

**HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE
Of the
Suffolk County Legislature**

Minutes

A regular meeting of the Human Resources Committee of the Suffolk County Legislature was held in the Rose Y. Caracappa Auditorium of the William H. Rogers Building, Veterans Memorial Highway, Smithtown, New York, on **April 18, 2001**.

Members Present:

Legislator Fred Towle - Chairman
Legislator Michael D'Andre - Vice-Chairperson
Legislator Vivian Fisher - Member

Members Not Present:

Legislator Jon Cooper - Member

Also In Attendance:

Paul Sabatino - Counsel to the Legislature
Suzanne Kappel - Aide to Legislator Towle
Barbara LoMoriello - Aide to Legislator Cooper
Marla Musgnug - Aide to Presiding Officer Tonna
Victoria Siracusa - Budget Review Office
Fred Pollert - Budget Review Office
Bonnie Godsman - County Executive's Office
Kristine Chayes - Civil Service
Robert Donnelly - Information Services
Billy Cunningham - Information Services
Ray Gontasz - Information Services
James Poitras - Suffolk County Comptroller's Office
All Other Interested Parties

Minutes Taken By:

Patricia Patriss - Court Stenographer

(*The meeting was called to order at 11:38 A.M.*)

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Good morning. We're going to call the Human Services Committee to order. If Legislator D'Andre would lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Salutation

We have two speakers this morning, Kristine Chayes and Robert Donnelly. Well, actually, there's a couple of other names. I guess why don't you all come on up and join us. I didn't see that. Also, as you're coming to the microphone, we're joined this morning by myself, Legislator D'Andre and Legislator Fisher. And Legislator Cooper had an excused absence this morning. Good morning.

MS. CHAYES:

Good morning. I'm Kris Chayes. I'm a Principal Personnel Analyst for Civil Service and I'm here to speak to Into Resolution 1290, which is establishing a recognition program for experienced County employees. The only comment we would have to that is that perhaps the category of twenty years should not be included, reason being that at twenty years it would include approximately one third of the entire County work

force. So the recognition program would be at twenty years including one third of the work force. At twenty-five years we would suggest it be started at twenty-five years, which would reduce that number by twelve hundred forty-one people.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Have you spoke at all to the sponsor of the resolution?

MS. CHAYES:

I've left a message with Legislator Carpenter's office and I'll be faxing her these numbers. We got these yesterday afternoon.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Okay.

LEG. D'ANDRE:

Motion to table.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

We'll table it for one meeting. Okay. We'll make a motion by Legislator D'Andre to pull 1290 out of order.

Introductory Resolutions

1290-01 - Establishing Recognition Program for experienced County Employees. Seconded by Legislator Fisher. Any discussion? There being none, all those in favor? All those opposed? Any abstentions? 1290 is now before us. A motion by Legislator D'Andre, seconded by Legislator Fisher to table for one meeting giving the Department of Civil Service an opportunity to speak with the sponsor. Any discussion? There being none, all those in favor? All those opposed? Any abstentions? 1290 is tabled for one meeting. (Vote: 3-0-0-1 - Not Present: Legislator Cooper).

MS. CHAYES:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

No problem. If a member from the Budget Review Office's staff could join us for a committee meeting, that would be great.

Robert Donnelly and his staff in reference to Resolution 1192. Good morning, gentlemen.

MR. DONNELLY:

Good morning. I'm Robert Donnelly, Director of Information Services.

MR. CUNNINGHAM:

I'm Bill Cunningham. I'm Principal Programmer Analyst for Information Services.

MR. GONTASZ:

And I'm Ray Gontasz, also from Information Services.

MR. DONNELLY:

I'm here this morning to speak to Resolution 1192, which is Capital Project 1740 for the integrated human resources payroll system. I think key to understand that what we are talking about here is an integrated system not just the payroll system.

We do indeed have a payroll system that has performed remarkably well

for the past fifteen years and we have certainly gotten our money's worth from it. Particularly, in light of what Mr. Cunningham has done with that system over these fifteen years to keep it running as well as it has. But it also lacks the functionality, I believe, that any modern government or business needs to do things in a most efficient and cost effective way.

For instance, the existing payroll system does not link with the budgetary system that's now in place. It doesn't link with the general ledger. We could technically actually write checks against funds that aren't available, not that that would happen in the real world, but it's possible that it would happen technically.

