

PUBLIC HEARING
February 9, 2022 4:35 p.m.

Roll call was taken. PRESENT – Eric Connolly, Joseph Grasso, Philip C. Barrett, Jonathon Schopf, Eric Butler, Jean Raymond, Arthur M. Wright, Kevin Tollisen, Mark Hammond, Scott Ostrander, Theodore Kusnierz, Willard H. Peck, Tara Gaston, Matthew E. Veitch, John Lant - 15. ABSENT Diana Edwards, Michael Smith, Kevin Veitch, Thomas Richardson, Sandra Winney, Thomas N. Wood, III, Edward D. Kinowski, John Lawler – 8.

Chairman Kusnierz called the public hearing on considering a Local Law amending Local Law No. 2 of 1968, as last amended by Local Law No. 5 of 2011, to increase the population threshold for an additional County Supervisor.

Chairman Kusnierz asked the Clerk to read the notice of public hearing.

Chairman Kusnierz called the speakers in the order they were signed up.

Barbara Thomas: Saratoga Springs. And I'm opposed to the proposed local law, increasing to 27,500 the number of residents that one board member can represent. In 1968., following the Supreme Court decision requiring one person one vote, this County adopted a weighted vote system at the Board level, but recognize that the ability to be represented on committees was also important. The County decided at that time that each Town should get one Supervisor for each 12,500 residents or part thereof. At that time, both Saratoga Springs and Clifton Park qualified for two supervisors. But using that standard today, Malta, Milton, Moreau and Wilton would have two Supervisors, and Clifton Park, Saratoga Springs, and probably Halfmoon would have three. Since the 70s, the Board of Supervisors has consistently increased the number of people that will trigger the creation of another Supervisor position, because the Board wants to keep the number of Supervisors at 23. Whether that's really because of the number of seats in this room, or your belief about the optimum size for a deliberative body, or an aversion to change, I can't say. What I can say is that it is not fair and getting less fair with each additional census. That's because the committees are where most of the Board's decisions are made. And one Supervisor can only serve on a few committees. As Supervisor Wood noted back in 2011, it's a rare exception, you see much controversy erupt. The reason is we've had full discussion in the committees and the committees make their decisions based on the majority. In the 1960s at the time of the court decisions that allowed weighted voting, it was clear that the courts preference was for the election of Board members from districts that were equal in population. That would mean that each district would get an equal number of committee seats, and every Board member would be equal and cast one vote, and every voter would be equal too. I call on the Board to scrap the proposed law and instead appoint a commission to propose a new charter for this County's governance, one that uses equal population districts as the basis of representation. It will be up to the commission to decide the appropriate number of districts and therefore the number of County Board members, and to decide whether Town Supervisors would be eligible to run for County Board seats. Thank you.

Chairman Kusnierz asked if any written communications were received.

Mary Lou Clausen: 4 Blue spruce lane in Ballston Lake. I also believe and one person one vote. It does not seem to be fair that the people in the Town of Day have one Supervisor and that the people in the Town of Halfmoon also have one Supervisor. So the few people in the Town of Day have the same influence as the 25,000 plus people on Halfmoon, when they are, when the

Supervisors are working in committee. There's nothing sacred about having 23 seats. I mean, we could have a new legislative body that had only 15 seats, as long as there was one vote for one person. Thank you.

Jeremy Conners: 26 Churchill Road, Halfmoon, New York. Basically set forth that the law is intended to have basic interests and representation for its constituents. And while this may seem like an increase, the House of Representatives still operates with 435 members, but they represent more people than they did 50 years ago. Also, the goal is to actually represent the people of our town and in Halfmoon, we do that well. We support the Supervisor, we support his decisions here, as well as in the Town. We take great pride in making sure we represent everyone of all different backgrounds, social statuses, and opinions. We do it and we do it well. With that I spoke to our Town board, they support this measure, as do I. Thank you.

Linda Bryan: 1 Par Way, Mechanicville, New York. I serve for the Town of Halfmoon as their Town Clerk for the past 11 years, I've seen many changes during that timeframe. And I've seen an awful lot of good changes. Back in 2012, we had a fund balance in our general fund of \$70,000. We at the end of 2020 had 5,00,000. 2021 figures aren't completed at this point. But I know that they have been very good. And I don't want you to think that we're putting money in the bank but not taking care of our residents. I also take care of the Senior Express, which gives rides to all of our seniors to go to their appointments for those people who don't have other means of transportation. Last year, we saw an increase of those services going up 25% for the rides we had given which are over 5,000 for the year, and also for our new clients, which has gone up this last year of 33%. I also want to thank the Office for the Aging for helping us with our fleet of vehicles. We currently have eight vehicles, half of them with wheelchair accessibility for our residents. So we are not only taking care of our residents very well, we are also taking care of a very fiscal managed budget. And I have our Supervisors to thank for that. I can't imagine we would need to have a second Supervisor to do any better than what we're already doing. And I thank you for your time.

Chairman Kusnierz asked if any written communications were received.

Mrs. Connolly said there were none.

Chairman Kusnierz closed the public hearing

Respectfully submitted,

Therese M. Connolly, Clerk