

## MINUTES

### GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

Approved 12/12/08

NOVEMBER 14, 2008 2:00 P.M. SCOTT HEYMAN CONFERENCE ROOM

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

Excused: M. Hattery

Staff: C. Covert, Clerk of the Legislature; P. Younger, Deputy County Administrator; J. Wood, County Attorney; V. Coggin, Assessment Director; J. Franklin, Assessment Department; D. Squires, Finance Director; J. Mareane, County Administrator; M. Lynch, Public Information Officer; A. Fitzpatrick, Personnel Commissioner; A. Valenti, County Clerk; B. Crosby, Public Health Administrator

Guests: T. Ashmore, Ithaca Journal Reporter

#### **Call to Order**

Vice Chair Kiefer called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

#### **Changes to Agenda**

There were no changes to the agenda. In response to a question concerning the Dedication of Bench item discussed at the last meeting, Mrs. Covert said the information was sent to Facilities Manager, Arel LeMaro, for follow up. *This item will be placed on the next Committee meeting agenda for a report back.*

#### **Report from the Committee Chair**

Ms. Kiefer asked Ms. Younger to provide an update on the Core Performance Subcommittee initiative. Ms. Younger said this topic was on the last Department Head agenda. In addressing concerns raised there is a need to make clear that the philosophy behind core performance is not "brand new" and that departments are already doing these efforts on their own and to acknowledge departments and staff need a little more time to understand the framework. Ms. Younger and Mr. Mareane have agreed to go out and talk to Departments and/or cabinets and give opportunities to discuss this initiative one on one and address any questions.

Mrs. Covert said she spoke briefly with Mr. Hattery prior to this meeting and he said he hoped to have a revised resolution for Committee members to consider at the next meeting. Ms. Kiefer made reference to the resolution presented at the last Committee meeting and reiterated her interest in having the Committee consider a resolution with her recommended changes. At this time she again reviewed the recommendations she would be proposing.

*Ms. Kiefer upon request said she would be willing to have her proposed recommendations sent to Committee members for review and give the Committee Chair the opportunity to decide if it should be included with the next Committee agenda packet.*

Ms. Younger commented that the Core Performance Subcommittee has not met and believes it has concluded its work and is now waiting for next steps.

#### **Report from the County Administrator**

Ms. Younger said Mr. Mareane will be arriving later in the meeting as he is on a conference call at this time. She said he is doing fine and enjoying his time with the County.

#### **Report from County Attorney**

Mr. Wood said he did not have a report.

**Report from the Finance Director**

Mr. Squires was not present at this time.

**Report from the Public Information Officer**

Ms. Lynch was not present at this time.

**Assessment Department**

**Resolutions**

It was MOVED by Mr. Sigler, seconded by Ms. Mackesey, and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members present, to approve and submit the following resolution to the full Legislature for approval. In response to a question from Mr. Sigler, Ms. Coggin said one employee has been out for six months and the other for four months.

**RESOLUTION NO. - APPROPRIATION FROM CONTINGENT FUND - REPLACEMENT PAY – DEPARTMENT OF ASSESSMENT**

WHEREAS, the Department of Assessment has had two employees out on disability for greater than two months, and

WHEREAS, the Fiscal Policy of Tompkins County allows for replacement pay from the Contingent Fund to the Department, not including the first two months of absence, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Government Operations and the Budget and Capital Committees, That the Director of Finance is hereby authorized to make the following adjustment to his books for 2008:

FROM:	A1990.54400	Contingent Fund	\$20,332
TO:	A1355.51000577	Asst Real Property Appraiser	\$20,332

**SEQR ACTION:** TYPE II-20

\* \* \* \* \*

It was MOVED by Ms. Mackesey, seconded by Mr. Stevenson, to approve and submit the following resolution to the full Legislature for approval. Mr. Sigler asked if the power plant in the Town of Lansing was included; Mr. Franklin said it is because the IDA pilot agreement with the power plant does not go into effect until 2009. Following a brief discussion, Ms. Kiefer said she believes the former County Administrator Steve Whicher notified the appropriate Town of Lansing officials about this action. A voice vote resulted as follows on the resolution: Ayes – 4; Noes – 0; Excused – 1 (Hattery).  
**RESOLUTION CARRIED.**

