given at the Economic Development Committee on what the Southern Chamber has accomplished and an outline of some goals for continued initiatives with the opportunity to expand some, such as an agriculture program, looking to see how they can better connect farmers with the local market place for their products. After a presentation from Peter Bardunias, the committee voted to move forward with a recommendation to continue those programs at a cost of \$25,000, which is an increase from last year of \$5,000. The committee agreed that this was a program worth supporting and a request was made to bring it to the Law and Finance Budget Meeting so that it could be included in the budget.

Mr. Sausville introduced the Chairman's Initiative "Character First Program". He said the county is in a unique position to advance some good things with regard to promoting character, not only in everyday lives, but in businesses and organizations throughout the county. A proposal was distributed to all committee members for their consideration.

Mr. Sausville proposed a \$75,000 Character First Chairman's Initiative.

The following are some ideas that were suggested for potential programs:

- County grants of \$2,000 to towns for local Character First initiatives, upgrading ethics codes, etc.
- Character education speakers sponsored by the County for assemblies of organizations such as business associations, schools, LWV, Rotary and Scouts.
- Collaboration with newspapers and TV to publish a character first article each month for a full year.
- Upgrading the County Ethics Law
- Student essays/presentations to the County Board on character trait of the month.
- Website page on Character First
- Use of social media to promote good character

Mr. Hellwig said the Economic Development Committee approved a resolution to accept Stormwater Management Funding, the MS4 program which is run through Cornell Cooperative Extension. This resolution will go to the full Board of Supervisors this month for a vote to approve the acceptance of the grant. The tentative budget did not contain the funding for that grant; therefore, the amendment that is being proposed would be to increase the expenses and the revenues by \$100,000, which will be a budget neutral request.

Mr. Kalinkewicz requested approval of position requests in the following departments for a total cost of \$104,461.

Personnel – create (1) PT account Clerk Typist; Abolish (1) Personnel Clerk

Self-Insurance – Create (1) Self Insurance Specialist Grade 10

Data Processing – Create (1) Deputy Director Grade 15

District Attorney – Create (1) Assistant District Attorney FT; Create (1) Crime Victims Advocate FT; Abolish (1) Crime Victims Advocate PT

Conflict Defender – Create (2) PT Assistant Conflict Defender Attorneys; Create (1) PT Conflict Defender Attorney

Sheriff – Create (1) Civil Clerk

Probation – Create (2) Probation Officers

Public Health – Create (1) PT Public Health Educator

DSS – Create (1) Social Welfare Examiners

Veterans (Salary Adjustment) Veterans Service Officer to non-union Grade 10

Employment & Training – Create a Senior Account Clerk

Sewer – Create (2) Maintenance Helpers; Abolish Electrician; Abolish Assistant Instrumentation Mechanic; Abolish Electrician's Helper; Abolish Instrumentation Mechanic Helper

**A motion was made by Ms. Daly, seconded by Mr. Wood to approve a Community Development Grant with the Southern Chamber of Commerce at a cost of \$25,000. Unanimous.**

**A motion was made by Ms. Daly, seconded by Mr. Veitch to approve the Chairman's Initiative, Character First Program at a cost of \$75,000.**

Mr. Wright said he could not support this initiative at this time, as the county is currently in the process of selling Maplewood Manor due to fiscal stress. He said as far as the towns are concerned, every two years they go through character testing.

Mr. Rowland said he wasn't sure of the town aspect of the request as well as some of the other initiatives such as updating the County Ethics Law, as that should be done automatically on a

regular basis and should not have to be funded. Mr. Rowland said he could support some funding, but not the entire request.

Mr. Wood suggested eliminating the \$2,000 requests for the individual towns leaving a \$33,000 funding balance.

Ms. Daly said if Supervisor Wood's idea was taken in eliminating town grant money and looking at a number much smaller, she asked for consideration that if there was a scholarship program that could be outlined up to \$5,000, she would be willing to take that request to the Capital Resource Corporation for their consideration.

Mr. Veitch said he was supportive of the idea to amend the motion to approve \$33,000 in funding for the Chairman's Initiative.

**A motion was made by Mr. Wood, seconded by Ms. Daly to amend the motion from \$75,000 to \$33,000 and to pursue other options for funding for the towns. Mr. Wright voted no. Motion Passed.**

**A motion was made by Mr. Rowland, seconded by Mr. Veitch to approve MS4 grant funding in the amount of \$100,000. Unanimous.**

**A motion was made by Mr. Veitch, seconded by Mr. Wood to approve Personnel Requests as outlined above. Unanimous.**

**On a motion made by Ms. Daly, seconded by Mr. Wood the meeting was adjourned to the November 14th Budget Workshop. Unanimous.**

Respectfully Submitted,  
Chris Sansom