

**Herkimer County Legislature
County Properties, Human Resources and Ways & Means
Committee Meeting
Wednesday, January 27, 2021
Via Teleconference
6:00 p.m.**

Persons Attending:

Raymond Johnson (Chairman, County Properties, W&M committee member)
Mark Gaworecki (County Properties/Human Resources committee member)
William E. Keeler, Sr. (County Properties committee member)
William Weakley (County Properties committee member)
Robert J. Schrader (County Properties/Human Resources committee member)
Ray Donley (County Properties committee member)
Frederick J. Shaw, Jr. (Chairman, Human Resources/W&M committee member)
Raymond Smith (Human Resources/Ways & Means committee member)
Peter F. Manno (Human Resources committee member)
Patrick E. Russell (Ways & Means Committee Chairman)
Kurt J. Ackerman (W&M committee member)
John P. Stephens (W&M committee member)
Vincent J. Bono, Chairman of the Legislature
James W. Wallace, Jr., County Administrator
Sheri Ferdula, Budget Officer
Steve Billings, Personnel Officer
Christina Cain, Director of Public Health
Tim Seymour, Commissioner of Social Services
(Non Committee Members Signed In)
Legislator Bob D. Hollum
Legislator John L. Brezinski
Legislator Peter Campione

Absent:

Gregory Malta, Sr. (Human Resources committee member)

Mr. Johnson called the County Properties committee to order, Mr. Shaw called the Human Resources committee to order and Mr. Russell called the Ways & Means committee to order at 6:01 p.m.

Items Discussed:

COUNTY PROPERTIES, HUMAN RESOURCES AND WAYS & MEANS:

1. Daycare discussion
2. Other

Committee Vote Record:

COUNTY PROPERTIES, HUMAN RESOURCES AND WAYS & MEANS:

Mr. Johnson: "I guess since I am first on the list I'm running the meeting. Guys, I just ask that you be courteous. It's a phone-in meeting and I know it's a big discussion so if we could ask the questions and let them get answered by what department head you want to ask the question to and then ask the next question. It will be a lot easier. I will open up for questions."

Mr. Ackerman: "For anybody that's on the call we should probably tell what the topic is, correct?"

Mr. Johnson: "The topic is the Daycare discussion. I'm sorry Mr. Ackerman."

Mr. Schrader: "Right off of the bat I just want to say I'm not saying we don't need this service after looking at the stuff that Christina sent out and everything. Obviously there is a need for the service. I'm kind of curious why we are not going for more infant beds rather than the older kids but because what I read is the infant beds are the ones more needed in the County than the other daycare part, maybe Christina can text me that a little later but I don't really care whose municipality that this ends up in, if it ends up in Herkimer that's fine, I just feel that the organization that we are tying in with does own the old Country Manor and they have not done anything to that. That's off of the tax rolls also. They have not done anything to that to rehab it other than to gut the thing and it's just setting there idle. It's not really a service to anyone that it's taken off of the Town of Herkimer's tax rolls and I just feel that if, wherever this ends up whether it be in the Village of Herkimer or any other municipality, I feel that the people that are renting the building for a dollar should be required. I think we have learned a lot of lessons through the jail project, I think we need to spell it out, dog, cat, who is plowing the driveway, who is maintaining the building, who is going to pay for the repairs on the building if something goes wrong, say the furnace, hot water tank. That all needs to be spelled out and I haven't seen anything yet of that sort so I am not going to put the tax payers at risk on paying for a building. Since I have been in there for ten years now, I remember the Country Manor was an issue that we wanted to get out of having to pay for repairs on the building and weren't making any money. We were losing money taking care of elderly people. The research that I did, there is even more restrictions on Daycare facilities than there is on elderly care. That's some of my concerns. So go back to the municipalities, after speaking with some people, if we go through with this building I think we need to make sure that the tenants are going to be willing to pay whatever taxes and there is no loophole getting out of it after a year or five years or whatever, paying taxes on this building, making the municipalities whole. School, Town and County and Village. That is my suggestion. I am only one Legislator so I am willing to hear anybody else to sway me either way."

Mr. Johnson: "Thanks Bob. Kurt?"