**RESOLUTION NO. - ESTABLISHING COUNTY EQUALIZATION RATES**

WHEREAS, pursuant to Article III, Section 4.05, Subdivision (d) of the Tompkins County Charter and Code, the Director of Assessment has submitted and recommended the adoption of equalization rates for all towns in Tompkins County and the City of Ithaca for the assessment rolls filed in 2008, and for the apportionment of County taxes levied in 2009, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Government Operations Committee, That the following equalization rates be and hereby are adopted:

<u>TOWN</u>	AGGREGATE ASSESSED	COUNTY	AGGREGATE FULL
	VALUATION OF TAXABLE REAL PROPERTY FOR <u>COUNTY PURPOSES</u>	EQUALIZATION <u>RATE</u>	VALUATION OF TAXABLE REAL PROPERTY FOR <u>COUNTY PURPOSES</u>
Town of Caroline	184,066,216	100	184,066,216
Town of Danby	233,386,313	100	233,386,313
Town of Dryden	830,250,420	100	830,250,420
Town of Enfield	156,593,968	100	156,593,968
Town of Groton	240,027,489	100	240,027,489
Town of Ithaca	1,239,185,093	100	1,239,185,093
Town of Lansing	1,188,603,046	100	1,188,603,046
Town of Newfield	234,428,753	100	234,428,753
Town of Ulysses	419,667,981	100	419,667,981
City of Ithaca	1,429,317,916	100	1,429,317,916
<u>TOTALS</u>	6,155,527,192		6,155,527,192

**SEQR ACTION:** TYPE II-20

\* \* \* \* \*

It was MOVED by Mr. Sigler, seconded by Ms. Mackesey, and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members present, to approve and submit the following resolution to the full Legislature for approval:

**RESOLUTION NO. - ADOPTION OF REGULAR AND SUPPLEMENTAL REPORTS OF TOTALS (FOOTINGS) OF ASSESSMENT ROLLS**

WHEREAS, Tompkins County desires to maintain an official record of the 2008 Final Assessment Roll, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Government Operations Committee, That the regular and supplemental report of the totals (footings) of assessment rolls be accepted and the figures therein be used as a basis for the taxation in the several tax districts of the County for the year 2009 based upon the July 1, 2008 County of Tompkins Final Assessment Roll.

**SEQR ACTION:** TYPE II-20

\* \* \* \* \*

It was MOVED by Mr. Sigler, seconded by Mr. Stevenson, and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members present, to approve and submit the following resolution to the full Legislature for approval. In response to Ms. Kiefer's question, Mr. Squires stated the State sets the 12% rate referenced in the resolution.

**RESOLUTION NO. - RETURNED SCHOOL TAXES**

WHEREAS Article 13 of the Real Property Tax Law authorizes school district tax collectors to submit by November 15<sup>th</sup> a listing of unpaid taxes to the County Treasurer for enforcement, and

WHEREAS the County guarantees the school districts payment of the unpaid taxes by April 1 of the year following the return, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Government Operations Committee, That the Director of Assessment of the County be and hereby is authorized and directed to add to the respective 2009 tax rolls the amount of the uncollected school taxes that remain unpaid and that have not been heretofore relieved on town tax rolls and that have been returned by the collectors of the various districts, exclusive of the Ithaca City School District, to the County Finance Director, and that said returned school taxes be reassessed and relieved on town tax rolls as they are returned, and that said school taxes returned in 2007

be reassessed and relieved upon the lots and parcels so returned with 12.0 percent annual interest in addition thereto.

