

**CAPITAL PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, MARCH 11, 2010 3:30 PM
SCOTT HEYMAN CONFERENCE ROOM**

Approved 6:10:10

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 3:30 PM.

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Kathy Luz Herrera	Legislator	Present	
Frank Proto	Legislator	Present	
Dooley Kiefer	Legislator	Late	3:50 PM
Martha Robertson	Legislator	Present	
Michael Lane	Legislator	Present	

Staff: C. Covert, Clerk of the Legislature; M. Lynch, Public Information; E. Marx, Planning and Public Works Commissioner; A. LeMaro, Facilities Manager; J. Mareane, County Administrator; D. Squires, Finance Director

Guests: A. Garnar, Sixth Judicial District

Changes to Agenda

An update on the Broadband issue was added to the agenda.

Introductions

At this time Committee members and guests introduced themselves.

Update on Broadband Issue

Ms. Robertson updated the Committee on a meeting held earlier today concerning a proposal to join in with the Southern Tier East Regional Planning Board for broadband access at a cost of \$861,000 in up-front as well as annual costs. Several Legislators and municipal officials from the Tompkins County Council of Governments attended and decided not to pursue this particular proposal but did agree to consider developing a countywide plan as there is a strong need for such access. The Government Operations Committee will take this issue up and look at what has been done in the past. The Committee will then make a suggestion on how to proceed and Ms. Robertson as Legislature Chair will likely appoint a special committee.

Discussion Items

Review of Policies – 05-02 and 06-08 (ID # 1882)

Mr. Marx said policy 06-08 – Capital Project Development and Management was recently updated and outlines the practice of using the Project Approval Request (PAR) forms for capital projects. The use of PAR forms was initiated to allow a new potential capital project investment to be fully vetted internally prior to moving forward.

Ms. Herrera asked what the process is for a project where at the beginning it is not a capital project but as time goes on, the scope of it exceeds the dollar amount as defined in the policy to be a capital project. Mr. Marx said that could be a possibility, but believes in the planning process most projects would be identified if they met the threshold for a capital project. There are a number of regular meetings held with division managers and others where projects are discussed and financial requirements are reviewed.

Mr. Marx said the PAR forms are available during the budget process and are updated every year. The Budget and Capital Committee reviews the forms in more detail.

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Ms. Kiefer arrived at this time.

Update Status of Current Projects in Capital Plan

Mr. Marx provided an update and overview on the status of the current projects (Table 3) outlined in the Capital Plan. There was some discussion of aquifer projects, Tompkins Community Action, road reconstruction equipment, and equipment replacement plans. Ms. Kiefer suggested the table include a column that identifies the last year a project would be paid.

The following potential projects and proposals not included in the Plan were also brought to the Committee's attention and will need further discussion:

Mobile Data System – Request for Proposals are out now; PAR form not completed at this time.

Payroll System – This was a new project that was not identified in the plan. Mr. Squires said there are three years to fund \$600,000. A request to purchase additional financial modules at a significant discount may be proposed during the budget process.

Tompkins Cortland Community College – Issues have been identified and discussed at various program committee meetings.

Energy – This will need to be discussed by the Committee.

Solid Waste – Caswell Road Landfill Leachate project will need to be reviewed and approved. Proposals are being reviewed for a new contract for the operating of a Recycling and Transfer Center.

Mr. Marx said PAR forms should be completed as soon as a project has been identified to allow discussion by staff before it is presented at a program committee. Ms. Herrera asked if the centralizing of taxes as discussed at the last meeting should have a PAR filed. Mr. Marx said ideas should be firmed up as a concept including potential costs. However, it is important to have any known projects reflected in the updated plan. Mr. Proto believes it would be helpful to know what is happening in other municipalities. Ms. Robertson suggested this could be an item on a Tompkins County Council of Governments agenda.

Mr. Marx spoke about the need to relocate the Office for the Aging Department and that it is unclear at this time if this would be a capital project or an operating expense.

Mr. LeMaro provided an overview of Appendix A and updated the Committee on the projects his Department completed for each of the County's facilities, 2006-2010. The total need was for approximately \$4.5 million, but we've gotten approximately 1/3 (\$1.7 million) done. As there were some unexpected repairs maintenance projects, some items on the list in the Plan were not completed. Mr. Marx noted that the new 20-year plan will have an updated Appendix and will show what is projected that has not been completed. He also said the updates being provided will be available in a written format as they are completed.