Mr. Ackerman: "I'm sure I will have a few more questions and a few more statements throughout this meeting but one thing I'm concerned, I agree with Bob, I don't think we should be taking any building off of the tax rolls. There is enough buildings we can utilize if we decide to go forward. It used to be at the College. We can tap back into that. There are a few churches that are empty at this current time that could possibly make a good daycare. I agree with Bob, we did this once before with the nursing home, we got out of that. I'm not saying there isn't a need. I'm not saying we can't look at doing something to help or assist this but if someone could answer me, what's the state rate for a child for five days a week, what is the hourly rate?"

Christina Cain: "I believe the market rate, last updated at \$220 for infants and \$206 for toddlers."

Mr. Shaw: "Is that per week or per day?"

Christina Cain: "That is per week."

Mr. Ackerman: "You would think with this time people would try to open, I think there is seven or eight places doing this already in the County. Are we trying to say that it is not financially...what makes this company succeed where others don't seem to want to invest in doing this? You would think that at \$9,000, \$10,000 a week that someone would want to take advantage of that and open a business. Is there any way we could assist somebody, maybe on the outside that would want to purchase the building themselves? If there is anybody out there for it, I don't know to open this business and not have the County have to pay for it. I know John Piseck is on the phone. I don't know if he can add anything to that."

John Piseck: "I do not believe that there is anything specific for that but we would need to see a business plan to work with any individual company."

Mr. Ackerman: "It would probably be able to go on to a PILOT program possibly? Remain on the tax roll with the option of a ten year prorated PILOT like everybody else?"

John Piseck: "Sometimes it's not that official for them to, with all of the fees involved, for them to get involved in the PILOT program though the IDA. I don't think this project would be large enough for them to do that but once again, without seeing any type of business plan I couldn't give a definite answer."

Mr. Ackerman: "Okay."

Christina Cain: "Just remember that market rate is not what folks have to charge. That is what the reimbursement from the state is. Especially in our area because folks might have fewer resources a lot of providers tend to charge a little bit less."

Mr. Ackerman: "I thought in our last conversation we said that the state rate is the state rate. The state sets the rate. So now you are saying they can charge less?"

Christina Cain: "No, what we were saying before is the state does set the market rate which is what all of the subsidies are based off of and that's nothing that we have any say for but as for what childcare facilities can charge, that's up to what they think people will pay for them. It can be above or below or at."

Mr. Ackerman: "I may have misunderstood that in the last conversation. So that throws a curve ball in it for me because now you have people that are paying...they are putting \$200,000 to \$300,000 in their facility, they are paying upwards of \$500 to \$1,000 in taxes every month and now we are going to come in and open up this facility and there is no overhead for that and they are going to be able to cut their rate because we don't have the same overhead so they may steal kids possibly from the other providers that are out there paying the bulk rate. Is that a concern of anybody?"

Mr. Schrader: "100% Kurt."

Mr. Hollum: "I guess my question would be, kind of like pizza places, is there so much business, that there is such a need for this that there would be enough for it all to go around? Is there such a desire, do we need people, that type of situation? Which it kind of appears possibly yes or am I wrong?"

Mr. Ackerman: "I think there is always a need for something like this but the questions you would ask is how many people do you know not going to work today because they do not have daycare because in the first conversation I think Christina did say there is a person bringing their kid to a facility in Little Falls that would be more convenient to bring them the Herkimer so if we open it is possible the facility in Little Falls will lose one or two kids. I think that's going to happen. You are going to lose people in these facilities because it's convenient which is a good thing I guess for the person dropping them off but it's bad for the provider who is paying their fair share. That's my fear. I'm not saying there is not a need. I would hate to get where we are competing and creating an unfair environment for one company to be able to charge less of a rate than another one in the private sector. I don't think that should be our place. We should assist in a system somehow but I don't know if that is the right avenue. I'm not saying I am against it, I'm not saying there is not a need. Would like to call these other places and see what their thought is of us competing against them."

Jim Wallace: “Bob, I talked to Kurt earlier today. We talked to the person in Little Falls. They have a two year waiting list. I don’t know if that helps you or not.”

