

MINUTES

Approved 5-11-07

GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

MARCH 9, 2007 2:00 P.M. SCOTT HEYMAN CONFERENCE ROOM

Present: G. Stevenson, Chair; M. Sigler; M. Hattery; D. Kiefer

Excused: P. Mackesey

Staff: C. Covert, Clerk of the Legislature; S. Whicher, County Administrator; J. Wood, County Attorney; C. Nelson, Public Works Administrator; A. Fitzpatrick, Personnel Commissioner; M. Lynch, Public Information

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 2:06 p.m.

Changes to Agenda

The following item was added to the agenda:

- Presentation concerning the activities of the Tompkins County Sustainability Team

Report from the Chair of the Committee

Mr. Stevenson said he did not have a report.

Report from the County Administrator

Mr. Whicher updated the Committee on the discussions and meetings being held concerning the location of defibrillators in County buildings. Two meetings have been held to discuss the concept and identify the major barriers. The Personnel Commissioner, Anita Fitzpatrick, will soon be brought into the process and the Contracts Coordinator, Jackie Kippola, will work with Ms. Fitzpatrick to continue moving this forward. At this time staff is working to develop a plan and Mr. Whicher anticipates this will come forward as a policy.

In response to a question raised by Mr. Hattery about training, Mr. Whicher said there is extensive training involved and there will also be an information component as well.

Mr. Wood spoke briefly of the legal concerns and the labor issues involved and said he believes the Personnel Commissioner is very familiar with as well.

A brief discussion followed and Mr. Stevenson stated that he believes there are locations within the County that would welcome a public access defibrillator program. He asked which committee(s) of the Legislature would consider this. Mr. Whicher said the Chair of the Legislature makes the final decision, but if it comes forward as a policy issue, the Government Operations Committee would be appropriate. Ms. Kiefer felt that the Health and Human Services Committee and the Board of Health could consider as well.

Report from the County Attorney

Mr. Wood said he did not have a report.

Report from the Finance Director

Mr. Squires was not present.

Report from the Public Information Officer

Ms. Lynch spoke about the public forums concerning the County budget and said the forum on March 3rd in Dryden went very well. The next two are scheduled for March 10th in Enfield and March 24th at the Human Services Building. Ms. Kiefer inquired about attendance and was told there was many officials in attendance but estimates of public attendance ranged between 5 and 10 persons.

County Attorney

Reorganization Plan

Mr. Stevenson provided an opportunity for Committee members to comment and ask questions concerning the memorandum from Chair Joseph concerning the County Attorney's reorganization proposal and the appropriate program committee assigned the responsibility.

Ms. Fitzpatrick said in her opinion she believes the interpretation of policy in the memorandum is correct. She spoke of previous years' discussions regarding the rating of the County Attorney's position. At this time, she also gave a brief overview of the existing reclassification policy including the appeals process and the changes made in the policy over the last few years. Further discussion followed and Ms. Kiefer stated that she did not want to act again on the County Attorney's salary in 2007 since during 2007 budget time, the Legislature had already raised his salary for 2007. Mr. Wood said that although he had reported that he was in the process of reorganizing his Department during the budget process last year, he was dissuaded from bringing it through at that time. It was recommended that his budget be approved for 2007 with no change in overall funding, with the understanding that the reorganization would be presented early in 2007 to the appropriate standing committee.

It was MOVED Ms. Kiefer, to recommend that this not take effect this year on the grounds that a raise was already given this year. MOTION FAILED FOR LACK OF A SECOND.

Ms. Kiefer brought to the Committee's attention noting that if there is interest by program committees a request can be made to see what changes are being made to job descriptions.

Report from the Sustainability Team

Ms. Nelson provided an overview of the efforts of the Sustainability Team as established by Resolution No. 198 of 2006 of the County Legislature. The resolution requires a Team be appointed by the County Administrator which is anticipated to happen officially within the next week. Pursuant to the Resolution the Team is charged with developing an action plan to promote sustainable practices by Tompkins County government. The resolution also states that progress reports be given annually to the Legislature by Earth Day.

The Team began meeting immediately and has developed a draft action plan for 2006-2007. The draft plan was presented to the Environmental Management Council and is now being presented to various standing committees of the Legislature. The sustainable practices as identified in the resolution are being addressed in the action plan including measurable action steps being developed. Subcommittees have been created and assigned to each of the action steps identified. The Team and subcommittees meet on alternating months.

Areas of lengthy discussions in meetings were highlighted. One area includes energy reduction in County buildings; it is anticipated that a full report will be presented to the Legislature in 2008. Another area is the County's fleet and identifying vehicles that can be targeted for alternative fuel use.

Mr. Whicher reminded Ms. Nelson that one policy component is to identify the overall costs of implementation. Ms. Nelson said there will be cost analysis done in the necessary areas.

Further discussion followed concerning the membership of the Team and it was noted that there are other people that will need to be involved. Ms. Kiefer feels that there are community members that could attend. Mr. Whicher said he will appoint the Team but can only appoint County employees and will appoint this Team on an annual basis. He noted that he is unable to appoint non-County staff.

Ms. Kiefer noted the County has had one purchasing specification in place that has allowed us to pay up to five percent more for paper with recycled content.

Committee Goals

Mr. Stevenson said he forwarded the goals as discussed and revised at the last Committee meeting to Ms. Younger, Deputy County Administrator; however, she has not had an opportunity to provide input yet.

Discussion followed and the Committee recommended the following suggestions:

Goal 1: Develop an overall picture of Legislature and Administration goals. Following discussion, the Committee felt this goal should be combined with Goal 4 (below) and renumbered as Goal 2.

Goal 2: To understand staffing levels, number of departments and their structure. Ms. Kiefer said this is an issue discussed during Charter revisions. She also feels this goal would be more appropriate in the Budget and Capital Committee. Mr. Sigler said he would like this to remain as a goal to begin addressing the budget issues he feels the County will be facing in the future. The Committee agreed to make this Goal 4 for this year.

Goal 3: Update Administrative Manual. The Committee suggested revising this goal and replace "Update" with "Maintain an Updated...". There was agreement that this should be renumbered as Goal 1 and that a plan be developed.

Goal 4: Define roles of Department Heads, County Administration, and the Legislature (organizational culture and values). Following discussion, the Committee felt this goal should be combined with Goal 1 (above) and renumbered as Goal 2.

Goal 5: Advisory Board appointment policy review. The Committee agreed to make this Goal 3.

Goal 6: E-mail system communications policy. This item is being moved to become part of the Administrative Manual Review.

Mr. Stevenson said he will meet with Ms. Younger to discuss the Committee's goals.

Approval of Minutes

It was MOVED by Mr. Sigler, seconded by Mr. Hattery, to approve the minutes of the February 21st meeting as corrected. A voice vote resulted as follows: Ayes – 3; Noes – 1 (Stevenson); Excused – 1 (Mackesey). MINUTES APPROVED.

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Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.