

WAYS AND MEANS
COMMITTEE
of the
SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE
Minutes

A regular meeting of the Ways and Means Committee of the Suffolk County Legislature was held in the Rose Y. Caracappa Legislative Auditorium of the William H. Rogers Legislature Building, Veterans Memorial Highway, Smithtown, New York, on Wednesday, April 24, 2014.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Legislator Steve Stern - Chairman
Legislator William Spencer - Vice-Chairman
Legislator Kate Browning
Legislator Rob Calarco
Legislator John Kennedy

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

DuWayne Gregory - Presiding Officer
Alicia Howard - Legislative Aide
Debbie Harris - Aide to Legislator Stern
Robert Lipp - Deputy Director - Budget Review Office
Tom Vaughn - County Executive's Office
Rick Brand - Newsday
All other interested parties

MINUTES TAKEN BY:

Kevin Gruebel - Court Reporter

MINUTES TRANSCRIBED BY:

Gabrielle Severs - Court Reporter

LEG. STERN:

Good afternoon, everyone. Welcome to the Committee on Ways and Means. I'm going to ask everybody to please rise and join us in the Pledge of Allegiance led by Legislator Kennedy.

(*Salutation*)

Please remain standing and join us in a moment of silence as we keep all of our brave men and women fighting for our freedoms overseas in our thoughts and prayers.

(*Moment of Silence Observed*)

LEG. STERN:

Good afternoon, everyone. Looking at the agenda, I do not have any correspondence before me. Do we have any cards?

MS. HOWARD:

No.

LEG. STERN:

We have no cards. We do not have any scheduled presentations, so we'll go to the agenda, and we'll do **Tabled Resolutions** first.

IR 1043, Adopting Local Law No. -2014, A Local Law to strengthen policy against dual public salaries (Cilmi). I'll make a motion to table for public hearing.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Second.

LEG. STERN:

Second by Legislator Kennedy. All in favor? Any opposed? Any abstention? IR 1043 is **tabled for public hearing. (VOTE: 6-0-0-0, Presiding Officer Gregory included in vote)**

That bring us to **Introductory Resolutions**. We do have representatives of the administration here today to speak on or to answer any questions on **IR 1295**, so I'm going to make a motion to take 1295 out of order.

LEG. CALARCO:

Second.

LEG. STERN:

Second by Legislator Calarco. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? 1295 is before us. I'll make a motion to approve so that we can have a conversation. Anyone else?

LEG. KENNEDY:

I'll second.

LEG. STERN:

Second by Legislator Kennedy. Anyone on the motion?

LEG. KENNEDY:

If I can, Mr. Chair --

LEG. STERN:
Legislator Kennedy.

LEG. KENNEDY:
-- in furtherance of the second. So the AREIS system is a system that's available now in which we all get the opportunity to go ahead and access land record information through the unique tax map identifier, and it gives us both the historical information associated with the property owner as well as the pertinent section, I believe, of the tax map. And so my only question, really, would be -- maybe BRO can tell us -- where will this capital project take us in furtherance of that system?

LEG. STERN:
Yeah. Why don't we have Mr. Bruss and Mr. Simonson --

MR. MUNCEY:
I think they'd receive better answers by Real Property Tax Service and the County Clerk.

LEG. STERN:
Sure. Welcome, gentlemen.

MR. SIMONSON:
Good afternoon. Here we go. What's coming down the pike relatively quickly, I think, is going to be electronic recording of deeds, mortgages, stats assignments. The Real Property Tax Service Agency gets involved with that because before it's recorded in the Clerk's Office, we check the legal description in the document to make sure it's accurate, to make sure the right piece of property is being transferred, to make sure the right piece of property is being mortgaged, to ensure that the right piece of property is being released from the mortgage; that's what we do. We need the map to do that and we need the map to be more functional so that it can work with the clerk's office in order to facilitate electronic filing. That's what this really is all about. It's coming down the pike; it's going to be paperless; it's going to be quicker, and it's just what's going to be happening, and we have to be in a position to do that, and that's why we're here.

LEG. KENNEDY:
Gary, so is it software and hardware, or is it just software modifications? What is it?

MR. SIMONSON:
It's software.

LEG. KENNEDY:
It's software?

MR. SIMONSON:
Yeah.

LEG. KENNEDY:
Okay. Proprietary or is it a piece that we're going to acquire and own?

MR. SIMONSON:
We're going to acquire it and own it, I do believe.

LEG. KENNEDY:
Okay. And then we're going to --

MR. SIMONSON:

I'm not really the techie. I mean, Peter --

LEG. KENNEDY:

I know that. And Peter, I know, knows some of the particulars. You're familiar with the software? You're comfortable with it, Peter?

MR. BRUSS:

Yeah, absolutely. Essentially, what you're doing is we're bringing a convergence of the county clerk's system closer to the real property system to unify and share the data.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Good.

