

Budget Capital, and Finance Committee
Regular Meeting Minutes
Monday, February 8, 2010 3:30 PM
Scott Heyman Conference Room

Approved 3-8-10

Present: J. Dennis, K. Luz Herrera, D. Kiefer (Temporary Member)
Excused: P. Mackesey, P. Stein, B. Robison
Staff: D. Squires, Finance Director; S. Estes, Personnel; M. Lynch, County Administration; C. DeMarco, CSEA; M. Pottorff, Legislature Office
Guests: S. Shackford, Ithaca Journal; C. Haynes, J. Turner, TC3

Call to Order

Mr. Dennis called the meeting to order at 3:37 p.m.

Changes to the Agenda

There were no changes to the agenda.

Minutes Approval

Minutes Approval (DOC ID: 1689): December 1 and 14, 2009 as corrected.

RESULT:	ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Dooley Kiefer, Temporary Member
SECONDER:	Kathy Luz Herrera, Member
AYES:	Dooley Kiefer, James Dennis, Kathy Luz Herrera
EXCUSED:	Pamela Mackesey, Brian Robison, Peter Stein

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Minutes Approval (DOC ID: 1758): January 19, 2010 as submitted.

RESULT:	ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Kathy Luz Herrera, Member
SECONDER:	Dooley Kiefer, Temporary Member
AYES:	Dooley Kiefer, James Dennis, Kathy Luz Herrera
EXCUSED:	Pamela Mackesey, Brian Robison, Peter Stein

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Chair's Report

Mr. Dennis said several members as well as County Administration staff are not in attendance because they are at the NYSAC Conference in Albany. He said he would like to begin a discussion of Committee goals. Mr. Dennis distributed copies of the Workforce Utilization Report.

Comment by Committee Member

Ms. Herrera reported she attended a PTA (Parent Teachers Association) meeting in Fall Creek where there was discussion of potential actions to balance the budget. One of the scenarios that was outlined was the potential closing of Fall Creek Elementary School and possibly bussing in pre-K kids from all across the District. Ms. Herrera said there are a lot of hard budget decisions that will need to be made but wanted to note the potential impact that decisions made by the School District will have on the County.

Report from the Finance Director

Mr. Squires distributed a document on the General Fund cash position for 2009 showing a cash position of \$8.3 million. Last year the County's unreserved fund balance was \$12 million and the cash position was \$11 million.

Centralized Tax Collection

Mr. Squires said he received a grant in the amount of \$45,000 two years ago from the Office of Real Property Services to look at the collection procedures to provide centralized collection. The report identified all of the tax-collecting parties but explained there currently is no system where information can be shared between the tax-collecting entities. Mr. Squires said it would require all of the municipalities to run the same software system in addition to investing in hardware upgrades with all data to be on a single server. He said in order to receive an additional \$25,000 the grant requires the County to develop a system that accommodates the municipalities and the school districts (14 school districts) that have parcels in Tompkins County. Mr. Squires said he hasn't gone any further than evaluating the system. For a cost of \$75,000 the system between the County and municipalities could be improved somewhat; but the City has invested heavily in their system.

Ms. Herrera said she would like there to be continued discussion on this subject and suggested it be referred to the Tompkins County Council of Governments for discussion. It was the consensus of the Committee to refer this subject to TCCOG.

Audit Subcommittee

Mr. Squires reported the Audit subcommittee will meet on April 15th. Ms. Mackesey and Mr. Dennis agreed to serve on the Audit Subcommittee. Ms. Herrera said she would also serve if needed.

Report from the Public Information Officer

Ms. Lynch had no report.

Tompkins Cortland Community College Electrical Panels

Mr. Haynes briefly reviewed the history of this issue, stating that in the summer of 2007 there was a fire in one of the electrical panels where an injury was averted by the quick action of one of the experienced electricians. When Mr. Turner began employment with the College in 2008 work began on identifying ways to solve the problem on a permanent basis. Since then there have been two additional incidents, of which one could have been very serious. Mr. Haynes said the panels have been there since the building was constructed. They are low quality and are no longer manufactured, and parts are not available. He also said other facilities around the country that have used these and have experienced similar issues.

