

## MINUTES

### GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

Approved 2/8/08

**JANUARY 11, 2008 2:00 P.M. COURTHOUSE CONFERENCE ROOM**

Present: G. Stevenson, Chair; P. Mackesey; M. Sigler; Kiefer

Excused: M. Hattery

Staff: C. Covert, Clerk of the Legislature; D. Squires, Finance Director; P. Younger, Deputy County Administrator; S. Whicher, County Administrator; K. Creenan, Finger Lakes Library System; J. Steiner, Tompkins County Public Library; J. Wood, County Attorney

#### **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m.

#### **Changes to Agenda**

The following items were added to the agenda:

- Liaison assignments
- Committee Goals (if time allows)

#### **Chair's Report**

Mr. Stevenson commented briefly on the printing error with the County's tax bills late last year and asked County Administrator Whicher to comment further.

Mr. Whicher reported the Solid Waste fee was raised by \$2 at the end of the 2008 budget process and unfortunately that information was not reported to the Assessment Department prior to the printing of the County's 2008 tax bills. The printing of the bills is handled by an outside vendor. However, the error was caught before any mailings occurred, but there was delay in the mailing due to the reprinting of the bills. The Towns of Groton and Dryden were the last two towns to receive their bills. The County is very appreciative of the support by the Town Clerks and Ms. Coggin will be writing a letter to the Town Supervisors thanking them.

#### **County Administrator's Report**

Mr. Whicher reported briefly on 55 Brown Road and referenced the article in the Ithaca Journal this morning. He requested Committee members when speaking about specific County projects to be sure to reference committees and not individuals.

He also reported that Congressman Hinchey will be in Ithaca on Monday and will be attending the ribbon cutting ceremony of the TCAT bus shelter on Seneca Street. Senator Schumer will be in Ithaca on Monday as well for a round table discussion in the afternoon. On Tuesday, Governor Spitzer will be at Cornell University for a casual conference with approximately eight people.

Mr. Whicher announced that just prior to this meeting, he received a call from the Governor's office stating there will be a reduction in the numbers of residents at the Lansing Residential Center.

Ms. Younger spoke in reference to the Committee's two goals from last year concerning the updating of the Administrative Policy Manual and the establishment of a process based on the Core Performance Framework and asked how the Committee would like to receive updates and reports this year from the two teams. Following a brief discussion, the Committee agreed to periodic reports as necessary and when substantial items are coming forward.

**Report from the County Attorney**

Mr. Wood was not present at this time, and upon his arrival, had no report.

**Report from the Finance Director**

Mr. Squires reported that although there was a delay in the mailing of the tax bills, it has been relatively quiet. However, there may be some issues raised later at the time bills are due relating to the 30-day period for payment and with the installment payments.

He also reported that December 28<sup>th</sup> was the last date for collecting Ithaca City School District taxes before their being turned over to the City for further processing. A few people came in late and tried to pay, but were told they could not and that they would have to wait for the City to come to the County and that a five percent charge would be added to the amount owed. A brief discussion followed regarding tax bills that are returned. Mr. Squires noted individuals are notified immediately when a bill is returned. In response to a question raised by Ms. Kiefer as to whether Mr. Squires has any discretion, Mr. Squires said that the postmark date is used if a payment is received late by mail.

**Report from the Public Information Officer**

Ms. Lynch was not present.

**Finance Department**

**Resolution – Participation in Various State Contracts**

It was MOVED by Ms. Mackesey, seconded by Mr. Sigler, to approve and submit the following resolution to the full Legislature for approval. Ms. Kiefer offered various suggestions that the Committee accepted as friendly and are reflected in the resolution below.

A voice vote resulted as follows on the resolution: Ayes – 4, Noes – 0, Excused – 1 (Hattery).  
RESOLUTION CARRIED.

**RESOLUTION NO. – AUTHORIZATION FOR 2008 TO PARTICIPATE IN VARIOUS NEW YORK STATE COUNTY CONTRACTS**

WHEREAS, as of July 18, 2007, New York State Legislature has amended Subdivision 3 of Section 103 of the General Municipal Law to allow counties to participate in another county's contract for materials, equipment, or supplies, or contract for services, and

WHEREAS, the Finance Department is recommending annual authorization and may determine throughout the 2008 fiscal year that it would be in the County's best interest to participate in another County's contract, and

WHEREAS, the Finance Department has the ability to analyze whether it is in the County's best interest to participate in another County's contract and recommend this authority for 2008, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Government Operations Committee, That Tompkins County is hereby authorized to exercise the option to participate in any other New York State County's bid for materials, equipment, or supplies, or contract services as authorized by General Municipal Law, Subdivision 3, Section 103,

RESOLVED, further, That the County Administrator, or his designee, be and hereby is authorized to execute required contract documents.