MR. BRUSS:

And then this actual capital project will take it to the next step and allow us to expose the data that's underneath what they call this "GIS layer," and once we have the data, we can actually allow us to electronically verify instruments as opposed to a manual intervention, so basically this is going to bring us into a paperless electronic recording.

LEG. KENNEDY:

And in doing so, just for my colleagues who may or may not be aware, with verification that goes on through real property, it's basically condition proceed and to recording. Recording basically throws not only revenue for us from filing fees, but it also is the genesis for, in many cases, mortgage tax, transfer tax and serves as a revenue stream even for our towns, and the faster that we're able to perform that function, then the quicker we're able to go ahead and have those revenues remit either to us or down to the towns. So, in fact, this is when we're actually -- an investment our part really is going to be something that realizes a greater rate of return for us both in time and cumulatively in the volume of instruments that both offices are going to be able to process. Is that pretty much it?

MR. SIMONSON:

Yeah. Last year, verification fees from the real property tax service agency -- they went directly to the county -- was \$13,482,000.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Good. Okay. So with these upgrades and improvements, we should see an increase on that. Perfect. Thank you, gentlemen. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

LEG. STERN:

This is a resolution that calls for additional funding. The Capital Project 1758 had an appropriation of \$180,000. This is a request for an additional 100,000. Can you speak to the reason why the additional \$100,000 appropriation is so essential to the project?

MR. BRUSS:

The complexity of the upgrade and the integration of the two systems takes it to the next level. I believe prior to these discussions we've had with Real Property, me representing the county clerk, the system was kind of looked upon as an asylum. Now what we're looking at is a collaborative-type system where we're sharing data from both agencies so that we could be more efficient from that perspective. So it gets to be a little complex -- well, a lot more complex in the way that we integrate the systems, so there is going to be an additional impact as far as how that occurs.

LEG. STERN:

With the additional impact, the additional cost, does it give us additional capabilities?

MR. BRUSS:

Yes. Essentially, it will give us an integration of the two systems between the county clerk and the real property system. Right now, that's a manual process, if you will. Paper is walked, literally, upstairs, and paper is walked back downstairs. This will make an electronic seamless paperless type of environment.

LEG. STERN:

The additional ability for you to have that type of integration, I guess that was not contemplated at the time of the original appropriation when the capital project was originally put forward?

MR. BRUSS:

I can't speak --

MR. SIMONSON:

Probably not because electronic filing of documents is just something relatively new, I mean, because the county clerk's office requires original signatures, so there had to be state legislation which would allow for the electronic, if you will, paperwork to come in and be recorded because the clerk's office requires originals.

LEG. STERN:

Maybe it's difficult to say at this point, but do you contemplate any additional resources being needed on this capital project? Do you foresee any additional capabilities that are going to be developed as you go forward?

MR. BRUSS:

As I see it for the initiative set forth as far as the integrating the real property system with the county clerk system for electronic recording, I don't personally see any further costs.

LEG. STERN:

Maybe BRO can speak to the numbers and particularly to the offset that's been identified.

MR. MUNCEY:

Well, it was drafted by the executive branch, but basically there's an offset from upgrade payroll system database of \$100,000, and it's being used to, you know, advance real property integrated land information services, Capital Program 1758, but there should be gained efficiencies between the county clerk and the property tax service. Like they mentioned before, they manually have to process the paperwork, bring it upstairs, and sometimes it will sit there for a while, go through it. If there's an issue, then it'll go back and forth a couple of times and then finally make its way back down. This should eliminate a lot of that.

LEG. STERN:

Anybody else? Okay. 1295 is before us and we have a motion to approve and a second. I'll call the vote. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? IR 1295 is **approved (VOTE: 6-0-0-0, Presiding Officer Gregory included in vote)**. Thank you.

Mr. Vaughn.

MR. VAUGHN:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Since Mr. Simonson is here before you right now, I just wanted to make this committee aware that on Tuesday, we will be bringing forward two certificates of necessity that are being generated out of the real property office. They are for the refunding and grantback of some taxes for the Town of East Hampton. We would like to get them adopted on the 29th, so that way East Hampton has the information that they can send out on their second-half tax bills. I know that the readjustments typically go through here very, very quickly, but I just did want to make the committee aware of it and thought that now since

Mr. Simonson was in front of you would be a good time to do it.

MR. SIMONSON:

Do you have any questions?

LEG. STERN:

Nope. We're good.

MR. SIMONSON:

Thank you.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Take it easy.

Continuing with introductory resolutions, ***IR 1282, Imposing moratorium on the sale of the former Foley Facility (Schneiderman)***. Motion to approve by Legislator Browning.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Second.

LEG. STERN:

Second by Legislator Kennedy.

LEG. STERN:

No other motions?

LEG. CALARCO:

Nope.

LEG. STERN:

Where did Tom go? What's the status?

