

Ways & Means Committee Special Meeting Minutes

DATE & TIME: November 20, 2019 – 2:00
LOCATION: KL Binder Library, 6th Floor, County Office Building,
244 Fair Street, Kingston, NY
PRESIDING OFFICER: Lynn Archer, Chairwoman
LEGISLATIVE STAFF: Natalie Kelder & Amber Feaster
PRESENT: Legislators Richard Gerentine, David B. Donaldson, Joseph
Maloney, Laura Petit, and Kenneth Ronk, and Legislative
Chairwoman Tracey Bartels
ABSENT: Legislator Mary Beth Maio
QUORUM PRESENT: Yes
OTHER ATTENDEES: Legislators Manna Jo Greene, Kathy Nolan and Brian
Woltman; Deputy County Executives, Marc Rider, John
Milgrim; Ast. Deputy County Executive, Anna Markowitz;
Commissioner of Finance, Burt Gulnick; Director of
Innovation, Timothy Weidemann; Comptroller Elect, March
Gallagher; Deputy Comptroller, Evan Gallo; District
Attorney, Holley Carnright; Environment Coordinator,
Amanda LaValle; Director of Economic Development, Lisa
Berger; Awareness, Marie Shultis; Harambee, Tyrone
Wilson; Resident, Sarah Weule, Jessica McNabb, Ronnell
Tinsley, Monique Tinsley, Hiver Kahn, Violet Reid, George
Reid, Donna Flayhan

- **Chairwoman Archer called the meeting to order at 2:06 PM**

District Attorney, Holley Carnright spoke from 2:07 PM to 2:40 PM providing an explanation and justification for his request for raises for six (6) of his Assistant District Attorney's, answering any questions. Discussion pursued on how salaries for newly added Public Defender positions were determined.

Legislator Gerentine spoke from 2:41 PM to 2:56 PM explaining that he put in an amendment to reclassify funding for the Department of Environment for the purpose of requesting further information and explanation for the use of the additional funds. Deputy County Executive Marc Rider and Environment Coordinator Amanda LaValle informed Committee members that \$50,000 was added to the Department of Environment Professional Services with the intent of creating a "reserve fund" which will be added to when savings result from the implementation of energy efficient options and will be used when an energy efficient option is more expensive than the alternative. Discussion pursued on the concept of a "reserve fund" and what this means in this circumstance.

Legislator Gerentine spoke from 2:56 PM to 3:18 PM explaining his amendment to reclassify funding for the “Town Economic Development Match” until a detailed explanation is brought forth before the Legislature. Deputy County Executive Marc Rider responded that a detailed plan is not available at this time.

Legislator Gerentine spoke from 3:18 PM to 3:20 PM requesting verification for the large increase to pre-school anticipated spending in 2020. Deputy County Executive Marc Rider stated that they are expecting a deficit in the 2019 budget, anticipating December pre-school costs to be anywhere from \$3 to \$3.5 million. Legislator Gerentine requested confirmation of this information, agreeing to withdrawal the amendment upon receipt of proof.

Legislator Gerentine spoke from 3:20 PM to 3:23 PM requesting a detailed explanation for Professional Service expenditures within the new Innovation Division budgeted for 2020. Director of Innovation Tim Weidemann stated that \$5,000 will be utilized for training for all team members, \$5,000 will be used for data tools and software, and \$8,000 to \$10,000 will be utilized for outside services which are determined to be outside of the scope of the team’s skills or expertise.

Legislator Joseph Maloney spoke from 3:24 PM to 3:32 PM asking to have a discussion on the salary level for the Director and Deputy Director of the newly created Innovation Division, stating need in exercising a healthy amount of skepticism in the Department’s creation phase when the Department’s mission and personnel are being established, and providing arguments for comparability between the positions selected within the amendment. Deputy County Executive Marc Rider provided an argument for the salaries recommended in the 2020 County Executive Recommended budget. Discussion pursued on the purpose of the Innovation Division.

Legislator Joseph Maloney spoke from 3:32 PM to 3:36 PM providing an explanation for his proposed budget amendment to remove the Deputy County Executive position which has been vacant since February 2019. Deputy County Executive Marc Rider stated that the position will not be vacant for much longer and that the County Executive has a plan, arguing for the need of the position.