Review of Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE)

Mr. Marx said this program has the potential to use the County's bonding authority. The PACE program started in California in 2008 and is now in 15 states. New York passed legislation November 17, 2009, to establish this program. The PACE program allows a municipality to finance or help a property owner finance energy efficiency or renewable energy improvements in private buildings. An annual charge is then added to the property's tax bill that will pay back the financing over a set period of years. This program will be very beneficial to citizens and the community as a whole to have energy-efficient buildings and will maintain much of the work and funding locally. Federal grants are available to help get these programs get going and New York State has proposed legislation to allow municipalities to use their own financing authority. Once this legislation is approved, this strategy will be used in Tompkins

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County to help take advantage of all the benefits available. Mr. Marx said that he has applied for a Federal grant and if awarded it will allow the County to begin the program. Over the long-term, the program should be self-sustaining and is not expected to be any cost to the County. The program rules are established at the local level, but have not yet been defined. In answer to questions, Mr. Marx said “small” means approximately \$10,000, with homeowner putting up match. Mr. Franklin said he does not think this will increase assessment. Mr. Marx said one of the unsettled legal questions has to do with the seniority of the tax lien. Mr. Marx estimate that half the homes in Tompkins County could be retrofitted over 25 years at a cost of \$5 million/year.

Update Status of Current Space Utilization

Mr. Marx said the Space Needs Assessment done in 2003 of departments was based on existing staffing levels and a ten percent growth for the future. Between 2003 and 2010 staffing levels for most departments were maintained flat or decreased with a couple exceptions. There has been significant growth in the Department of Social Services and a significant decrease in the Mental Health Department.

In the two buildings where surplus space was identified were the Human Services Building and Mental Health building. Both those buildings will be re-evaluated and the space needs assessment will be updated. Mr. LeMaro will be taking the lead with this effort.

New York State Courts

Ms. Garnar reported on the space needs of the court system in the Courthouse. The amount of Court business continues to increase; however, Sixth Judicial District Court representatives understand the financial constraints of the County and New York State. She and others are looking at the reports to determine how much court space is needed and to work with the County to develop a plan and timeline. Judge Mulvey, Administrative Judge for the Court system wants the County to continue moving forward and having the space study done is moving in that direction to develop a schedule and timeline.

Mr. LeMaro said meetings with Court representatives have been held and said he is looking at the current use of space in the Courthouse. He is negotiating with LaBella for a cost to do a study to be completed in three months. It was noted that the Study will be paid by both the County and the State.

Next Steps

Ms. Robertson asked the Committee how it wished to continue and what the next steps would be.

Mr. Proto agreed with Ms. Kiefer with updating the 2006 report to include a column that shows when the last payment for a project is going to be made. He also requested a status report based on the project list in the plan and to prioritize what needs to be done next.

Mr. Lane believes the Committee should integrate and explore any issues the Budget and Capital Committee may be discussing and suggested inviting the Chair of the Budget Committee to a meeting. Ms. Herrera asked if this Committee would be making a recommendation to the Budget Committee and vice versa. Ms. Robertson said she hopes that if there are projects being proposed for the 2011 budget that they be identified by mid-July.

Ms. Robertson said the Committee will need to make a recommendation on the future of the Public Safety Building.

Ms. Kiefer agrees the Public Safety Building is an area the Committee needs to discuss and suggested the Committee tour the building with Mr. LeMaro. She also suggested the State Commission of Corrections provide options for the County on what can be considered.

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Ms. Herrera said an important task of the Committee will be to look at the jail and make a decision. She would also like to discuss with the guidance of the Finance Director, Mr. Squires, the percentage of the County's encumbrance for bond rating and what flexibility the County has.

Mr. Marx said agrees with the Committee and that the Public Safety Building needs to be looked at. He also suggested a permanent location for the Criminal Justice Center needs to be considered, as well as a decision about the Old Library and Center of Government building.

Mr. Mareane said he agrees with Mr. Marx and recommended a discussion with the appropriate City of Ithaca officials about a suggestion for a co-habitation plan.

Discussion followed concerning the Public Safety Building and Ms. Robertson said she would look into having a Committee meeting at the Sheriff's Department.

Ms. Kiefer said she would like an executive session at the next meeting to discuss the properties for the Community Justice Center and Office for the Aging.

Minutes Approval

It was MOVED by Ms. Herrera, seconded by Ms. Kiefer, and unanimously adopted by voice vote, to approve the minutes of the February 11th meeting as amended. MINUTES CARRIED.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:45 p.m.