There is not time and accruals module in the existing system. We manually have to compile time and accrual totals at the end of the year by going out to the individual department, saying get Fred Towle's time sheet, add up all the time we owe him in terms of vacation and sick time, add it all so we know what the County's liability is in those areas.

We presently use three disparate systems to accumulate information. We have a payroll system running on the mainframe. We have a benefits disability system, which is actually a third party contract service. So that's money out the door for us. In Civil Service we have a home grown data base that runs in access that we use to track applicant tracking. The new integrated system will ideally do all of those things for us under one umbrella.

In terms of indirect cost allocation, which we absolutely need because we get reimbursements based on those cost allocations in our health department and DSS. That's a service that's presently contracted out that we would hope to bring in --

LEG. FISHER:

Can you repeat that? You went very quickly.

MR. DONNELLY:

Oh, I'm sorry. Indirect cost allocation, certain charges are funded back to the individual department's health and DSS and then they get reimbursed for those charges. The way those costs are allocated, it's handled by a third party that we contract with outside the County to go around and decide how much of a particular service DSS should get charged for, how much health should get charged for etcetera. The new integrated system would allow us to do that without again, going outside the County on a contact basis to make that happen.

LEG. FISHER:

Excuse me, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Yeah, Legislator Fisher, go ahead.

LEG. FISHER:

Could we interrupt for questions because there's so much information?

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Yeah, your -- you've gone through a lot of things. Like, I was thinking, you know, if we have a contract with this agency, even if we put this system in place, how long is the contract for?

MR. DONNELLY:

These are all one year contracts.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Okay.

MR. DONNELLY:

And I'll be glad to make --

LEG. FISHER:

Would you mind if we ask questions --

MR. DONNELLY:

-- this information available to you and print it for you. And these are just my notes, but --

LEG. FISHER:

Okay.

MR. DONNELLY:

-- they're legible.

LEG. FISHER:

But would you mind if we ask you questions as you go along --

MR. DONNELLY:

Not at all.

LEG. FISHER:

-- because you're giving us so much information at once --

MR. DONNELLY:

Sure.

LEG. FISHER:

-- and I want to make sure we understand this.

MR. DONNELLY:

And please interrupt me --

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Legislator Fisher, just before you ask the questions, there was a discussion about this at the last meeting. The reason it was tabled was not so much the system, but the offsets. Apparently this has been floating around for some period of time. From my recollection of Counsel informing us, it had been disapproved I guess, or the funding wasn't provided by the Legislature. The funding that was put in for this particular project, there are at least a half a dozen resolutions that we all introduced that would be taking that funding for something else, some of which are pending and may or may not be approved. We were waiting for Budget Review Office to give us --

LEG. FISHER:

What are the offsets?

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Exactly. That's what we were waiting for. That's why we had tabled it.

LEG. FISHER:

Okay.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

So --

LEG. FISHER:

Budget Review -- would you mind if I just asked --

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

No. Go right ahead. I just -- as I said, I wanted to bring you up to speed as to why it had been tabled.

MR. DONNELLY:

And may I address one other issue while Budget Review is looking for the offset information? There's apparently some misunderstanding on either my part or Counsel's part. This resolution was never voted on. It was tabled in committee and was lost at the end of the year. It never came before a full committee for a vote, and never came before the Leg. for a vote.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Was it tabled in committee?

MR. DONNELLY:

It was tabled in committee. That's the best of my knowledge.

LEG. FISHER:

It never came before the full Legislature.

MR. DONNELLY:

No, it did not.

LEG. FISHER:

It's just a very brief question about what you had mentioned that right now there are three systems, and that the third one you referred to was the data base on applicant tracking.

MR. DONNELLY:

Yes.

LEG. FISHER:

And that's done by an outside consultant?

MR. DONNELLY:

No. We do that one internally, but it's on an access data base system. It's certainly not the most sophisticated system. It allows us to do business, but when we need information from applicant tracking to moving into a human resource or payroll system, there's no way to do that.

LEG. FISHER:

Okay. And you mentioned the third party consultant did the social services tracking of that --

MR. DONNELLY:

The indirect cost allocation.

LEG. FISHER:

Okay. Would our system also integrate the community college payroll? This system would integrate the community college payroll and all of those --

MR. GONTASZ:

The college presently gets paid by the County's payroll system. When developing the needs of this system, okay, they were sort out, their information, the help was -- they gave us a great deal of information as far as putting together a consolidated plan for an integrated system. So they will continue to be paid from the system, but also this system will handle a lot -- many of their requirements, which cannot be resolved in the current payroll system.