Mr. Hollum: “It does and I understand Kurt. You don’t want to take away from people who are actually contributing. If it’s acceptable to anybody...I wouldn’t want somebody opening on the street and charging half price for certain things. I would hope that Legislators would lookout...I understand Kurt’s concerns but if there is such an overpowering need where it’s not going to cut into certain things then I would be for it in that direction but if not then I understand where Kurt and Schrader are coming from.”

Christina Cain: “Can I just ask where the thought is coming from that prices are going to be under the other facilities and based on that as well, if you have a provider pool that can supply 500 children, let’s say with slots, and yet the need is 2,500, whether they relocate based on proximity or any other preference there is still a lot of pool to be drawn from as far as need so I would definitely give that...factor that in as well and like I said, market rate is kind of a base as far as a foundational number but I don’t think you are going to find a ton of variety especially when you are looking at home based daycares and some of the small centers we have here in Herkimer County.”

Mr. Campione: “Mr. Johnson, can I ask Mr. Piseck a question please?”

Mr. Johnson: “Go ahead Mr. Campione.”

Mr. Campione: “John, when you are trying to lure these places to come do business in the County do they ever ask you about our daycare situation?”

Mr. Piseck: “They ask about that all of the time. Yes they do.”

Mr. Ackerman: “And I am going to respond to that question because Tractor Supply and places...our biggest employers, none of those people are going to be able to bring their kids to these daycares because they work twelve hour shifts, evenings and swings shifts and weekends. Daycare is not open around the clock. Some of my family members work at Tractor Supply and I know what they have to do for daycare. They hire outside people to come into their home and watch their children and I am ok with that but this daycare...it wouldn’t have assisted Tractor Supply at all so I don’t see where that would make a difference when we are talking about a lot of the businesses that John talks to.”

John Piseck: “Kurt, Tractor Supply did ask about daycare as well.”

Mr. Ackerman: “Right, and I’m just saying they would not be able to utilize this daycare because it’s not around the clock, it’s not running in twelve hour shifts.”

Mr. Campione: “But John, you are telling me that this could way out a decision whether they would come and build here or whether they wouldn’t?”

John Piseck: “I can’t answer their decision on what. We just gave them...at the time I believe the College was doing daycare and there were a bunch of other ones that we found listed. But they were concerned too and every shift has a lot of office people that work there that do not work those twelve hour shifts too.”

Mr. Campione: “Okay. I just want to leave by saying, I went around my district and I asked a lot of people in the last week and there definitely is a need for daycare in my district for sure.”

Mr. Ackerman: "I'm not arguing that but Pete did you ask any of them if they are not going to work because they do not have daycare?"

Mr. Campione: "No, I did not."

Mr. Ackerman: "I have asked a lot of people that question and everybody is still finding a way to make it to work. I not saying it wouldn't they aren't inconvenienced but I don't want to fool ourselves to say that forty-five people are going to work tomorrow because we have opened it. The last conversation that we had somebody said that ninety people would be able to go to work now and that's not the case."

Christina Cain: "Can I say one more thing?"

Mr. Johnson: "Go ahead Christina."

Christina Cain: "It is a layered conversation and I think everybody has made some really good points that have been considered over time. This has been a really long multiyear process so I definitely don't want to make it sound like these things haven't been taken into account at least to a certain extent but when you are speaking to Kurt's point about how people are finding a way, yes that is true and a lot of the ways they are finding are unmonitored daycare situations and in some cases I am sure that is lovely but there is no way to actually base that in any kind of evidence which is potentially concerning because, as we know, there are bad daycare providers just like there are bad plumbers and there are great ones and everything in between so having that state license is incredibly important not to mention when you start to look at the fact that children who go to programs and licensed daycare programs, their outcome, especially as evidenced by the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment that Dolgeville started and now the entire County, all of the districts partake, they look at the skills that these kids come into school with and you can absolutely see the difference between kids who go to these actual licensed, monitored programs, whether it's a home daycare or center, as opposed to kids that are just with their Uncle Mike or hanging out at Grandma's and what is happening you end up seeing in some cases that some of these kids need additional help when they hit preschool. And then you see our preschool rates go up because these kids need speech therapy, because they were sat in front of the TV for the first three years of their life, etc., etc. This is a very large issue in a multitude of ways so I just keep wanting to make sure that we have enough context around the discussion."

