

ALLEGANY COUNTY BOARD OF LEGISLATORS
Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes
MARCH 31, 2015

**** NOT APPROVED ****

CALL TO ORDER: The Committee of the Whole meeting of the Board of Legislators was called to order at 6:35 p.m. by Chairman Curtis W. Crandall.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG: The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chairman Curtis W. Crandall.

ROLL CALL: 11 Legislators Present: Curtis Crandall, Philip Curran, Dwight Fanton, Karl Graves, Dwight "Mike" Healy, Theodore Hopkins, Charles Jessup, Kevin LaForge, Timothy O'Grady, David Pullen, Norman Ungermann, Jr., Absent: Scott Burt, David Decker, Aaron McGraw and Debra Root.

Others Present: Dan Acton, Jodi Adams, Mitchell Alger, Brad Blouvet, Jim Blowers, Dustin Burch, Calvin Carmer, Robert Carney, Brian Clendenin, Mike Dieter, Kier Dirlam, Michelle Dunbar, Dennis George, Cynthia Gowiski, Ricky Gould, Lee Gridley, Al Hall, Rick and Kate Hollis, Kimberley Howe, John Jessup, Bob Jones, Donald LaForge, Ginny LaForge, Karen Linza, Jim Lucey, Jeff Luckey, Ryan Marble, Darlene Mason, John Meehan, Thomas Miner, Lauren Oliver, Brent Platt, Jeri Reichman, Dennis Ricketts, Brenda Riehle, Terri Ross, Chad Smith, Mary Stearns, Rich Sullivan, Lon Sweet, Thomas Taylor, Mike Trivisonoli, Ronald Wightman, and Barb Zlomek.

Media Present: There were no representatives from the media present.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR:

Chairman Crandall welcomed everyone and stated the agenda for the evening. All Town Supervisors and Village Mayors from municipalities in Allegany County were invited to attend the meeting to discuss the Governor's Property Tax Freeze, the Efficiency Plan, and ongoing efficiency steps that the County has already taken and will continue to work toward. Every municipality is required to submit an efficiency plan to the State Division of Budget by June 1, 2015. We wanted to convene a meeting to explain how Towns and Villages can join and become part of the County's Government Efficiency Plan.

County Administrator Mitchell Alger discussed the handout information. A lot of the paperwork talks about the Property Tax Freeze and Government Efficiency Plan. Phase I of the property tax freeze required staying under the 2 percent property tax cap in order for residents to get the property tax freeze credit. Now in Phase II of the property tax freeze, in order for residents to get the property tax freeze credit it requires 1) staying under the tax cap and 2) municipalities submitting a compliant government efficiency plan. The Chief Financial Officer for the lead entity must submit the Government Efficiency Plan to the NYS Division of Budget no later than June 1, 2015. Individual plans are allowed, but NYS prefers cooperative efforts and assumes the County will take the lead. If plans are rejected or are not submitted, then residents will not be eligible for a rebate check from NYS. Mr. Alger noted that if all municipalities and the County submit a joint plan, the target efficiencies or cost savings needed is 1 percent of the collective tax levy.

County Treasurer Terri Ross discussed the tax levy and the 1 percent cost savings calculation spreadsheet that was distributed to participants. The spreadsheet lists the 1percent calculation rates

for each municipality according to the levy. This is the amount of efficiencies or cost savings that will need to be demonstrated in the efficiency plans. The combined total for all towns, villages, and the County is \$570,000.

County Administrator Mitchell Alger stated that NYS Division of Budget provided guidance about eligible cost savings and efficiency actions. In addition, NYSAC's Toolkit contains several good examples. Efficiency actions can be cooperative agreements, shared services, efficiencies, or mergers. To be eligible, actions have to have been implemented after January 1, 2012—this is the "look back" period. The County has identified around 50 possible actions to include in the efficiency plan. Participants reviewed the example efficiency detail sheet. Additional work will be required to define details and cost savings estimates, but Mr. Alger believes a significant portion of the 1 percent collective tax levy amount can be met. It is likely that it will be in each municipality's best interest to join in the County's plan. Otherwise, municipalities will be tasked with compiling this information and then entering it in the Division of Budget website.

Darwin Fanton suggested adding privatization as an efficiency cost savings action to the efficiency detail sheet. Mr. Alger noted the forms contain the specific data fields as required by the state. For this example, Mr. Alger said that operational efficiency would be the data field to select.

Additionally, the state requires three signed certificates from each municipality in order to participate in a plan. Therefore, in order to participate in the County's plan, municipalities will each need to submit the three signed certificates to the County. Two of the certificates are to be signed by the Chief Financial Officer and the other form is to be signed by the Budget Officer or Chief Executive Officer. The forms are fairly self-explanatory. The County would like to know if municipalities plan to participate in the joint plan within the next week or so.

