

MINUTES

Approved 10/10/08

GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

SEPTEMBER 12, 2008 2:00 P.M. SCOTT HEYMAN CONFERENCE ROOM

Present: D. Kiefer, Vice Chair; G. Stevenson; M. Sigler; P. Mackesey (arrived at 2:03 p.m.); M. Hattery, Chair (arrived at 2:56 p.m.)

Staff: C. Covert, Clerk of the Legislature; D. Squires, Finance Director; M. Lynch, Public Information Officer; P. Younger, Deputy County Administrator; J. Wood, County Attorney; S. Varner, Information Technology Services Department

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m. by Vice Chair Kiefer.

Changes to Agenda

The following changes were made to the agenda:

- Transfer from Board of Elections – added as information only
- Budget updates from Rural Libraries – withdrawn

Report from the Committee Chair

This report was given later in the meeting.

Report from the County Attorney

Mr. Wood was not present at this time.

Report from the County Administrator

There was no report provided.

Report from the Finance Director

Mr. Squires provided an update on the Ithaca Area Waste Water Treatment Plant takeover of septage billing operations.

Ms. Mackesey arrived at this time.

Mr. Squires said the proposal for the transfer of the Septage billing from the County has been deferred until the October meeting of the Ithaca Area Waste Water Joint Commission. The Treatment Plant staff is scheduled to report to the Commission on the impact of the takeover at the October meeting. He reported there are three haulers that have been told they have until the end of the day to pay their outstanding balance or their access to the facility will be terminated. Below is a list of the haulers and the amount owed:

- Stinky's - \$19,600
- Hicks - \$11,300
- Minter Construction - \$9,060

Mr. Squires said he will be asking the County Attorney to seek judgment on them.

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Report from County Attorney

Mr. Wood said he did not have a report.

Report from the Public Information Officer

Ms. Lynch reminded the Committee that the community budget forum is September 22 at the Borg Warner Room of the Tompkins County Public Library at 7:00 p.m.

Board of Elections

Transfer

The following transfer was briefly discussed and Ms. Kiefer asked when the reclassification took place and why. Staff was unavailable to attend the meeting and answer questions at this time. [Further discussion was held later in the meeting].

From: 1450.51000503	Clerk	\$11,830
To: 1450.51000518	Senior Clerk	\$11,830

Explanation: Reclassification of position.

Approval of Minutes

It was MOVED by Ms. Mackesey, seconded by Mr. Stevenson, and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members present, to approve the minutes of the August 8, 2008, meeting as corrected.

Rural Library

2009 Budget Discussion

This item was withdrawn from the agenda.

Dedication of Bench – Courthouse

Mrs. Covert distributed a letter from Elaine Joseph, an employee in Family Court, for Committee members to review and discuss. Members appreciated the gesture and reasons Ms. Joseph gave for wanting to do something nice for the public. Also copies of the policy for naming County spaces and items was included in the agenda packets. Mr. Stevenson believes if this request is going to be considered, Facilities Manager, Arel LeMaro, should be consulted. Such issues as placement of the bench, maintenance involved, installation, etc. should be considered.

Ms. Kiefer believes an interpretation of the policy is needed. *Further discussion followed and the Committee felt more information was needed and asked that Ms. Joseph and Mr. LeMaro be contacted for more details.*

County Clerk

Resolution

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 full Legislature for approval:

RESOLUTION NO. – AUTHORIZATION TO ACCEPT A GRANT FROM THE STATE ARCHIVES AND BUDGET ADJUSTMENT – TOMPKINS COUNTY CLERK

WHEREAS, the County Clerk’s Office has been notified of a grant award from the New York State Archives in the amount of \$69,860, and

WHEREAS, the New York State Archives grant application represents a project for the County Clerk’s Office to back-file and index older land records into their Electronic Document Management System, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Government Operations Committee, That the County Administrator or his designee be authorized to execute all documents related to this New York State Archives grant award,

RESOLVED, further, That the Director of Finance is authorized and directed to make the following budget adjustment:

APPROPRIATION:	A1410.54442	Professional Services	\$69,860
REVENUE:	A1410.43089	Other State Aid	\$69,860

SEQR ACTION: TYPE II-20

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Board of Elections

Transfer (continued)

Mrs. Covert said that staff is not available to attend the meeting. Mr. Squires said it is his opinion that Committee approval is not required; it is an information only item as it is only transferring from one salary line to another. The Committee had no objection.

