

JOINT GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS AND FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 21, 2021

GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: O'Brien, Rozell, Haff, Hicks, Fedler, Ferguson, Fisher

GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT: None.

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Campbell, O'Brien, Haff, Hicks, Fedler, Hogan, Rozell, Ward, Griffith

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT: Skellie, Clary

SUPERVISORS: Hall, Henke, Wilson

Debra Prehoda, Clerk of the Board

Melissa Fitch, County Administrator

Al Nolette, County Treasurer

Roger Wickes, County Attorney

AGENDA AS PRESENTED IN COMMITTEE NOTICE:

- 1) Call to Order
- 2) Accept Minutes – September 1, 2021
- 3) Consider 2022 Departmental Budget Requests:
 - A. 9:30 AM Legislative Board/Clerk of the Board
 - B. 9:45 AM County Administration
 - C. 10:00AM County Attorney
 - D. 10:15AM Real Property
 - E. 10:30AM County Clerk/Historian
 - F. 10:45AM Treasurer
 - G. 11:00AM Buildings & Grounds/Parks
 - H. 11:15AM Board of Elections
 1. School Elections
 2. Increase Work & Storage Space
- 4) Other Business
 1. Vacation Balances
- 5) Adjournment

Chairmen O'Brien and Campbell called the Joint Government Operations and Finance Committee meeting to order at 9:36 A.M. via teleconference and in person.

Chairman O'Brien announced that the Champlain Hudson Power Express was approved yesterday by NYSEDA so that project will be coming on line. Washington County is going to receive over \$800,000 in revenues that we do not have now and over thirty years escalating somewhere around \$1M to \$1.2M every year for that period of time.

CONSIDER 2022 BUDGET REQUESTS:

LEGISLATIVE BOARD – Debra Prehoda, Clerk of the Board, presented the 2022 budget request:
Expenses: A.1010

Personal Services	\$372,000
Equipment	\$ 0
Contractual	\$ 2,400
Benefits	\$158,259
Total	\$532,659

Revenue: \$0. Highlights: Personal services budgeted the same as last year. Contractual – same as last years.

CLERK OF THE BOARD – Debra Prehoda, Clerk of the Board, presented the 2022 budget

request:

Expenses: A.1040

Personal Services	\$206,001
Equipment	\$ 0
Contractual	\$ 15,000
Benefits	\$ 84,844
Total	\$305,845

Revenue: \$0. Highlights: Personal Services budget as previous year. Submitted request to upgrade Sr. Account Clerk to Sr. Audit Clerk. Equipment – none and Contractual – increased advertising and transcription. The cost for printing the 2020 Proceedings is \$1,565.84, 250 more pages than the 2019 Proceedings.

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR – Melissa Fitch, County Administrator, presented the 2022 budget request:

Expenses A.1230

Personal Services	\$225,151
Equipment	\$ 0
Contractual	\$114,050
Benefits	\$ 88,965
Total	\$428,166

Revenue: \$0. Highlights: Personal Services: The part time position of Purchasing Coordinator is only budgeted until July and will be requesting to backfill with a full time Purchasing Coordinator moving an existing employee into that position. Also requesting to hire an Administrative Assistant and properly classify the Assistant County Administrator position as Deputy to the County Administrator and pay increase. Equipment: None. Contractual: Contract Expenses includes \$48,000 Larry Paltowitz, Union Negotiator, \$46,000 Annual Audit, liability for the post-employment benefit. Education/Training/Staff Development – training required due to Purchasing Coordinator retiring mid-year 2022.

STOCKROOM: A.1660

Copiers	\$20,000
Office Equipment Misc.	\$ 0
Total	\$20,000

Budgeted \$20,000 for copier replacements.

UNALLOCABLE INSURANCE: A.1910

Insurance	\$435,800
Total	\$435,800

The insurance is up 7% from the 2021 actual. General Fund share of all the insurance.

COUNTY ATTORNEY – Roger Wickes, County Attorney, addressed his 2022 budget request:

Expenses: A.1420

Personal Services	\$658,650
Equipment	\$ 0
Contractual	\$ 34,215
Benefits	\$202,434

Total	\$895,299
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Revenue \$170,287 comes over from Workers Compensation fund to pay (2) Safety Officers salaries. Expenses: Personnel – Anticipates being over in 2021 personal services due to a long term illness and hiring a temporary position to fill in. Contractual – Consultant line \$7,500 depends on need for outside consultant services; recommended to leave as budgeted.