MR. VAUGHN:

I think that -- I know that we spent a lot of time discussing the fate and future of the Foley facility, but it is my understanding that in a desire to work with the both sides of the street that we are in support of this at this time to allow -- my understanding is that there are a couple of different committees that are taking a look at a couple of different potential uses for the building, and we will support this for the time being.

LEG. STERN:

Very good. Okay. We have a motion and a second. I'll call the vote. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? IR 1282 is **approved (VOTE: 6-0-0-0, Presiding Officer Gregory included in vote)**.

IR 1285, Sale of County-owned real estate pursuant to Local Law No. 13-1976 Linda L. Nichi (SCTM No. 0200-446.00-03.00-024.000 (County Executive)). I'll make the motion to approve.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Second.

LEG. SPENCER:

Second.

LEG. STERN:

Second by Legislator Spencer. Any questions? All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? IR

1285 is approved.

IR 1286, Sale of County-owned real estate pursuant to Section 72-h of the General Municipal Law Town of Brookhaven (SCTM No. 0200-389.00-06.00-036.002) (County Executive). This is to the Town of Brookhaven in Centereach, roadbed for highway purposes. I'll make the motion to approve.

LEG. SPENCER:

Second.

LEG. STERN:

Second by Legislator Spencer. All in favor? Any opposed? Any abstentions? IR 1286 is **approved (VOTE: 6-0-0-0, Presiding Officer Gregory included in vote).**

IR 1287, Authorizing the sale, pursuant to Local Law No. 16-1976, of real property acquired under Section 46 of the Suffolk County Tax Act Orlando Lopez (SCTM No. 0500-317.00-01.00-447.015 k/n/a all or part of 0500-317.00-01.00-093.002) (County Executive). Motion by Legislator Spencer, which is to approve and place on the consent calendar.

LEG. STERN:

I'll second. All in favor? Any opposed? Any abstentions? IR 1287 is **approved and placed on the consent calendar (VOTE: 6-0-0-0, Presiding Officer Gregory included in vote).**

IR 1288, Authorizing the sale, pursuant to Local Law No. 16-1976, of real property acquired under Section 46 of the Suffolk County Tax Act Steven Crawford (SCTM No. 0100-090.00-01.00-044.000) (County Executive). Same motion, same second, same vote. **Approved and placed on the consent calendar (VOTE: 6-0-0-0, Presiding Officer Gregory included in vote).**

LEG. SPENCER:

Yes.

IR 1289, Authorizing the sale, pursuant to Local Law No. 16-1976, of real property acquired under Section 46 of the Suffolk County Tax Act Elias Nunez (SCTM No. 0100-130.00-03.00-004.000) (County Executive). Same motion, same second, same vote. **Approved and placed on the consent calendar (VOTE: 6-0-0-0, Presiding Officer Gregory included in vote).**

IR 1290, Authorizing the sale, pursuant to Local Law No. 16-1976, of real property acquired under Section 46 of the Suffolk County Tax Act Marci A. Micciantuono (SCTM No. 0400-098.00-02.00-003.000). Same motion, same second, same vote. **Approved and placed on the consent calendar (VOTE: 6-0-0-0, Presiding Officer Gregory included in vote).**

IR 1291, Authorizing the sale, pursuant to Local Law No. 16-1976, of real property acquired under Section 46 of the Suffolk County Tax Act Margaret Dubitsky (SCTM No. 0209-033.00-02.00-075.000) (County Executive).

LEG. BROWNING:

Motion.

LEG. STERN:

Motion by Legislator Browning to approve and place on the consent calendar. I'll second. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? IR 1291 is **approved and placed on the consent calendar. (VOTE: 6-0-0-0, Presiding Officer Gregory included in vote).** Please list

Legislator Browning on 1291.

We have already done 1295. We do have some items before us in executive session, so I will make a motion to go to executive session. Second by Legislator Spencer. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? We will go to executive session.

(*The committee met in executive session from 12:50 p.m. to 1:54 p.m.*)

LEG. STERN:

Okay. We are back on the record after having gone to executive session. So the committee deliberated on a few different cases, and I will read them into the record.

The first is in regards to Aleena Jenkins, an infant by her mother and natural guardian Alisha Nieves, and Alisha Nieves, individually v. County of Suffolk, et.al. This was approved -- this was approved with a vote having been taken and Legislator Spencer voting in opposition.

The next is Daniel T. Ferrier v. County of Suffolk, et al. That was approved unanimously.

The next is in regard to Cordell Antrobus, an infant by his mother and natural guardian, Cortenna Antrobus, and Cortenna Antrobus, individually v. County of Suffolk, et.al. Vote taken was approved and unanimous.

And, lastly, in regard to Terrence Buckley v. County of Suffolk, was approved unanimously. Anybody else? There being no other business before the committee, we are adjourned. Thank you.

(*The committee was adjourned at 1:55 p.m.*)