Mr. Ackerman: "I would like to respond to that because I think forty-five kids in that building or going with an aunt or an uncle doesn't mean they are not going to get some kind of educational component with their family. I disagree. My sister watches my niece's kids. She works at Tractor Supply and is constantly working with those kids and I know there is a lot of other people, one of the people that used to work for us downstairs left because she chose to leave to go watch her grandkids and works with them every day so I don't think we can figure that forty-five kids are going to get a better education or more than a family member taking care of their kids."

Christina Cain: "Mr. Ackerman, with all due respect that is not what I said at all. What I said was in some cases that is not the case. There are great plumbers and there are terrible plumbers and in some situations families don't have the option to have their aunt or somebody who actually would do a good job and they just do the best they can and there are varying levels of that not to mention forty-five kids stuck in a room is probably not the best illustration of what this project is actually going to look like. I think that's a real disservice to the discussion."

Mr. Ackerman: "When we talked about state facilities where I happened to work at for twenty-eight years, the service kid, there were bad ones of those and group homes that are monitored that are terrible

that I wouldn't put my dog in them. Just because they are State certified doesn't mean they are a good place to send your child."

Christina Cain: "Nope and I agree but it's another layer of protection and security in that."

Mr. Ackerman: "Again, I think when you get to large facilities I worry about anything that gets done productive. Forty-five kids in that building over there that we are talking about with a very small yard which is the same problem we had with our jail, I can't believe that some state facility is going to certify it and if they are I would question what they deem is suitable for forty-five children. That's my problem. That facility over there is not large enough for forty-five kids. Multiple bathrooms and settings for different age groups and then have no yard. I think we are going to be liable when someone gets hurt because we own the building."

Christina Cain: "It's not forty-five children all at one time anyway."

Mr. Ackerman: "That's what I thought we had talked about."

Christina Cain: "There are the ten toddlers, eight infants and fifteen preschool and then there are the afterschool kids that would be there part-time."

Mr. Ackerman: "But they would be there the same time, correct if they were there until 5 p.m. so 2:30 p.m. to 5 we could potentially have forty-five kids in that building."

Christina Cain: "Yes but not the full time, correct."

Mr. Johnson: "I have to agree on the building. I talked to Kim today, we have eighty-five properties right now on the Limbo list. I think an architect should be brought in, set down, figure out what the needs are and look at a limbo building. I would have no problem giving that to...putting that in the project, get it up and working and get the building functional and in five years, if this company leaves, we could sell the building in In Rem and put the building back on the tax roll. We have a lot of buildings. I just don't think we should be purchasing this building. I feel it's too small."

Mr. Bono: "Out of those eighty-five, how many are handicapped accessible? That would eliminate a lot of those."

Mr. Johnson: "Jim, anything can be made handicapped accessible you know that more than anybody."

Mr. Bono: "Right but at an additional cost. This one is handicapped accessible on the get-go. That's all I am saying. I'm not saying we shouldn't look at those properties because absolutely but you are going to take a lot of those off because they are either dilapidated or would take a ton more work or money."

Mr. Ackerman: "You are \$200,000 less starting out."

Mr. Bono: "Yes but you might have asbestos remediation or...it all depends on the property. I agree with what you are looking at."

Mr. Ackerman: "We don't know if there is asbestos in the building they are looking at now."

Mr. Bono: "Well, that's what we are here for tonight to look at that and whether we want to go ahead and do any type of a study or..."

Jim Wallace: “We can get those questions answered for you very quickly.”

Mr. Johnson: “I think it’s a great project, don’t get me wrong. I want to thank Christina and Jim for all of their hard work, Tim, you too. I think we need to take a step back and get some questions answered.”

Mr. Bono: “Absolutely. I just want to say one other thing Ray. Most of you have gotten the study from Cornell. A lot of great information in there and if you look at some of those comments that were made there, I mean there is definitely a need. And this is a study that was done as of I think February 2020, Christina?”

Christina Cain: “I think it was earlier than that but realistically issues like this don’t change and everything anecdotally that we have heard from Cornell Childcare Counsel since then has been that it continues to grow. Providers, we continue to lose them and the gap gets bigger.”