Ms. Kiefer distributed an article on voting machines to Committee members for information only.

Freedom of Information Law

Mr. Wood spoke about the recent change in State Law and the concern by the County Administrator about whether the County’s policy is up to date. It is his opinion that there is very little that is new in the State law that would require the County to change its policy. However, he does believe the County’s policy should be revised and updated such as the privacy section. Ms. Kiefer believes specific information about electronic-format files should be added. Mr. Wood said that could be addressed when the policy is amended, but does not believe the County’s policy is inconsistent with the new State Law.

In relation to the goal for updating County Administrative Manual policies, Ms. Younger said the responsible department for updating this policy is County Administration but that it is not on the list to be updated at this time. At the time the policy is to be reviewed and updated it would be done in partnership with the County Attorney.

Mr. Wood said the other issue Mr. Whicher asked to be discussed is the Freedom of Information officer and the appeals process. Currently, the County Administrator is the Freedom of Information officer and the County Attorney is the appeal officer. There have been some occasions where the County Administrator needs to consult with the County Attorney’s office, but in those cases the Deputy County Attorney has assisted so the County Attorney could serve as the appeal officer if necessary. This is an area that should be discussed.

Ms. Kiefer asked how the Ithaca Journal request for FOIL information (attached to the agenda) was handled; Mr. Wood said the information was provided and believes it was done either electronically or accessed via County Administration's website.

Mr. Squires reported that the Albany Times Union had asked for State payroll information, which was refused because each item had a social security number on it.

Discussion followed concerning the updating of the policy and Ms. Kiefer asked if this could be made a priority for reviewing and amending. Mr. Sigler said he would like to discuss what information is available by the Freedom of Information Law (FOIL). Mr. Wood said that the purpose of having someone fill out a FOIL request is the information is not readily or legally available and some research may need to be done. Often requests are made in various departments and information is provided without a FOIL request being submitted. Ms. Younger said there is a subject master list (a record of files maintained by County departments) that was prepared recently and could make that available.

Update from Administrative Manual Maintenance Planning Work Group

Ms. Younger provided an update on the progress of the Administrative Manual Maintenance Planning team's work and briefly reviewed the task list and timeline distributed with the Committee agenda. The team met September 5th and discussed the strengths and weaknesses with the process and agreed to revise the outreach efforts. The team is putting together a "Frequently Asked Questions" document to help address some of the questions being asked. A request is being made to appropriate departments to identify a point-of-contact person for the team to work with and provide needed guidance.

Ms. Younger briefly reported on the July 31 meeting concerning the plain language guide that is being developed. She hopes to introduce this guide at the November 14th Government Operations Committee meeting.

Mr. Hattery arrived at this time.

Ms. Younger suggested that committee chairs could include this as an agenda item from time to time.

Ms. Kiefer asked if the prioritized list from Administration could be made available to the Committee.

Legislature/Information Technology Services

Resolution

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

RESOLUTION NO. – AUTHORIZATION TO ACCEPT GRANT FROM NEW YORK STATE ARCHIVES AND BUDGET ADJUSTMENT – TOMPKINS COUNTY LEGISLATURE

WHEREAS, the Legislature's Office and the Information Technology Services Department (ITS) have been notified of a Local Government Records Management Improvement Fund (LGRMIF) grant award in the amount of \$64,000, and

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WHEREAS, the New York State Archives LGRMIF grant application was submitted to develop an Electronic Document Management System (EDMS) with an approved business process to create efficiencies for document and information management and retrieval, and

WHEREAS, the primary records include agendas, minutes, and agenda items to Tompkins County government, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Government Operations Committee, That the County Administrator or his designee be authorized to execute all documents related to this New York State Archives grant award,

RESOLVED, further, That the Director of Finance is authorized and directed to make the following budget adjustment:

APPROPRIATION:	A1040.54442	Professional Services	\$64,000
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REVENUE:	A1040.43089	Other State Aid	\$64,000
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SEQR ACTION: TYPE II-20

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Chair's Report

Mr. Hattery said he hopes to have for the next Committee meeting, the Communications policy for discussion. In relation to Core Performance and following the report out by the subcommittee last month, Ms. Kiefer suggested the Committee consider a resolution in support of the ongoing commitment. Copies of two draft resolutions were distributed for Committee members to review and discuss at the next meeting.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:10 p.m.