**SEQR ACTION:** TYPE II-20

\* \* \* \* \*

It was MOVED by Ms. Mackesey, seconded by Mr. Stevenson, and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members present, to approve and submit the following resolution to the full Legislature for approval:

**RESOLUTION NO. - RETURNED VILLAGE TAXES**

WHEREAS Article 14 of the Real Property Tax Law authorizes village tax collectors to return to the County Treasurer a listing of unpaid taxes for enforcement, and

WHEREAS the Villages of Cayuga Heights, Dryden, Freeville, Groton, Lansing, and Trumansburg are authorized to submit their unpaid taxes to the County for enforcement, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Government Operations Committee, That the Director of Assessment of the County be and hereby is authorized and directed to add to the respective 2009 tax rolls the amount of the uncollected village taxes that remain unpaid and that have not been heretofore relieved on town tax rolls and that have been returned by the village tax collectors of the various villages to the County Finance Director, and that said returned village taxes be reassessed and relieved on town tax rolls as they are returned, and that said returned village taxes be reassessed and relieved upon the lots and parcels so returned with 12.0 percent annual interest in addition thereto.

**SEQR ACTION:** TYPE II-20

\* \* \* \* \*

It was MOVED by Ms. Mackesey, seconded by Mr. Sigler, and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members present, to approve and submit the following resolution to the full Legislature for approval:

**RESOLUTION NO. - ADOPTION OF APPORTIONMENT OF TAXES FOR 2009**

WHEREAS, the report of equalization rates and totals (footings) of assessment rolls has been prepared and approved by the Assessment Director, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Government Operations Committee, That the report of the Director of Assessment be accepted and adopted, and the valuation of real property and franchise be based on the 2008 final assessed values for the purposes of general tax levied against the several tax districts of the County and that the values determined therein be set forth as the basis for such general and highway tax levies for the year 2009,

RESOLVED, further, That the several amounts therein listed for State tax and County tax for general County purposes for 2009 be assessed against, levied upon, and collected from taxable property of the several towns and City liable therefore.

**SEQR ACTION:** TYPE II-20

\* \* \* \* \*

New Maximum Income Limits for Senior/Disability Exemption

Mr. Franklin said this is the third year that the topic to increase the exemptions has come to the Committee for consideration. He explained New York State in 2006 adopted a scale to increase the maximum limits for senior and disability exemptions for the years 2007, 2008, and 2009. The County for the last two years adopted the maximum limit allowed. The limit for 2008 was increased from \$34,400 to

Minutes  
Government Operations Committee  
November 14, 2008

\$35,400 with an allowance of an additional \$1,000 increase for the 2009 Assessment Roll year. Mr. Franklin described the impact of the \$1,000 increase if adopted as follows:

If raised by \$1,000, the extra taxable value exempted is \$11,854,891.

If the County were to decide to adopt a higher income limit, applying the 2009 County Administrator Recommended County Tax Rate of \$5.92 to the loss in tax base, ~\$70,181 in county tax dollars would be shifted to the remaining tax base.

It was MOVED by Ms. Mackesey, seconded by Mr. Stevenson, to approve an increase to \$36,400 the maximum income limit allowed by the State for the senior and disability exemptions.

Mr. Franklin noted that each town, village, county, and the school districts often set different limits and said this increase would only be applicable to the County tax roll. For example, in the Village of Freeville the maximum limit is \$7,200. *He provided a copy of the senior/disability income scales by municipality, which Mrs. Covert agreed to distribute to Committee members following the meeting.*

Ms. Mackesey offered this motion as she believes these are some hard times for people and that this will help.

Ms. Coggin also spoke about the STAR exemption and believes there will be some changes to that as well as the enhanced STAR exemption.

