

**Herkimer County Legislature
Administration/Veterans' Affairs and Ways & Means
Committee Meeting
Friday, January 15, 2021
Via Zoom
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Persons Attending:

Bob Hollum (Chairman, Administration/Veterans' Affairs)
Gregory Malta, Sr. (Administration/Veterans' Affairs committee member)
William Weakley (Administration/Veterans' Affairs committee member)
Patrick E. Russell (Chairman, Ways & Means, Admin. committee member)
Raymond Johnson (committee member, both)
John L. Brezinski (Administration/Veterans' Affairs committee member)
Kurt Ackerman (Ways & Means committee member)
Raymond Smith (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 County Administrator
Lorraine Lewandrowski, County Attorney
Sheri Ferdula, Budget Officer
Steve Billings, Personnel Officer
(Non Committee Members signed in)
Legislator Mark Gaworecki
Legislator Robert J. Schrader
Legislator William Keeler, Sr.
Legislator Ray Donley
Legislator Peter Campione

Absent:

N/A

Mr. Hollum called the meeting to order at 9:49 a.m.

Items Discussed:

ADMINISTRATION/VETERANS' AFFAIRS:

1. Discussion of Legislator terms
2. Other

ADMINISTRATION/VETERANS' AFFAIRS/WAYS & MEANS:

3. Reappoint County Administrator
4. Other

Committee Vote Record

ADMINISTRATION/VETERANS' AFFAIRS:

Mr. Hollum: "First on the agenda is discussion of Legislator terms. A little bit of information that Mr. Wallace was kind enough to pull up for me. Last time it was attempted was in 2002. The yes votes for it were 2,693, no votes were 6,255, 25 voids. What's interesting is blanks. There were 10,972 so that is the information so we can start the discussion."

Mr. Weakley: "I just brought it up originally because I just thought that it is kind of a pain in the neck to go through this process every two years. Not to mention the cost to the County via the Election Department. Those guys work hard enough anyways. Why add something on there if we don't have to. I can see a split here. Pretty significant. I'm not too sure I would have any traction but I wanted to bring it up and talk about it anyway."

Mr. Smith: "I want to add something to this too because the last time when it was brought up the whole Legislature would go up for election and it would be for four years. I think if you bring it up and split the Legislature in two groups. One group would get elected for just two years the first time and the other one would get elected for four years and then from then on it would be four years for everyone. You won't be turning the whole Legislature over in one year and it will be half turned over. I think when people see that they would be more willing to vote for it."

Mr. Weakley: "That's a good idea Dutch. I like that."

Mr. Hollum: "I guess my question would be if one group gets voted yes the one year and the other one gets voted no, is that possible?"

Mr. Weakley: "It would only be on one vote."

Mr. Hollum: "Okay."

Jim Wallace: "So what I am hearing then Dutch would be so the first time nine Legislators would go for four years, eight Legislators would go for two years, two years later eight Legislators would go for two years and then after that all seventeen would run for four years. Is that what I am hearing?"

Mr. Smith: "Right."

Jim Wallace: "The one point too, Bob and I talked about a little bit, we had 10,000 blanks so we probably did not do a great job of telling people why we thought this was a good thing. That's amazing to me that 10,000 people didn't vote on it."

Mr. Stephens: "Mr. Chairman, I like Dutch's idea but I was confused as to what was just said there. I thought it would be that, just for easing my mind, the even Legislators would be up for four years, the odds would stay at tow and then after that everyone would be on a four year cycle, correct?"

Jim Wallace: "John, the way I was trying to push Bill's point on saving money is you would have the two years go twice."

Mr. Smith: "No."

Jim Wallace: "So we are not going to be saving any money? We are still going to have those elections, right?"

Mr. Stephens: "But it would be every four years, Jim."

Jim Wallace: "What I was saying was to get this so you are all running at the same time..."

Mr. Stephens: "That's what we were trying to avoid."

Jim Wallace: "Okay. That's not what I thought I heard. I thought you were trying to save money. You are still going to have those elections so you are not going to save any money so you lose that argument."

Mr. Stephens: "Understood that part."

Mr. Smith: "After the first election it would be every four years for the Legislature but there would be a vote every two years."

Mr. Weakley: "But it would only be for half of the Legislature."

Mr. Smith: "But it would only be for half of the Legislature."

Mr. Weakley: "So you are really not going to save any money but..."

Jim Wallace: "Okay. I was looking for that argument of saving money but that's where I was guys. Just to try to help out, that's all."

Mr. Schrader: "I don't see where that is going to save any money here guys."

Mr. Stephens: "But if we split it where nine are two years or four years and then eight are after that and then every four years there is nine and eight."

Mr. Smith: "Yes. That's the way it would go."

Mr. Stephens: "So odds and evens, however, odd districts go first and evens second or whatever."

Mr. Smith: "Yes."

Mr. Hollum: "There are other things you would have to take into consideration. So we will use this year as an example, the Legislators that are going to have opponents are going to be able to

use this as a tool against the person they are running against. So that is a possibility. I mean, that's what I would do if I was running against a Legislator that was asking for a four year term."

Mr. Bono: "In light of the public sentiment nationally with Congress have terms of thirty, forty years, members there, I don't think this is going to pass in any way, shape or form. Especially when you had a three to one vote last time. I think it's going to be even more if you present this. The only way that I think this would pass is if you interjected term limits into those terms being whether it's three terms. Three terms is the number we could play with if you were to even play with that number or to play with the idea. I think the only way it would pass with the way the sentiment is now in this Country is to have term limits involved with that. This is not going to pass anyway you put it. That's my opinion and my two cents."

Mr. Schrader: "I concur with the Chairman."

Mr. Bono: "I don't know if the flavor is to set term limits at this time. That's something we can probably caucus with and discuss in a caucus. Thanks."

Mr. Hollum: "Anymore discussion?"

Item #1 – Discussion only. No vote taken.

Item #2 – N/A.

ADMINISTRATION/VETERANS' AFFAIRS/WAYS & MEANS:

Mr. Russell called Ways and Means to order.

Mr. Hollum: "Number three on the agenda is a very important one, is to reappoint the County Administrator, Jim Wallace."

Item #3 - On motion of Mr. Bono, seconded by Mr. Brezinski for Administration/Veterans' Affairs, and on motion of Mr. Bono, seconded by Mr. Johnson for Ways & Means, Item #3 was voted on, approved and moved for Resolution. Unanimous.

Mr. Hollum: "Congratulations Mr. Wallace."

Mr. Wallace: "Thanks everybody. I really love working with all of you guys and look forward to working the next three years with you. Thank you so much. I really appreciate it."

Mr. Hollum: "Is there anything else under other?"

Item#4 – N/A.

On motion of Mr. Johnson, seconded by Mr. Brezinski for Administration/Veterans' Affairs, the committee adjourned at 9:58 a.m.

The Ways & Means Committee continued.