Legislator Greene spoke from 3:36 PM to 3:52 PM providing an explanation for the need for a Compliance-focused position within the Department of the Environment. Discussion pursued on the tasks which this individual would undertake, the salary for the position, and the origins of the need for such a position.

Legislator Gerentine spoke from 3:52 PM to 4:16 PM asking for an explanation for raises awarded to management, non-union employees in excess of 4%. Commissioner of Finance Burt Gulnick provided an explanation for raises given within the Public Defender Department. Deputy County Executive Marc Rider stated that the Assistant Deputy County Executive raise was awarded to provide comparability between the two Deputy County Executives. Discussion pursued on raises recommended for a County Clerk position and for positions within the County

Attorney's office. Committee members are reassured that the Compensation study started in the year is currently on hold but is not cancelled.

Legislator Ronk spoke from 4:16 PM to 4:26 PM providing an argument for raising the Director of Audit and Internal Control's salary to be equal to that of the Legislative Financial Analysts salaries. Deputy County Executive Marc Rider explained the County Executive Recommended salary. Comptroller-elect March Gallagher and Deputy Comptroller Evan Gallo thanked Legislator Ronk for his support but provided arguments for a higher salary than is offered by this amendment. Discussion pursued on compression issues within the Office of the Comptroller.

Legislator Ronk and Legislator Joseph Maloney spoke from 4:26 PM to 4:51 PM lead discussion on an amendment to reclassify additional funding for the Department of Economic Development and funding marked as being for the UCEDA contractual agreement into the Contingent Account for further legislative review. Legislator Ronk requesting a detailed explanation for the additional funding recommended for the Department. Director of Economic Development Lisa Berger provided a brief explanation, answered committee member questions, and agreed to follow up with a more detailed explanation. Discussion pursued on legislative oversight, the ability to move funds from contingency back to the department, and the timeline for use of the funds if placed in contingency.

Marie Shultis from Awareness, Inc. spoke from 4:52 PM to 5:09 PM to inform Committee members of the impact the program has on youth, sharing specific stories from the current year, answering any questions. Legislator Nolan expressed concern over the program and the reporting requirements of the contract.

Legislator Joseph Maloney spoke from 5:09 PM to 5:17 PM in favor of adding an additional position to the Clerk of the Legislature's department, providing reasons for this addition. Discussion pursued on the strength of the office's financial team, the need for another finance professional, and the timing of the funding.

Legislator Ronk spoke from 5:17 PM to 5:36 PM concerning the Chief Diversity Officer position, stating that the funding should be held in contingency until a Civil Service test is administered so that an appointment is not awarded prior to the completion of the required test. Deputy County Executive Marc Rider defended the immediate need for the position. Discussion pursued on emails received by Committee members and other legislators, the timing of the release of information to the County Executive, the public, and the Legislators.

Legislator Ronk spoke from 5:37 PM to 5:38 PM expressing concern that the creation of a PowerPoint presentation was outsourced for the budget speech's presentation, stating that digital media personnel should have the skills necessary to create such a presentation.

Legislator Ronk spoke from 5:38 PM to 5:41 PM regarding the Assistant Deputy County Executive's salary, noting the timing of this individual's raise and the prior inhabitant's

qualifications. Deputy County Executive Marc Rider retorted that the individual has a post-bachelor degree and duties have been redistributed. Legislator Ronk noted that this individual now has a higher salary than the Clerk of the Legislature.

Legislator Ronk spoke from 5:41 PM to 5:42 PM in favor of increasing the salaries of six (6) individuals within the District Attorney's office to make them comparable to salaries within the Public Defender's office.

Legislator Ronk spoke from 5:43 PM to 5:XX PM in support of giving management, non-union employees a 2% raise over the adopted 2019 rate, providing reasons for this suggestion. Discussion pursued on the technical aspects of this proposed amendment.

New Business: None

Old Business: None

Chairwoman Archer announced that the upcoming meeting of the Ways & Means Committee will be on November 25, 2019 at 3:00 PM. Legislator Ronk thanked County Executive staff and Legislative staff for their hard work. Chairwoman Archer asked the members if there was any other business, and hearing none;

Adjournment

Motion Made By: Legislator Ronk
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Gerentine
No. of Votes in Favor: 7
No. of Votes Against: 0

Time: 5:47 PM

Respectfully submitted: Amber Feaster
Minutes Approved: December 18, 2019