Jim Wallace: “We have lost, due to COVID but also not being able to make it, some providers in the region.”

Mr. Bono: “I found it. It’s October 2019 to February 2020, this report was compiled and there were over 2,000 participants and if you haven’t read that you really should. There is a lot of great and pertinent information. It’s not just about people trying to get new jobs, its people with current jobs too. And to go back to Kurt’s statement about Tractor Supply, listen, there are hundreds of businesses in this community, in this County, it’s not just the big boxes that have the twelve hour shift. We are trying to get, you know, maybe there is a single mother out there that has been on the system and I think our jobs as Legislators is to try and put people back on the rolls and get them the jobs that they want. Somebody wants to pick themselves up whether it’s a mother or a father, a single parent who has one or two or three kids and wants to get off of the system, this gives them the opportunity to certainly go back to work, build up some self-esteem and get off that system. And there are a lot of them. Guys, we know, just look at Tim’s rolls. Every month you get a report and there is 500 to 600 cases and then compound that by a couple, times two is about 800 to 1,000 people it affects. Some of those people can go back to work. I support the project and I agree with some of your statements, maybe we have to look at a building or different options but I don’t think we should bury our heads in the sand with these reports and this is just one report. There is another one out there.”

Mr. Ackerman: “They don’t take in affect all of the people who are working from home due to COVID which is going to change those statistics drastically. And I am not saying we shouldn’t do this, I don’t think we should take another property off of the tax roll and I definitely don’t think it should be that property that only has a yard the size of my living room for that number of kids. I don’t think that property is set up properly for it. I’m not saying there is not a need for something like this, I just would rather partner with somebody, help somebody open this but I don’t know if it is our place to fund it all and then create alack overhead for this building where the other providers out there are paying full price. I think that is unfair. These people are paying thousands of dollars a year but this company isn’t going to have to pay. That’s all I am saying and I’m not against it but I do think there is going to be a reduction in the number of people needing daycare because there is more people working from home right now. I spoke to you, I spoke to Jim Wallace about...I know you reached out to the schools but they may not be interested right now because of COVID and don’t want to go down that path but maybe in a year they would entertain that of having some kind of set up at the school, sister to the pre-k program that are there now, somebody could go in and open some type of daycare right at a school setting. They already have the parks, they have the infrastructure, they have everything set up there and I think more people would feel comfortable dropping their kids off at the grade school level than dropping them off at an old bank that sits on Prospect Street. I’m sorry. With no yard and forty five-kids I just see...most of the people I talk to aren’t going to send their kid there.”

Mr. Bono: "I'm going to respectfully disagree Kurt just personal experience with my daughter who has two kids and those numbers that Christina gave for reimbursements are right on because she told me she pays about \$450 for two kids and \$426 is close enough for me but my two grandkids are in a building the size of an Applebee's or that building there which is pretty much the size of Applebee's and the playground is no bigger than our Legislative Chambers. It's a fenced in area about that size. You think of a playground you need all this room but you really don't because they are not out there all of the time and there is six months of winter and some of the kids are infants so they don't go out there so you really don't need that big of space. Until we get that report from the state people I guess that's...you know we will need to make that decision. If you want to look at another building I have no objection to entertaining a host community benefit whether it be the taxes in full to both the village and maybe the school district and I think Jim got us those figures. I think they were around \$10,000 plus or minus for both of those figures. To say this building doesn't go off of the tax roll, especially if it is in the Village of Herkimer, which is inundated with properties like that. I have no objection to considering something whether it's full, partial, or a PILOT, I don't care, come up with something. We could reimburse them for that so I don't know how everybody else feels about that. Does it set a precedent, maybe but...I guess another thing I just want to say is where is the best place for this? I mean I guess we have to...is Herkimer the best place for this? Maybe you want to look somewhere else? Jim and I and Christina had one of those meetings where it talked about how 11,000 of our people go to other counties. The majority of them go to Oneida County, those workers. Do you want to consider somewhere in route which Herkimer is for some people but do you go to a Frankfort, do you go to a Schuylers, do you go to Ilion even and consider a building there? It's all on the table. Everybody has made some great points and I think we can work this out. Thanks Ray."

