

Legislative and Research Committee Minutes
February 8, 2017 – 2:30 p.m.

Present: Chairman Art Johnson; Supervisors Bill Peck, Dan Pemrick, Jean Raymond, Tom Richardson, Jon Schopf, Tom Wood, Mo Wright; Spencer Hellwig, Chad Cooke, County Administrator; Steve Dorsey, County Attorney; Craig Hayner, County Clerk; Andrew Jarosh, Treasurer.

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

On a motion made by Mr. Pemrick, seconded by Mr. Peck, the minutes of the August 9, 2016 meeting were approved unanimously.

Chairman Johnson announced the appointment of Mrs. Raymond as Committee Vice Chair.

A motion was made by Mrs. Raymond, seconded by Mr. Pemrick, to adopt the 2017 Saratoga County Legislative Agenda. Unanimous.

Mr. Cooke gave an overview of the 2017 Legislative program which was previously distributed to Committee members:

STATE

1. **Opposing the Governor's Proposal for Additional Property Tax Relief through Efficiency Plans until the State Reduces Unfunded Mandates.** Mr. Johnson said that this topic was discussed at the NYSAC Conference last week and many other counties voiced their opposition to the Governor's proposal.
2. **Urging the State to Enact Legislation to Ensure a Fair and Level Playing Field for all Retailers by Addressing Loopholes in Internet Sales Tax Collection Practices.** Mr. Cooke said that the state has identified over \$200M worth of uncollected sales tax annually from internet purchases, which could amount to over \$2M of revenue to Saratoga County.
3. **Supporting a Constitutional Amendment Banning New Unfunded State Mandates and Additional Measures to Provide Mandate Relief.**
4. **Opposing the Proposal for Early Voting and Automatic Voter Registration through DMV.** Mr. Cooke said that finding voter space on weekends, additional staff, ballot printing and voting machines can drive the County cost per election up over \$50,000. It has been shown that early voting does not increase voter turnout. Mr. Peck suggested the language be adjusted to show the county encourages voting.
5. **Urging the Governor to Seek Local Input on Matters Related to Raising the Age of Juvenile Jurisdiction.** Mr. Cooke said that this has been an ongoing item each year.

- 6. Supporting the Privatization of NYRA but Urging the Organization of the Board of Directors to Include Local Representation.**
- 7. Supporting Legislation to Promote the Full and Expanded Use of Video Conferencing for Court Appearances for Inmates Held at the County Jail.** Mr. Cooke said that the County spends on average \$250,000 per year in salaries and benefits for deputies to transport prisoners.
- 8. Opposing Jail-Based Restoration Units for Mentally Ill Felony-Level Defendants While They are Restored to Competency to Await Trial.** Mr. Cooke said that currently the inmates are at a state run facility and the cost is split between the State and the County. This proposal would force the County to take over, earmark 20-25 beds in the jail and provide psychiatrists and additional staff. This could ending up costing the County over \$1.5M annually.
- 9. Urging State Lawmakers and the Governor to Work to Reform Indigent Legal Services and Fund the County Share of Public Defense.** Mr. Cooke said that the NYS Senate and Assembly passed the Public Defense Mandate Relief Act which would have required NYS to reimburse all counties for expenditures made fulfilling the state's obligation to provide representation for those financially unable to afford counsel. The Governor vetoed this Act.
- 10. Home Rule Request by Saratoga County for the Enactment of a Local Law to Amend the Tax Law relating to Authorizing the County of Saratoga to Impose an Additional Mortgage Recording Tax.** Mr. Cooke said that this is something 23 other counties in New York State do, it would impose a 0.25% mortgage recording tax on top of the 1% already in place. Mr. Johnson said that he has reservations about this item but asked Mr. Cooke to keep the item in for discussion purposes. It was decided to put this item to the side as an optional topic to discuss.
- 11. Urging State Lawmakers to Work to Amend Draft NYSDEC Conservation SPDES Permit Language for Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4s).** Mr. Cooke said that he spoke with Cornell Cooperative Extension and the items that would impact the county and towns are regarding additional mapping that will be required, the specific software needed and additional staffing.

NATIONAL

- 1. Calling on New York's Congressional Delegation to Preserve the Federal Tax Exemption for Municipal Bonds.**
- 2. Calling on New York's Congressional Delegation to Support the Enactment of Federal Legislation to Simplify and Ease Sales Tax Collections on Internet-Based Purchases and to Support a Level Playing Field for "Main Street" Retailers.**

3. Supporting Federal Infrastructure Investment.

4. Supporting Programs that Assist Counties to Prevent and Reduce Poverty.

Mr. Johnson said that Matt Veitch will be attending NaCo and meeting with Federal delegates on the national items.

Mrs. Raymond said that at least six of the State points above are new mandates and recommended these points be highlighted. County Clerk Hayner provided some additional items for consideration from a recent NYS Association of County Clerks conference. Mr. Johnson said that suggested changes will be incorporated by Chad and an updated program will be forwarded to this committee and then on to Law and Finance for approval. The meeting with Legislatures in Albany has been set for March 7, 2017 at 10:30am.

On a motion made by Mr. Richardson, seconded by Mr. Peck, the meeting was adjourned unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Therese Connolly
Deputy Clerk of the Board