

Herkimer County Legislature
County Planning & Development and Ways & Means Committee Meeting
Friday, May 1, 2020
Via Teleconference
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Persons Attending:

Kurt J. Ackerman (Chairman of Co. Planning; W&M committee member)
William Weakley (Co. Planning committee member)
Peter J. Campione (Co. Planning committee member)
Gregory Malta, Sr. (Co. Planning committee member)
Bob Hollum (Co. Planning committee member)
Patrick E. Russell (Chairman, Ways & Means)
Raymond Smith (Ways & Means committee member)
Raymond Johnson (Ways & Means committee member)
Frederick J. Shaw, Jr. (Ways & Means committee member)
John P. Stephens (Ways & Means committee member)
Vincent J. Bono, Chairman of the Legislature
James W. Wallace, Jr., County Administrator
Brandy Serow, Sec. to Co. Admin.
Lorraine Lewandrowski, County Attorney
Sheri Ferdula, Budget Officer
Steve Billings, Personnel Officer
Gina Giacobelli, Executive Director, Youth Bureau

(Non-Committee Members Signed In)

Legislator Mark Gaworecki
Legislator Robert J. Schrader
Legislator William E. Keeler, Sr.
Legislator John L. Brezinski
Legislator Peter F. Manno
Legislator Ray Donley

Absent:

N/A

Mr. Bono asked to call County Planning and Development to order.

Mr. Ackerman called the meeting to order at 9:32 a.m.

Items discussed:

COUNTY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT/WAYS & MEANS:

1. Summer Youth Program & Bus bid Discussion - **tabled**
2. Other

Committee Vote Record

COUNTY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT:

Mr. Ackerman stated "We just have one thing on the agenda. Discuss the Summer Youth Program and bus bid. Pat, you were going to have some discussion up north with some of the businesses and was wondering if you could share?"

Mr. Russell stated “Well, we did. We were looking at possibly having the Enchanted Forest open on July 1st but of course that’s all dependent on what the Governor has to say about it. Would you concur with that Mr. Wallace and Mr. Bono?”

Mr. Bono and Mr. Wallace both replied yes.

Mr. Ackerman asked “Mr. Wallace, how long do you think we can go for the bid on those buses?”

Mr. Wallace responded “Sheri is with me as well. I would think, maybe have a meeting before our meeting on the 13th to give us an extra 12, 13 days. I think Jimmy’s point and Pat’s point about on where the Governor is now with approving our plan in moving us forward. I think we are going to get some information on that. And again, I will let Sheri speak on the bus part of it.”

Sheri Ferdula stated “I have a question and it may be for Lorraine, is there a way that we can award the bid with a stipulation that if for some reason Enchanted Forest doesn’t open or the program doesn’t run, we can do that?”

Lorraine Lewandrowski stated “I would have to look at General Municipal Law on that. If you can hold it up for a specific entity. So General Municipal Law has the rules on soliciting bids. We have held bids open for a while.”

Sheri Ferdula stated “I think they are ok holding it because they aren’t doing anything else right now so they have no business to make up for it.”

Mr. Ackerman asked “Sheri, will there be any problem waiting until the 13th?”

Sheri responded “No. I can call them today. They are pretty flexible. They are not doing anything else and we give them a lot of money between Pre-K and this. I think they will work with us.”

Mr. Ackerman stated “Ok. We will just table that for now. Does anyone have anything else for County Planning?”

Mr. Bono stated “I know we brought those guys in from HACK NY. Are we going to do anything with that? Is there any interest there?”

Mr. Ackerman asked for what.

Mr. Bono stated “To go ahead with that. They came in, they did the presentation. I just had it on my cross off list here. We brought them in and told them we would let them know. This is on the coding.”

Mr. Ackerman stated “I don’t know how at this time, I can open it up to the rest of the committee but I feel we are not moving forward with the bridge and not looking at what we are looking at until we hear from the Governor. I don’t know if we want to throw \$300,000 at that.”

Mr. Bono stated “Ok. That’s fair enough. I understand thoroughly. We are talking 13 billion in the hole and 4 or 5 year projection is close to 70 billion dollars and it’s all coming back on us here. Those are valid points. Anyone else have anything to say?”

Mr. Russell stated “Might be a good time for Mr. Wallace to go over the affairs of the County based on what the Governor and the Legislator has said that could be happening to the county’s.”

Mr. Wallace stated “Mr. Bono and I were on the call last night with the State Comptroller. Sheri and I are tracking this stuff every day. I think we all know that probably one of our most important sales tax checks will be May 7th that will cover this period so that’s very important. I think it will give us a sign. I’ve done some antidotal talk with the car people around. They are down 65%. I think all the data I have been showing you guys, one of the biggest drivers of our sales tax in the county is automobiles so that’s an issue. We know that gas is down however the antidotal information from Walmart, Lowes, etc. is through the roof. What Amazon does is going to be very curious but the projection from NYSAC is 1.25 million. They are saying at least increase that by 50%. I think Jimmy mentioned a few minutes ago that the Governor now is saying we are 13.3 billion dollars in the hole. If he doesn’t get money from the Feds, that’s a 6 million dollar hit for us which is tremendous up from about 2 million a month ago. They are saying tribal probably going to lose about two quarters so that’s another \$225,000. So you’re looking on the worse end of about an 8 million dollar hit to us which is tremendous. That is right around that 16%, 17% of our revenues that won’t be here and then if we don’t open up quick enough the states looking at 69 billion dollar hole over the next 4 or 5 years. So they definitely didn’t paint a pretty picture for us. I don’t know if that’s good enough or if you want more in depth?”

Mr. Ackerman stated “That’s enough. Does anyone else have anything for County Planning? If not I will take a motion to adjourn.”

On motion of Mr. Weakley, seconded by Mr. Hollum the County Planning & Development committee adjourned at 9:40 a.m.

The Ways & Means committee continued.