REAL PROPERTY – Laura Chadwick, Director, addressed 2022 budget request:

Expenses: A.1355

Personal Services	\$298,954
Benefits	\$ 69,555
Contractual	\$127,750
Total	\$496,259

Revenue \$166,475. Unspent grant funds will be recognized at the proper time to next year's budget. Personnel: Requesting to increase hours of Clerk from 35 hours per week to 40 hours per week, Tax Map Technician to Senior Tax Map Technician and a raise in pay for the Director. Equipment – Through Information Technology requested a new printer scanner. Contractual – Basically the same as last year.

COUNTY CLERK – Stephanie Lemery, County Clerk, addressed the 2022 budget request:

Expense: A.1410

Personal Services	\$ 678,641
Equipment	\$ 0
Contractual	\$ 109,150
Benefits	\$ 262,791
Total	\$1,050,582

Revenue \$1,640,000. There has been an increase in mortgages. Anticipate coming in \$100,000 to \$150,000 more than amended 2021 budget. Expenses: Personnel – Decrease due to long term employees leaving county service and new employees hired at a lower pay rate. Requesting a new title (combination of recording/index clerk cross-trained in both avenues of the office), change in her staffing pattern and impact the budget of just under \$2,000. Contractual: Postage was increased due to DMV – processing paperwork. Hopeful by spring to reinstitute mobile unit. Appointments are more efficient. Possibly have two retirements upcoming. Discussed reducing OT from \$5,000 to \$2,500 but consensus will be leave it the same and possibly cut if needed.

HISTORIAN: A.7510

Personal Services	\$11,190
Equipment	\$ 0
Contractual	\$ 925
Benefits	\$ 1,009
Total	\$13,124

Revenue \$200. Expenses: Personnel and other contractual numbers flat.

TREASURER: Al Nolette, County Treasurer, addressed the 2022 budget request, summary attached:

Expenses: A.1325

Personal Services	\$495,572
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Equipment	\$ 0
Contractual	\$ 65,200
Benefits	\$164,527
Total	\$725,299

Revenue \$198,000 and only change is increase for collecting town and county taxes for the Town of Fort Ann. Chargeback to Sewer District is flat and they are only charged for user fee collections in April and October and he is willing to discuss charging back other duties done for the Sewer District. Expenses - Personnel: Since budget request, someone has decided to retire and replacement will be at lower rate. Put in a plan asking to drop a position out of staffing pattern eliminating an Account Clerk position and also change the title of the employees processing payroll to a new title Payroll Clerk at a grade 13 which would be an increase from a grade 10 to grade 13 for one of the employees and the other is already a grade 13 Bookkeeper. If changes are approved will lower his personal services expense. Contractual: stayed pretty much flat except for Misc. Other – fees for borrowing and this year had to borrow extra money and next year back to normal short term renewal. Had included the barns and now funding with lost revenue in relation to the American Rescue Plan Act. Probably could come down a little; he will work up a new number. Bankruptcy Council legal fees is down due to a lot less billable hours and dropped that amount a little.

TAX ADVERTISING: A.1362

Tax Sale	\$10,000
Redemption	\$ 6,500
Total	\$16,500

Expense for mailings; required notices Left everything flat for now.

EXPENSES ON PROPERTY ACQUIRED: A1364

Water & Sewer Rent	\$ 500
Advertising	\$1,500
Repairs & Maintenance	\$ 0
Total	\$2,000

Left everything flat.

TAXES COUNTY PROPERTY: A1950

Program Expenses	\$33,711
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Taxes on County Owned property included a 2.5% increase.