Mr. Alger informed the group that he will send out an email to everyone in attendance about where to submit the forms in addition to providing copies of all the handout materials and electronic forms. If anyone has questions, he would gladly provide support and can be reached by email algermm@alleganyco.com or by phone (585)268-9217.

A member of the audience questioned if municipalities were required to complete all three certificates if they wish to participate in the County's plan. Mr. Alger confirmed that all three certificates are required by the Division of Budget.

Jim Lucey discussed reoccurring savings with shared services agreements and contract terms being extended to five years.

Al Hall mentioned efficiencies through shared services agreements for fire and ambulance services.

Legislator Dwight Fanton noted that the County Administrator and County Treasurer will be reviewing the plan and preparing it for submission to the state.

Mr. Alger stated all forms and directions will be posted to the County's website www.alleganyco.com and again encouraged participants to call his office with any questions at 585-268-9217. He will also provide links to NYS DOS website and NYSAC website for more information on the NYS Property Tax Freeze and the Government Efficiency Plan.

Chairman Crandall segued to ongoing efficiency efforts and planning that has been underway for over a year now at the County. He introduced Legislator Kevin LaForge to the group. Legislator LaForge, Chairman of the Allegheny County Affordable Government Group, talked about the committee work that has been accomplished to date. He outlined some concerns the committee has identified including a lack of trained and experienced water and sewer treatment plant operators available when the existing workforce retires. He stated the County is interested in engaging municipalities in defining and implementing future efficiency goals. Some areas for discussion include water and sewer districts, bonding capacity, abatement, code enforcement, assessment, land bank program, district justice courts, and group purchasing/bidding. Legislator LaForge stated the group is open to any suggestions. He is interested in identifying three efficiency goals to accomplish to benefit towns, villages, and the County and promoted the need for municipality buy-in and support for success.

Cindy Gowiski stated she couldn't support tax assessment being a service provided by a County employee and saw this as a conflict of interest.

A member of the audience noted that some municipalities already receive competitive rates for assessment services at \$9/parcel compared to statewide rates of \$50-60/parcel.

Jim Lucey questioned funding for land bank programs. Legislator LaForge noted there has been some funding provided by the state in the past and most likely initially, it would require some seed money at the onset. Legislator LaForge mentioned land bank programs assisting with blight prevention through renovation, selling properties, and demolishing dilapidated properties. Currently, state policies are favorable with asbestos removal whereas in the past asbestos removal has been costly.

Legislator LaForge introduced the municipality survey that was distributed to all attendees and encouraged participation. Surveys should be returned to the County Administrator's Office via mail, fax, or email.

Kier Dirlam noted that the committee is looking to garner information from the surveys and that the committee does not have all the answers.

Chairman Crandall closed the meeting with questions and comments. He reiterated that the County is here tonight to 1) offer to be the lead organization; 2) request that all municipalities sign on with the County in a joint efficiency plan; and 3) introduce a process for municipalities to submit cost-saving actions and other required forms for compilation and submission to the state. He noted all forms should be returned by May 1 to ensure the June 1 deadline for the Government Efficiency Plan submission to the state.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m. on a motion made by Legislator Graves, seconded by Legislator Pullen, and carried.

Additional Comments: Handout materials from the meeting were mailed to the following municipalities that weren't in attendance at the meeting:

The Honorable Julie Steadman, Town of Allen Supervisor

The Honorable Annette Kish, Town of Belfast Supervisor

The Honorable Marc Bliss, Town of Centerville Supervisor

The Honorable Ronald Truax, Town of Clarksville Supervisor

The Honorable Donald Jordan, Town of Genesee Supervisor

The Honorable Anthony Vekich, Town of New Hudson Supervisor
The Honorable Daniel Fleming, Town of Scio Supervisor
The Honorable Ronald Wightman, Town of Willing Supervisor
The Honorable Tricia Grover, Town of Wirt Supervisor
The Honorable Justin Grigg, Village of Alfred Mayor
The Honorable William Ellis, Village of Almond Mayor
The Honorable Terrance Schmelzer, Village of Belmont Mayor
The Honorable Daniel Fuller, Village of Bolivar Mayor
The Honorable Richard Kinney, Village of Canaseraga Mayor
The Honorable John Day, Village of Richburg Mayor
The Honorable Judith Lynch, Village of Wellsville Mayor

The information that was discussed at the meeting, handout materials, and fillable/printable forms are available on the Allegany County Website www.alleganyco.com.

Respectfully submitted by:

Jodi Adams
Assistant to the County Administrator