Mr. Johnson: "Okay, Bob, did you want to go?"

Mr. Schrader: "Yes. Jim, to your comment about...and I understand what you were saying about getting people off of the system but we already have an organization that does that. Christina, back me up on this, I know the Herkimer Housing, she made a comment that when I said there was eighteen instead of the four that that's for lower income people and that's exactly what I am saying, there is eighteen slots, I think it is, four of the newborns Christina. That's the information I got from the company that...just to let everyone know, Herkimer Housing does not run the daycare facility. Another company from Utica just like this one would be, runs the organization."

Jim Wallace: "Community Action."

Mr. Schrader: "Yes Jim, thank you very much. So it's not unheard of that another organization runs the daycare. I'm not against this program at all. Really, the bottom line, I am not against the program. Obviously I have read the reports just like Jimmy and Kurt and whoever else. There is a need but I do understand what Kurt is saying. It's not going to fit certain factories if they want to become a twelve hour shift because you are still going to have, like Christina said, your Uncle Joe, your Uncle Bill, your Uncle Jimmy or whatever watching your kid for four hours because they are only going to be able to be there for eight hours of the day. We are not going to be able to satisfy every need in the County but I have heard from other people before from the Legislature, we can't service everybody. I think it's a great idea. I thank Jim and Tim and Christina for the work that they have done. I'm on HR and I have not heard anything about this building or anything about the daycare since two months ago and I heard that through the grapevine about something about a daycare. I don't know why it wasn't brought to the Legislature and say hey, do you guys know of any buildings. We could have helped. You guys aren't architects. As Legislators we could have been out there saying hey maybe this building would work instead of us being in this situation we are tonight discussing a building that some people aren't happy with the size and taking it off of the tax rolls. I guess that is all I wanted to say Ray."

Jim Wallace: “Mr. Chairman, I just want to make sure, I’m not sure people understand we were looking to get all of the money for the building, the architect’s fees, the closing fees and renovations from a grant we received. You guys approved a grant several years ago so you knew we were chasing this through ESD and we are also looking for the remainder to come from the Community Foundation. Again, that is not an excuse just to move forward but I just want to make sure that there is no commitment of County dollars to purchase a facility or to fix the facility. I have talked to a couple of Chairmen and they thought a couple people didn’t realize that that was the case. And again that makes no excuse for us to move forward. I’m just saying we weren’t looking for the County to come up with cash. Tim has worked his tail off with Christina and I on the operating. We feel that we would have probably \$30,000 a year that we would put in a fund for repairs for the building. That was brought up earlier and I just want to make that point. Thank you Mr. Chairman.”

Mr. Schrader: “With what you said Jim, you guys said you did fifteen budgets, my concern is we all sit here and complain about the Governor of New York State taxing, taxing, taxing, making people move out of New York State, we are doing no better to the County of Herkimer, Herkimer County Residents than the Governor is doing it to New York State if we continue to take properties off of the tax roll and make the other people swallow that extra tax burden for service. The people that are supplying the service should have to pay the taxes. They should have to make right the taxes of the property they are taking off otherwise we are no better than our Governor. Everybody sits in that Legislature office complaining about the Governor running people out of New York State. We are doing the same thing to the village residents. Mr. Hollum even put it in a comment that the taxes in Herkimer are way too high. This is part of the problem right here, taking it off. I don’t care what municipality it goes in, we need to rethink this and whoever rents it from us pays the taxes on the property regardless to what municipality it’s done in. Thank you.”

Mr. Johnson: “Anybody else want to jump in?”

Mr. Keeler: “I would like to ask, these businesses that are still on going, is there any room for expansion on these businesses where they could take in more or are they at their limits?”

Mr. Ackerman: “Herkimer Housing is doing that now, right Bob?”

Mr. Schrader: “Yes.”

Jim Wallace: “Yes. We went to Herkimer Housing and they could not accommodate us. Christina and I talked with Mr. Dow about a year and a half ago before they were doing their project, he was one of the first people on our list to talk to.”

Mr. Keeler: “The buildings that we have that are off of the tax roll, what buildings do we have that we can utilize for something like that that we don’t have to spend a whole lot of money on?”