**SEQR ACTION: TYPE II-20**

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Resolution – Cash Management and Investment Policy

It was MOVED by Mr. Sigler, seconded by Ms. Kiefer, to approve and submit the following resolution to the full Legislature for approval. At this time Mr. Squires reviewed the changes in the policy from last year. The Committee asked that in the future any changes made be highlighted. Mr. Squires noted that the County can only do business with State and National banks, not savings banks. Mr. Squires stated in response to a concern by Mr. Sigler that most of the County's money is deposited locally.

A brief discussion followed concerning whether it was appropriate to include this policy with the policies in the Administrative Manual. It was noted that this policy must annually be reviewed and approved by the Legislature.

A voice vote resulted as follows on the resolution: Ayes – 4, Noes – 0, Excused – 1 (Hattery).  
RESOLUTION CARRIED.

**RESOLUTION NO. - ADOPTION OF CASH MANAGEMENT AND INVESTMENT POLICY**

WHEREAS, Article 2 -Section 10 of the General Municipal Law requires each local government to authorize depositories for public funds, and

WHEREAS, Article 2 -Section 11 of the General Municipal Law requires each local government to authorize Permitted Investments for public funds not required for immediate expenditure, and

WHEREAS, Article 3 -Section 39 of the General Municipal Law requires each local government to adopt a comprehensive investment policy which details the local government's operative policy and instructions to officers and staff regarding the investment of public funds, and that the Investment Policy shall be annually reviewed by the local government, and

WHEREAS, the Government Operations Committee considered the 2007 policy and minimal changes are being recommended to it for the 2008 policy, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Government Operations Committee, That the Cash Management and Investment Policy dated January 2008, is hereby adopted.

**SEQR ACTION:** TYPE II-20

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Resolution – Lansing Community Library

It was MOVED by Mr. Sigler, seconded by Ms. Mackesey, to approve and submit the following resolution to the Budget and Capital Committee for approval. Mr. Sigler believes this request is justified as it is a rural library and they should receive this funding.

Ms. Kiefer said it is her understanding that there are still people in Lansing challenging this and that the County should not consider this issue until the Lansing Library receives its Charter. She would recommend giving the Lansing Library the \$1,000 one-time funding approved in the budget process for the Lansing Reading Center and then consider this library in the pool for next year. She believes the contingent fund is for emergency purposes and does not consider this request an emergency.

Ms. Mackesey said she would support this request if language was included that this is contingent on Lansing's approval as a library before the money is dispersed and that it is also prorated.



alternate member be determined by resolution at a later date as it was included without any discussion. She believes these appointments to this Council should be reviewed and discussed prior to submission.

Ms. Kiefer suggested appointing Ms. Robertson as the voting member for a six-month period and Mr. Koplinka-Loehr as the alternate and then the two could switch seats once the new Chair has become familiar with the Council's activities. Following a brief discussion, it was MOVED by Ms. Kiefer to appoint Ms. Robertson as the voting member for a six-month period and Mr. Koplinka-Loehr as the alternate and then the two Legislators would switch seats. MOTION FAILED FOR LACK OF A SECOND.

At this time, Ms. Mackesey withdrew her motion to approve and submit the resolution. RESOLUTION WITHDRAWN.

**RESOLUTION NO. - APPROVAL OF APPOINTMENT TO THE TOMPKINS COUNTY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS (TCCOG)**

WHEREAS, the Tompkins County Council of Governments is an association of local governments organized to provide a forum of discussion, study, and negotiation leading to agreements for a more efficient, improved, and/or less costly delivery of government services, and

WHEREAS, Tompkins County desires to change its appointed member of the Tompkins County Council of Governments, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Government Operations Committee, That Michael Koplinka-Loehr be appointed as the voting member and Martha Robertson as the alternate member.