A voice vote resulted as follows: Ayes – 3, Noes – 1 (Kiefer), Excused – 1 (Hattery). **MOTION CARRIED.** *Mr. Franklin agreed to prepare a resolution and send it to Mrs. Covert for consideration by the Legislature.*

#### Overview of Exemptions

Ms. Coggin spoke briefly about the information provided during the Expanded Budget Committee meetings concerning exemptions and informed the Committee that the New York State Legislature added a section to the Real Property Tax Law allowing counties to disclose exemptions on the assessment roll. It is done for transparency purposes; however no taxpayers come in to research it. There are two major exemption categories: mandatory and permissive. Mandatory categories have to be administered. There are some with time limits or certain amounts attached to them and local jurisdictions do not have the opportunity to change it. Permissive is limited to five groups of property classes: Nonprofit organizations, Living Quarters for Parents and Grandparents, Historic Properties, Low and Moderate Income Housing, and Improvement to Property ADA. The Veterans exemption is not included in the calculation she presented in the information provided to the Legislature during the Expanded Budget Committee meetings. Although it is an option, it would be a different story and unpopular to opt out.

Ms. Mackesey commented on information she has gathered on the history of exemptions and would like to share it with the Assessment Department.

#### **Report from County Administrator**

Mr. Mareane provided a brief update on the Governor's budget proposal. It appears the Governor responded to the request of counties to avoid shifting the burden of the State Budget to county budgets by withdrawing it from mandated programs. He said it looks like there are a couple of areas effected including a proposed reduction in the cost-of-living adjustment for human service agencies; he is still assessing this information. The second area is a significant effect on full-time equivalent aid for TC3. He

Minutes  
Government Operations Committee  
November 14, 2008

has not yet received a report as requested from the college but it appears it could be in the range of 10%. The other proposed changes seem to be modest.

### **Report from the Finance Department**

Mr. Squires distributed and briefly reviewed the report of properties in foreclosure including residential, commercial, and vacant land. There are substantially more properties at this time than in the past particularly in residential. A list of properties with delinquent taxes will be printed in the Ithaca Journal tomorrow.

Ms. Kiefer reminded Mr. Squires that Legislators at some point like to be notified of properties in foreclosure so that they are able to make any necessary constituent contacts. Mr. Squires said he will be sharing this report with the Legislature.

Mr. Squires said that he and appropriate staff visit properties in March and that the final date of payment is January 9<sup>th</sup>.

### **Legislature**

#### Transfer

*Ms. Kiefer asked about the total cost for the County Administrator's Search; Mrs. Covert said she would provide the information.*

### **Report from the Public Information Officer**

Ms. Lynch did not have a report.

### **County Clerk/Personnel Department**

#### Resolution

It was MOVED by Ms. Mackesey, seconded by Mr. Stevenson, to approve and submit the following resolution to the full Legislature for approval. Ms. Fitzpatrick provided a brief explanation of the history of the two programs: Central Services and Records Management.

Following a brief discussion about staffing and office space, a voice vote resulted as follows: Ayes – 4, Noes – 0, Excused – 1 (Hattery). RESOLUTION CARRIED.

### **RESOLUTION NO.            - AUTHORIZATION FOR PROGRAM RECONFIGURATION – RECORDS AND CENTRAL SERVICES**

WHEREAS, the Records Management budget and program oversight was transferred from County Administration to the Personnel Department in 2003, and

WHEREAS, Article 18, Chapter 18.03 of the Tompkins County Charter places the responsibility over Records Management with the County Clerk, and

WHEREAS, it is anticipated that the Legislature, through the 20-year Capital Budget, will establish a multi-jurisdictional records center, and

WHEREAS, it is appropriate current electronic data-management system efforts in the County Clerk's Office be fully integrated in planning of the records center, and

WHEREAS, the Central Services Division is a program within the Personnel Department and works in conjunction with the Records Management Program, and

WHEREAS, greater efficiencies have resulted by coordinating these work efforts, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Human Resources, the Government Operations and the Budget and Capital Committees, That effective January 1, 2009, the Records Management Program and Central Services Division shall be transferred from County Personnel to the County Clerk's Office, and

RESOLVED, further, That the Tompkins County Personnel Department's fiscal target shall be reduced by \$56,046 (\$20,353 for Records Management and \$35,693 for Central Services) with a commensurate increase in the County Clerk's Fiscal Target.