Mr. Johnson: “There are eighty-five in limbo. Until we know what size, that’s why I thought and architect should come in, sitting down with Christina, Tim and Jim and everybody and say hey, you need two thousand or you need three thousand foot then you could look at the list of the eighty-five buildings. Out of eighty-five it sure seems like we could come up with five or six buildings that would fit the needs in different areas and then throw it back at us.”

Mr. Russell: “I understand whole heartedly about taking property off of the tax rolls. I don’t like the thought of that either but I’m wondering why we are second guessing the folks that have done all of this work over the last few years on the size of the buildings, what can be done there because they seem to

know what they have been working on and doing. That's my questions to you guys. Why are we second guessing that in terms of size of the building and what can be done there?"

Mr. Ackerman: "Because they are not architects. If we had second guessed the jail we would have been better off."

Mr. Russell: "I guess you are making my point. The point is, when you are looking at these services especially being with the State all of the time I know people have had them up here. The State comes in and says this what you need to do. I was just curious because these guys have done their homework pretty well. You know, it's anything that is going to be costing us money. Jim said maybe after five years we might have to look at it. I guess Ray, it sounds to me and tell me if I am wrong, it sounds to me that people are in favor of the daycare. Is that a general yes?"

Mr. Johnson: "I agree with you one hundred percent. I think everybody thinks it's a great idea. That is what I feel."

Mr. Russell: "Okay. So we have the grant so we are looking at the daycare how long is the grant going to be good for if we have to go back and look at another piece of property? I guess that is a question to Jim."

Jim Wallace: "My belief Pat is that the State grant would run out this year. I don't think there is any parameters on Community Foundation."

Mr. Russell: "As far as hiring an architect for something like this, why are we wasting our money?"

Mr. Bono: "Can I make a suggestion Ray?"

Mr. Johnson: "Go ahead."

Mr. Bono: "Just to answer some of those questions. Would it behoove us to go inside the building and get a tour of the building? It's tough to buy a piece of property from looking at the outside. When I show a house, I like to bring the people inside, show them where the TV goes, where the refrigerator is and where the bathrooms are. I think maybe we would have a different appreciation of the property once you see it inside. Can we maybe table this and look at the property and then reconvene and say hey, this is for us or this isn't. Just throwing that out there."

Mr. Johnson: "Jim, you know if you start knocking walls out you don't know what's bearing walls, what's support walls, can the plumbing handle it, and does this building have to have a sprinkler system in it with kids in it?"

Mr. Bono: "Yes, that's why we want to hire somebody to do this."

Jim Wallace: "We have a lot of that data guys. I can share it with you."

Mr. Ackerman: "Jim, what is the grant for specifically?"

Jim Wallace: "Which one?"

Mr. Ackerman: "The grants that we are going to use for this project."

Jim Wallace: "So the two grants, Empire State Development, up to 20% of the project, anything capital. The \$240,000 from the Community Foundation is for daycare and the community. We will have some

mental health services in there for kids and do a couple of other things that helps us with the rent. That would not terminate. We would have a little more flexibility with that.”

Mr. Ackerman: “That sounds good. I just feel that we just got this last week and we have to vote on it today. Maybe there would be a property that would better suit this or maybe not but at least have the opportunity do that and then bring it back to the table. I think most people that I have talked to would be happy with that.”

Jim Wallace: “Do you want to hire a real estate agent? We will give them all of the specifics. Have them come back to us in a month with recommendations because if you have a really good realtor in the area they will know every piece of property in the County.”

Christina Cain: “We did work with a realtor in the in the beginning just to give us as idea of what might be available on just a loose, very unofficial bases. We tried to look at everything and in every area.”

Mr. Hollum: “Just a comment as far as properties. Have any of you guys gone over the list of the eighty-five properties? There is a reason why the County has not looked at these. None of them would pass no matter how much money you put into them. They are bad. I have gone over these lists. They are undesirable for a reason.”

Mr. Shaw: “I like Jimmy’s suggestion. I think if we are serious about this and it sounds like everybody is in favor with the project, we should set up a tour and go through the inside of the building. Since Christina and Tim and Jim put a lot of time into it, they have pretty well covered all of the bases of it, I think that would be a good start. Maybe get some people to recognize their judgement was right.”