LEG. FISHER:

Now, you mentioned at the beginning of your presentation that an integrated system would allow us to look payroll vis-a-vis budget issues. Would the system be able to handle the college budget issues as well? Because we've gone back and forth with Budget Review and the college and how their payroll is reflected in their budget. And there have been some questions and I'm just wondering if that integration would be there.

MR. POITRAS:

Okay. James Poitras, Suffolk County Comptroller's Office. The system would have the capability of giving the needed information to the college and to the Budget Office. Now, I think the question is whether it will be utilized by the college. I mean, that would be their call as far as how they would --

LEG. FISHER:

They could opt in, is --

MR. POITRAS:

Yes, yes. But we can -- and the Plan C Agreement I don't think we can force them to utilize the information.

LEG. FISHER:

Right. Thank you. Sorry for the interruption. I just wanted to clarify that before we went on .

MR. DONNELLY:

Just some closing remarks. The system that we're proposing has been endorsed by of course, Information Services, the Executive Budget Office, Civil Service, and I've contacted the AME and spoken with Phyllis Garbarino, and she has no objections at this time to the new system. And I think it's also noteworthy that during the development of the system requirements we involve people and got input from Department of Social Services, Health, Police, Sheriff, Department of Public Works, the Comptroller, the Treasurer, Laborer, and the Budget Review Office of the Legislature.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

There's just a question about benefits. Would this system have anything to do with the benefits?

MR. DONNELLY:

Yes, right now there's a benefit system out there that's a third party contract. We would roll those services in under the new system.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Okay.

MR. DONNELLY:

Again, eliminating out sourcing and contract expenditures.

LEG. FISHER:

May I ask a -- Mr. Chair?

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Yeah. Legislator Fisher.

LEG. FISHER:

As far as looking for the funding, would we be using those contact amounts that are presently earmarked for the outside consultants? Would those be offsets for this?

MR. DONNELLY:

I believe those are operating funds at this point.

LEG. FISHER:

I see. Okay. So one doesn't mix with the other. Okay.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

It would be nice to see a list of what we're spending in those amounts for those outside contracts that we're no longer going to need in 2002 if we were to put this system in place.

MR. DONNELLY:

We can certainly provide those numbers.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Yeah, that would be great.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Budget Review, I guess there were some questions at the last meeting in reference to potential offset problems.

MS. SIRACUSA:

There are two introductory resolutions, 1201 and 1202 that use this project as an offset. 1201 and 1202 provide funds for courtrooms at the Cohalan Court Complex. One of them is for four courtrooms and the other for two courtrooms. Four hundred thousand dollars, or eight hundred thousand dollars taken out of this project. My understanding is those were tabled in Ways and Means pending, finding another offset if this project is voted on.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Okay. Who are the sponsors on those bills?

MR. DONNELLY:

Legislator Bishop.

MS. SIRACUSA:

Okay. Legislator Bishop. Sorry.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Okay. And the total cost of the project is?

MS. SIRACUSA:

The courtroom project?

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

No, the --

MR. DONNELLY:
Five point five million.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:
Five point five million. And he's looking to take how much, Vicki, out of the -- those two resolutions are going to take out how much money?

MS. SIRACUSA:
Eight hundred thousand in one of them, and four hundred thousand in the other. They're mutually exclusive. You'll either vote for two courtrooms or four courtrooms. So one or the other, well, of those, can only be adopted.

LEG. FISHER:
What's the one and a quarter million amount then on the resolution?

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:
Legislator Fisher had a question.

LEG. FISHER:
This amount on the resolution, one and a quarter million, what is this?

MR. GONTASZ:
For this year we anticipate a phase to approach this integrated system.

LEG. FISHER:
Oh, so for this year it's one --

MR. GONTASZ:
One and a quarter --

LEG. FISHER:
One and a quarter million.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:
What's the phase time frame?

MR. GONTASZ:
We can -- again, this is an integrated system so we can -- and that's quite extensive as far as the capabilities of a system. So we anticipate a phased approach. So we will probably put in the benefits portion and Civil Service portion in first, and then look at implementing the payroll portion again, department by department.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:
Have you done a time limit on the full system?

MR. GONTASZ:
No, I haven't.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:
Okay. Obviously if it's going to take us two or three years to put this system in line, then some of these contracts are not going to be cancelled necessarily right away.