**SEQR ACTION:** TYPE II-20

\* \* \* \* \*

### **Health Department**

#### **Disposal of Surplus Equipment**

Ms. Crosby said she is presenting the proposal to work outside of policy 01-21 - Disposal of Surplus Equipment to the Committee as an informational item and that the Fleet Team will be looking at this policy and likely recommending amendments. The Department purchased five Ford Focus vehicles to replace five 2005 Jeeps and is in the process of posting them for auction. However, current policy indicates surplus equipment is to be made available for reuse within the County prior to making items available for auction, sale, donation, recycling, or disposal. The revenue from the sale of the Jeeps is part of the funding needed for their replacement with more fuel-efficient, lower emitting vehicles in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Ms. Crosby noted that the Jeeps are in need of routine replacement of brakes and that the cost of fuel is significant. It is being recommended in consultation with Ed Marx, Planning and Public Works Commissioner, that auctioning the Jeeps is the best alternative for removing them from the County's fleet. She noted that this process will be addressed in the fleet policy as well as amendments proposed in Policy 01-21. She commented that this same process would be done in January or February 2009.

Following further discussion and a brief explanation of tracking costs of fuel within the Health Department, Ms. Kiefer asked if it was the consensus of the Committee to endorse the direction outlined above.

Mr. Stevenson said he would agree, but is unaware of the day-to-day needs of other departments with respect to vehicles and if another department could have a use for them. Ms. Mackesey understands Mr. Stevenson's concern and stated that she supports the concept in general, but does not want to be exclusionary if another department has a real need for a four-wheel drive vehicle. Mr. Stevenson said he would agree with this direction but does not want to withhold one from some department that needed it.

Ms. Crosby spoke about the revenue line the Department has in their budget from the sale of the Jeeps and if not received, the Department will have a shortfall.

### **County Administration**

#### **Resolution**

It was MOVED by Ms. Mackesey, seconded by Mr. Sigler, and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members present, to approve and submit the following resolution to the full Legislature for approval:

**RESOLUTION NO.                    – APPROPRIATION FROM CONTINGENT FUND – TERMINAL-  
PAY – REIMBURSEMENT - TOMPKINS COUNTY  
ADMINISTRATION**

WHEREAS, the Tompkins County Administration's Administrator retired effective March 26, 2008, and

WHEREAS, the Fiscal Policy of Tompkins County allows for terminal-pay reimbursement to the Department from the Contingent Fund, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Government Operations and the Budget and Capital Committees, That the Director of Finance is hereby authorized and directed to make the following budget appropriation:

FROM: A1990.54440	Contingent Fund	\$34,985.57
TO: A1230.51000253	Administrator	\$34,985.57

Note: Vacation	474.5 hours	\$25,519.84
Compensatory	120 hours	6,453.91
Personal	48 hours	2,581.56
Holiday	8 hours	430.26

**SEQR ACTION:** TYPE II-20

\* \* \* \* \*

### Appointments

#### Public Information Advisory Board

It was MOVED by Ms. Mackesey, seconded by Ms. Kiefer, and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members present, to approve and submit the following appointments to the Public Information Advisory Board to the full Legislature for approval:

Geoff Dunn – term expires December 31, 2010  
CJ DelVecchio (Croft) – term expires December 31, 2010

#### Library Board of Trustees

It was MOVED by Mr. Sigler, seconded by Ms. Kiefer, and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members present, to approve and submit the following appointments to the Library Board of Trustees to the full Legislature for approval:

David Weil – term expires December 31, 2011  
Marcy E. Rosenkrantz – term expires December 31, 2011

### County Attorney

#### Resolution

It was MOVED by Ms. Mackesey, seconded by Mr. Sigler, to approve and submit the following resolution to the full Legislature for approval. Mr. Wood explained the resolution and said it extends the lease agreement for another year as the current lease expires at the end of the year. In the past he has discussed and asked that consideration be given to sell this County-owned parcel. The company does indemnify and defend the County for any accidents or other incidents that may occur. He hopes that in the future the County will reconsider selling the parcel. Ms. Kiefer suggested that an alternative could be approving a five-year lease rather than extending the lease year after year.