Mr. Schrader: “Mr. Chairman on Human Resources, Mr. Chairman on Properties can I make a motion we table this?”

Mr. Russell: “It wasn’t necessarily up for a vote anyways. We can table it or just come back the next time with more information.”

Mr. Johnson: “What do you want to do Jim?”

Jim Wallace: “You guys have given us ten or twelve things to go and get information on I think we have that and what I would like to do is have Bruce and the lady from Syracuse take a walk through the building with guys so the guys believe what she said to us before is that it is a good sight for the facility. Again there has to be some renovations, we understand that, I think maybe that will help people feel comfortable.”

Mr. Schrader: “Jim, with you saying that, will that lady from Syracuse give us something in writing saying that that building will hold, now you’re saying we are going to have mental assistance there too, that’s going to put even more people in the building...I have to be honest with you, I have been in that building many times, with the bathrooms and the other updates that it would have to have I don’t know...”

Jim Wallace: “I just think if you have the people that have done this all of their lives talking to you guys instead of myself being a third wheel. Christina and Tim have a much better handle on it than I do but I am just saying I just thought it might be a good opportunity to do that over the next couple of weeks. I have a list of six or seven items that we will get answers for you.”

Mr. Ackerman: "I'm not saying this is a bad idea but my two concerns are one, taking the building off of the tax roll and if we could find a location that already exists or someone we could partner with and number two, is anybody concerned with the study that was done that has totally changed because of COVID and if we do this and we negatively impact the other agencies that are out there doing it today, paying their full price...I just worry that because a lot of people are working from home and a lot of companies are not bringing them back, is that going to reduce the number of kids that are out there in daycare and we could possibly be putting these other places out of business. That's my concern."

Mr. Bono: "Kurt, can I answer that. Why aren't they doing that now? Why aren't those people pulling their kids out now if we are in the COVID? Listen, I don't expect this to last forever. It may last a little bit but people are going to get back to work. Second of all, there are essential workers that go to work every day. You are assuming everybody is going to work from home. That's not the case. There are people that have to go out of their home to work. Plumbers, electricians, carpenters, health care workers, you name it they are thousands of people that do that on a daily basis."

Mr. Ackerman: "Jim, I never said that."

Mr. Russell: "Why can't we make it where they have to tell us if they have daycare or not and just bring in the people that need the daycare?"

Mr. Ackerman: "All I said is we have to realize there are more people working from home. If that is not a true statement then correct me if I am wrong."

Mr. Bono: "It is true Kurt but I took it that you are assuming that everybody..."

Mr. Ackerman: "I didn't say that Jim. I said the study would change because...it's not one way or the other. I'm agreeing there is a need, I'm just saying I don't want to put a business that's been in existence in jeopardy of losing kids to another facility because even Christina said in the last meeting the person that drops their kids off now in Little Falls would be more convenient to drop them off in Herkimer so they would lose those people. I'm not saying it's good or bad because there might be somebody in line to take their place. I'm just worried with more people working from home that that number could change and we could hurt those businesses that are already there. That's all I am saying."

Mr. Bono: "Okay, I got it. Listen, guys I don't mean to put pressure on the Chairman but its five minutes of seven."

Mr. Johnson: "I was just going to say that Jim. Properties committee, are we good with Mr. Wallace and Christina and the group getting some answers and bringing this back?"

The committee members agreed.

Mr. Shaw: "Is Human Resources okay with that?"

The committee members agreed.

Mr. Johnson: "Pat, are you good with that?"

Mr. Russell: "Yes, I am good with it. Based on what I am hearing everyone else seems to be."

Mr. Johnson: "Then maybe next time we can have the meeting Zoom. It might be easier."

Jim Wallace: "Sure."

Item #1 – Discussion only. No vote taken.

Item #2 – N/A

At 6:57 p.m., on motion of Mr. Bono, seconded by Mr. Schrader for the County Properties Committee, on motion of Mr. Bono, seconded by Mr. Schrader for the Human Resources Committee and on motion of Mr. Bono, seconded by Mr. Russell for the Ways & Means Committee, the committees adjourned.