MR. DONNELLY:
I'm not really sure that that's true. I know for a fact that one of

them is an annual contract and I believe the second contract with the benefit system is also up at the end of this year.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

But if you're only spending one and a quarter million, and the overall project is five point five million, you know, what is your time frame to get the full system up in line for the five point five? What are you thinking or what are you looking to do?

MR. DONNELLY:

If you people are kind enough to give us the money, I anticipate we'll have this system on line within two years.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

So then in other words you're coming back next year for four million dollars?

MR. GONTASZ:

Well, the total is five five and we're asking for one quarter this year.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

I'm curious why you're not here for the five point five now. Let's do this once instead of having to go through this twice. You know, what happens if you don't get the four million dollars next year? We have a half of a system or quarter of a system?

MR. DONNELLY:

That's been a dilemma --

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Okay. I'm going expect --

MR. DONNELLY:

Forever.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

I'm going to expect two things between now and the next committee meeting. One is a break down of what you believe we'll save financially by being able to cancel contracts, and two, a time line under your proposal of asking for one and a quarter now and then the balance when, or if you could get the whole five point five now, what would be the time frame? Because maybe that's what we need to look at as opposed to piecemealing this. I'd hate to wind up approving one point four this year and next year God forbid because of some reason we don't approve the other four million and we're sitting here with a quarter of a system.

MR. DONNELLY:

Would it be -- Legislator Towle, would it be possible to provide that information at the full committee meeting on Tuesday or the full Leg. Meeting on Tuesday?

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Well, you could try to do that at the full Legislature, but I think it's a lot easier to have questions asked of four people endorsing this than eighteen, but I'll go with the will of the committee.

LEG. FISHER:

I have another question vis-a-vis that.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:
Legislator Fisher, go ahead.

LEG. FISHER:
Because there is quite a bit of information that we do need to have. For example, what would the personnel impact be with this system? Would you require more staffing to run this system? Those are decisions -- those are bits of information that we need in order to come to a decision as far as the cost. We have the consultants and we don't know what we're paying for those outside consultants, as Legislator Towle said, that's important information. But I think we also need to know will we require -- will we need to hire more staff in order to run this system, and at what level would the staff be? So what would that soft cost be in this system?

MR. DONNELLY:
The short answer on that is yes. The --

LEG. FISHER:
I forgot my question.

MR. DONNELLY:
There would be the addition of two staff members, programmer analysts. Whether there would be commensurate staff reductions going forward I don't know that at this point, but there is a requirement for two people to help bring that system on line and maintain it.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:
I think Budget Review wanted to jump in Legislator Fisher, if you wouldn't mind.

MR. POLLERT:
The proposed capital program that was just submitted by the County Executive on the 15th indicates that the total estimated cost is two point seven million dollars. So that's all the funding that he has provided with one point two five million dollars this year, and one point five million dollars next year. So clearly, if you wish to move ahead with the project and the project is going to cost five million dollars, the additional funds have to be provided by the Legislature either next year or the year after depending upon what your time frames are. But the --

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:
That brings a good question to light, Fred. We just heard before you got into the room that the plan was to bring this system on line completely by, you know, within the next two years, but obviously the County Executive's Capital Program doesn't reflect that.

MR. POLLERT:
That's correct.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:
Okay.

Tabled Resolutions

1192-01 - Appropriating Funds in connection with the purchase of an integrated human resources/payroll system (CP 1740). I'm going to make a motion to table 1192 for one more meeting cycle until we

obviously get these questions --

LEG. FISHER:
Second that.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:
-- resolved. Legislator Fisher second. Any further discussion on it? There being none, all those in favor? All those opposed? Any abstentions? 1192 is tabled (Vote: 3-0-0-1 - Not Present: Legislator Cooper).

Obviously if you guys can get that information together by the next meeting I think that's going to be important because obviously you're telling us one thing and the budget's reflecting another.

MR. DONNELLY:
We will put that stuff together.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:
That would be great, thank you.

MR. DONNELLY:
Thank you.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:
Any further speakers before the committee? There being none a motion by Legislator D'Andre to adjourn at eleven fifty-five. Seconded by myself. All those in favor? All those opposed? We stand adjourned.

(*The meeting was adjourned at 11:55 A.M.*)

Legislator Fred Towle, Chairman
Human Resources Committee