It was MOVED by Ms. Mackesey, seconded by Mr. Sigler, to change the lease agreement to a five-year agreement. Mr. Stevenson said he does not support a five-year lease as he supports selling the parcel and would like that proposal considered in the next year. Mr. Sigler agreed with Mr. Stevenson.

A voice vote resulted as follows on the amendment: Ayes – 2 (Kiefer and Mackesey); Noes – 2 (Sigler and Stevenson); Excused – 1 (Hattery). AMENDMENT FAILED.

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

**RESOLUTION NO. – AUTHORIZING THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR TO ENTER INTO A LEASE FOR PROPERTY LOCATED ON ELMIRA ROAD IN ITHACA**

WHEREAS, Will-Ridge Associates, LLC (a company associated with Benderson Development Corporation) has constructed a retail commercial development on Elmira Road in the City of Ithaca including a road providing access to the development and a sign for advertising purposes, on an irregularly shaped .25 acre parcel, which parcel is owned by Tompkins County and located in a heavily developed urban corridor, and

WHEREAS, it has been determined that the property is no longer needed for a public use, and

WHEREAS, the City of Ithaca has advised that the city has no interest in purchasing the property or in delaying a sale of said property, and

WHEREAS, the County and Will-Ridge executed a lease Agreement commencing January 1, 2008, for a period of one year, and

WHEREAS, the County desires fair compensation for the use of its property, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Government Operations Committee, That the County Administrator is authorized to enter into an agreement to extend the lease for up to one year.

**SEQR ACTION:** TYPE II-26

\* \* \* \* \*

**Legislature**

**Resolutions**

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 asked if the Committee wished to consider having the organizational meeting on January 1<sup>st</sup>. Committee members opposed with the suggestion and a voice vote resulted as follows on the resolution: Ayes – 4, Noes – 0, Excused – 1 (Hattery). RESOLUTION CARRIED.

**RESOLUTION NO. - DATE OF ORGANIZATION MEETING**

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Government Operations Committee, That in accordance with Section 151 of County Law, the organization meeting of the Tompkins County Legislature shall be held in the Legislative Chambers of the Tompkins County Courthouse, Ithaca, New York on Tuesday, January 6, 2009, at 5:30 o'clock in the evening thereof.

**SEQR ACTION:** TYPE II-20

\* \* \* \* \*

It was MOVED by Mr. Sigler, seconded by Mr. Stevenson, to approve and submit the following resolution to the full Legislature for approval. Ms. Kiefer expressed her desire to only have one scheduled Legislature meeting in the month of August since recent experience has shown the agendas to be very light then. Committee members believed this was a discussion that should occur at the Legislature meeting when the resolution is being considered. Mrs. Covert commented that this resolution will be on the agenda of the Organizational meeting in January.

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

**RESOLUTION NO. - ESTABLISHING 2009 MEETING DATES**

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Government Operations Committee, That the 2009 regular meetings of the Tompkins County Legislature are as follows:

Tuesday,	January 6,	2009 at 5:30 p.m.
Tuesday,	January 20,	2009 at 5:30 p.m.
Tuesday,	February 3,	2009 at 5:30 p.m.
Tuesday,	February 17,	2009 at 5:30 p.m.
Tuesday,	March 3,	2009 at 5:30 p.m.
Tuesday,	March 17,	2009 at 5:30 p.m.
Tuesday,	April 7,	2009 at 5:30 p.m.
Tuesday,	April 21,	2009 at 5:30 p.m.
Tuesday,	May 5,	2009 at 5:30 p.m.
Tuesday,	May 19,	2009 at 5:30 p.m.
Tuesday,	June 2,	2009 at 5:30 p.m.
Tuesday,	June 21,	2009 at 5:30 p.m.
Tuesday,	July 7,	2009 at 5:30 p.m.
Tuesday,	July 21,	2009 at 5:30 p.m.
Tuesday,	August 4,	2009 at 5:30 p.m.
Tuesday,	August 18,	2009 at 5:30 p.m.
Tuesday,	September 1,	2009 at 5:30 p.m.
Tuesday,	September 15,	2009 at 5:30 p.m.
Tuesday,	October 6,	2009 at 5:30 p.m.
Tuesday,	October 20,	2009 at 5:30 p.m.
Wednesday,	November 4,	2009 at 5:30 p.m. (Tuesday, November 3 - Election Day)
Tuesday,	November 17,	2009 at 5:30 p.m.
Tuesday,	December 1,	2009 at 5:30 p.m.
Tuesday,	December 15,	2009 at 5:30 p.m.