Mr. Haynes said SUNY was contacted because they have emergency funds and they readily agreed this project would fit into that category. In the Fall of 2008 the College approached the County for approval of a \$1.6 million project to address the replacement of the panels with the State paying 50% of the cost and the local sponsors share is the other half (62% Tompkins/38% Cortland). The understanding with Tompkins County in November 2008 when this was approved was that the College would not move forward until checking back with the County and that happened last summer. Mr. Haynes said he believes they are in a favorable bidding process and thinks it is somewhat likely they could come in under budget. The design work is now underway and the only real concern that exists now is how to stage this because it will require that sections of the building be shut down for two to three days

Minutes
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Monday, February 8, 2010

TO:	A3141.51000211	Probation Supervisor	727
	A3142.51000211	Probation Supervisor	2,909
	A3141.51000565	Registered Prof. Nurse	369
	A3141.58800	Fringes	395
	A3142.58800	Fringes	1,047

SEQR ACTION: TYPE II-20

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Discussion of Committee Goals

Mr. Dennis distributed copies of the 2009 Committee goals.

1. Facilitate a strategic approach to the budget challenges forecasted for 2011-2013
 2. Work with the County Administrator to institute performance measures for 25 major programs.
 3. Explore ways of improving information provided during the budget deliberations.
 4. Oversee the human resource and payroll data migration.
 5. Finalize the strategic training plan.
- Develop an expanded employee orientation process and corresponding handbook.

The Committee discussed goal No. 6 and what information should be contained in the handbook. Mr. Estes said many of the documents that have been suggested for inclusion in this book are electronic and suggested it would be easier to maintain a summary document that contains links to the electronic documents. Ms. Kiefer suggested it be formatted as a welcome brochure for employees and only a few pages in length. It was suggested the document be referred to as the employee "Welcome and Informational Brochure". Ms. Herrera agreed a brief document would be better. Ms. DeMarco noted there are some employees who do not have access to electronic communication.

Ms. Herrera asked for clarification on Mr. Dennis' suggestion of having an additional goal relating to diversity. Mr. Dennis suggested a goal that would work towards increasing the number of people taking Civil Service tests.

Mr. Estes said last year the program committee had three goals that were related to diversity. The Committee was going to increase the number of County departments that participate in the Diversity Consortium by 20%; this was accomplished to the level of 50%. The second goal was to increase the number of candidates in the resume data bank to 100 through the Diversity Consortium; there are currently 80 candidates in there with the majority having a bachelors degree or higher and all are diverse candidates. The third goal was to meet with Legislative leaders from the State to discuss changes in the Civil Service system, and based on comments from State representatives this does not appear to be likely to happen. Mr. Estes suggested continuing work along the same path as in 2009 and continue to review selection procedures, review workforce utilization and analysis on a monthly basis, continue electronic posting of exam notices and vacancy lists, and review employment records of minority and diverse existing staff to try to create promotion lines for them.

Ms. Herrera asked Mr. Estes to provide an overview of what he means by diversity. Mr. Estes said diversity is not just about race, its about many things, including ability, disability, veteran status, race, gender identity, and sexual preference. He said diversity is about many things but summarized it is about employees coming to work to do their jobs every day and be happy and based on a lack of complaints or negative comments he believes employees of Tompkins County are happy in their workplace. He noted if some groups choose not to self-identify there is no way to capture those numbers.

Minutes
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Ms. Herrera asked how many points veterans are granted on Civil Service exams. Mr. Estes said new veteran candidates receive an additional five points if they are not disabled and ten points if they are disabled. Promotional veteran candidates receive 2.5 and 5 points on exams.

Ms. Herrera suggested a possible goal could be “Fostering an environment that promotes a diverse and inclusive workplace for all employees.” Ms. Kiefer also suggested the Committee receive regular reports from the Personnel Department throughout the year.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Michelle Pottorff, TC Legislature Office