**SEQR ACTION:** TYPE II-20

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**Resolution – 2008 Succession of Members of the Legislature**

It was MOVED by Ms. Mackesey, seconded by Mr. Sigler, to approve and submit the following resolution to the full Legislature for approval. Ms. Mackesey said she supports continuing to rotate the succession annually. Ms. Kiefer does not see the need to list all the committees and believes individuals should be listed taking into consideration availability and expertise. Following a brief discussion the Committee accepted as friendly the following language added to the second Whereas: "...taking into consideration availability and Legislative experience,". The Committee also agreed to the following succession order:

- Planning, Development, and Environmental Quality Committee
- Health and Human Services Committee
- Public Safety Committee

A voice vote resulted as follows on the resolution as revised: Ayes – 4, Noes – 0, Excused – 1 (Hattery). RESOLUTION CARRIED.

**RESOLUTION NO. - APPROVAL OF 2008 SUCCESSION OF MEMBERS OF THE COUNTY LEGISLATURE TO SERVE IN THE ABSENCE OF THE CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR**

WHEREAS, Section 2.05 of the County Charter, specifies the succession of members of the Legislature be designated annually by resolution to serve in the absence of the Chair and Vice Chair, and

WHEREAS, the Government Operations Committee recommends the chairs of standing committees be designated taking into consideration availability and Legislative experience, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Government Operations Committee, That the following order of succession of County Legislators for the year 2008 be approved to serve in the absence of the Chair and Vice Chair:

Chair, Planning, Development and Environmental Quality Committee

Chair, Health and Human Services Committee

Chair, Public Safety Committee

**SEQR ACTION:** TYPE II-20

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**Liaisons Assignments**

The Committee agreed to keep the same liaison assignments as 2007:

The History Center – Pam Mackesey

Public Information Advisory Board – Greg Stevenson

Library Board of Trustees – Mike Sigler, Dooley Kiefer (alternate)

**Review of 2007 Committee Goals**

At this time, the Committee reviewed the 2007 goals and highlighted the progress as follows:

**Goal 1:** With direct support from the County’s Director of Information Technology Services, oversee and give guidance to updates to the County’s Communication policy. Although focused on the usage of the County’s electronic mail (e-mail) system, i.e., Section 01-18 of the *County Administrative Policy Manual*, these updates will also address changes in communication technology which affect County operations overall. The updates and implementation steps should be completed by September 10, 2007.

- Completed

**Goal 2:** Administer the development of a plan, including guidelines and process, for routine review and/or updates to the *County Administrative Policy Manual*. The plan should be in place by the end of the 2007 calendar year and should provide a suggested timeline for improving Manual currency by 50% by the end of 2009.

- Ongoing

**Goal 3:** In concert with the Budget and Capital Committee, establish a process, based on the County’s Core Performance Framework, that enables Legislators/Standing Committees to have ongoing knowledge about and a common understanding of County Department operations, accomplishments, challenges, and/or needs. At a minimum, the process will provide Legislators/Standing Committees with continuing data about a department’s programming, staffing levels, and spending rates based on its current operating budget. Look to pilot the process by July 2007.

- Part of Goal 2; not necessary to have as a separate goal.

**Goal 4:** Conduct a review of the County Legislature’s Appointment Policy, which is documented in the *Rules of The Tompkins County Legislature*, to identify inconsistencies and outdated procedures. Also look to ensure that the information contained in the *Rules of The Tompkins County Legislature* regarding the Appointment Policy is congruent with other documented practices related to this policy, such as those referenced in Section 01-26 of the *County Administrative Policy Manual*; any bylaws

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adopted by the various County-affiliated boards, commissions, and committees; and the appointment process guidelines currently used by the Clerk of the Legislature staff.

- Ongoing – Committee agreed to be kept informed.

*The Committee also agreed to review the goals and discuss at the next Committee meeting.*

### **Other Business**

Ms. Kiefer briefly reported on a new bill in Congress concerning paper ballots and audits of Elections and felt the Committee may want to weigh in when the bill is introduced. Mr. Stevenson commented that the Election Commissioners will be at the next Committee meeting and that this issue could possibly be discussed at that time.

### **Approval of Minutes**

It was MOVED by Ms. Mackesey, seconded by Mr. Sigler, and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members present, to approve the minutes of the December 14, 2007, meeting as corrected. MINUTES APPROVED.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.