**SEQR ACTION:** TYPE II-20

\* \* \* \* \*

Establishing Salaries

It was MOVED by Ms. Mackesey, seconded by Ms. Kiefer, to approve and submit the following resolution to the full Legislature for approval. Ms. Kiefer briefly reported on the additional information she requested prior to this meeting. Based on the information from the New York State Webinar, the number of hours elected officials need to work to get fulltime retirement credit is 30 hours per week. She suggested adding the following Whereas: “Whereas, New York State now requires a minimum of 30 hours per week to be worked by elected officials in order to qualify for fulltime New York State retirement credit, and”.

In addition, Ms. Kiefer asked what the most recent current living wage is for Tompkins County for a single wage earner with health benefits provided and based on information dated April 2007, the annual salary is \$20,450 for a single full-time (40 hour per week) wage earner with health benefits.

The third item she requested information about is whether there was language somewhere that reflected the reasons the Legislature started increasing salaries for Legislators to broaden the pool of potential Legislators by making the salary close to a half-time job, allowing people who are not retired to work a half-time job and to also serve as a Legislator and not require social service help. The information provided by Mrs. Covert existed in minutes from 1993 as comments made by Legislators and the Charter

Minutes  
Government Operations Committee  
November 14, 2008

Review Report. Ms. Kiefer hoped that a Whereas could be added that captures that sentiment and other relevant information discussed and suggested the following: “Whereas, it is reasonable to set a salary to enable a person to serve as an elected Legislator and to hold a halftime job if necessary, and”.

The final Whereas she would like to have added is: “Whereas, for January 1, 2009, through December 31, 2009, the Legislative salary is already set at \$18,700, and”.

Ms. Kiefer asked if the proposed Whereas’ were acceptable to Committee members. Ms. Mackesey believes the suggestions Ms. Kiefer is offering to add are satisfactory, but it is difficult to make a decision without having it in a written format.

Mr. Squires spoke about the retirement benefit for elected officials and cautioned the Committee not to reference a standard workweek in the resolution until a study is done.

Ms. Mackesey commented that she is uncertain if the 30 hours as suggested by Ms. Kiefer should be included as she believes it may make it more complicated as explained by Mr. Squires.

Ms. Kiefer referenced the Resolved setting salaries for Legislators and believes it is getting further and further away from the intended goal, and making it impossible for someone to earn enough to feel comfortable holding a halftime job and being a Legislator. She also believes an argument can be made to increase the salary by \$500 increments, which is about a 2.5% increase.

Mr. Stevenson believes the position of a Legislator is public or community service position not so much a career position or a job. There are some community service positions that may actually cost a person money to serve. A Legislator’s position receives reimbursement for expenses such as mileage. He does not support the resolution as presented to Committee and the more career language that is built in the more he opposes it. He would support just picking a dollar amount for the salary for the four-year period.

Mr. Sigler spoke against a salary increase for next year after hearing how bad the economy is doing. Fiscal restraint is being preached and now there is discussion to increase salaries for Legislators.

The Committee discussed other dates to consider the resolution and Ms. Kiefer said action could be taken early next year which will still allow individuals who are interested in running for office to know what the salary is. At this time, Ms. Mackesey withdrew her motion.

### **Approval of Minutes**

October 10, 2008

It was MOVED by Mr. Stevenson, seconded by Mr. Sigler, to approve the minutes of the October 10<sup>th</sup> meeting. Following discussion and suggested changes being recommended, Mr. Stevenson withdrew his motion.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 3:44 p.m.