SALES TAX DISTRIBUTION: A1985

Sales Tax Distribution	\$1,755,340
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BUILDINGS & GROUNDS – Matt Jones, Superintendent, addressed the 2022 budget request:

Expenses: A.1620

Personal Services	\$1,010,805
Equipment	\$ 10,000
Contractual	\$ 834,107
Benefits	\$ 347,006
Total	\$2,201,918

Revenues: \$249,550. **Reduce \$62,000 for entry error in Rental Property Other.** Expenses: Personnel – Submitted to Personnel an overhaul of the whole department staffing from the bottom to the top for overall a couple grade increases. Skilled workers and tradesmen that are really working out of class and very difficult to recruit for these positions. He would like them equal to DPW or Sewer. The average hourly rate is \$15.00 per hour for most of the department. This will be a major increase to his budget. Had changed seasonal employees to part time several years ago, three positions, and questioned that the amount doubled. **The Superintendent report the correct amount in A.1620.121.PT is \$26,579 replacing \$48,062.** Expenses: A.1620.4050.0108 Electric Burgoyne \$00.0 is a sub account that should be removed from the budget printout.

HULETTTS PARK – Expense A.7110

Personal Services	\$48,312
Equipment	\$ 1,000
Contractual	\$ 6,100
Benefits	\$ 4,715
Total	\$60,127

Revenue \$2,000. Movie production rented pavilion for three weeks. Gifts and donations are also going to be more due to creation of pickle court (formerly tennis court) which has been very popular. Expenses: only increase in personal services line.

LAUDERDALE PARK – Expense A.7111

Personal Services	\$64,561
Equipment	\$ 6,000
Contractual	\$ 6,600
Benefits	\$ 5,603
Total	\$82,764

Revenue \$18,000. Expenses: only increase in personal services line.

BOARD OF ELECTIONS – Tom Rogers and Jeff Curtis, Commissioners presented the 2022 budget request:

Expenses: A.1450

Personal Services	\$272,373
Equipment	\$ 0
Contractual	\$ 50,600
Benefits	\$ 86,304
Total	\$409,277

Revenue \$0. Not doing schools so no revenue and labels are usually emailed at no charge. Expenses: Primary next June on both sides and early voting for both. Postage has gone up. At the end of October, Dominion is coming in to service machines being used in November; installing new mylar. The original mylar is from 2008 and will be replaced on 36 machines and moved money around in the 2021 budget to do that around \$7,500 and it will extend the life of the machines. Need to seriously start to look at purchasing new machines. **Office supplies is in the 2022 budget at zero and should be \$11,000. Machinery rentals lowered to \$4,000 from \$7,000.**

OTHER BUSINESS:

BOARD OF ELECTIONS:

- School Elections – Regarding procedure, the Commissioners do apologize for not bringing their decision that their services are no longer being available to the schools for use for their May school and special elections and made the commitment in the future to first run changes such as this through the Government Operations Committee prior to implementing. It was not intentional; they were just trying to be efficient. There are eleven school districts in Washington County and started doing school elections in 2014. No machines went out in 2020, it was all absentee ballots. When they asked the schools this year who needed their services, they were down to seven schools. The County provided the machines, ballots which they printed for the schools and ended up charging the schools for printing the ballot and, delivery and pickup of the voting machines. The complication is with the timing of the primary in relation to the school elections and have to be producing ballots for both and preparing to get the military absentee ballots to go out. In this process, they end up with only three days to print the school ballots, get machines ready and get machines to school. At the same time trying to produce ballots for the primary and the system used to produce the ballots does not like doing all these different ballots at the same time. Also, regular business is being conducted; phone, mail, state DMV portal and absentee portal. This is a time crunch and the primary election is their priority and moving from September changed the cycle and created this situation. Many of the smaller counties are dropping the schools as well due to lack of staff. Dominion can help the schools with the programing and the ballots can be sent out to a printing company. The County sends a technician with the voting machine and the school pays for that person and the machine is under our control. The options are a paper ballot and the schools know the process of printing absentee ballots. Mr. O'Brien stated we are not charging the fair share to the school of what effort we put into this process. Mr. Hicks asked the Commissioners if they would be able to assist the schools in providing a list of vendors and give them opportunities that you can reach out to because Board of Elections is in that business and they are not and the Commissioner agreed to provide them with information to assist the schools to get to the next step in the spring.
- Need More Space – The voting machines are compactly stored in a room without ample space to open the machines up to work on them. The voting machines have to be tested four times a year. They need a much bigger room with ample electrical outlets. Mr. O'Brien directed the County Administrator and Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds to look into a solution. Mr. Campbell suggested moving them to the room used for early voting to work on.
- Mail – Just having the mail delivered to the Burgoyne complex verses the Municipal Center would be helpful. Code Enforcement and Board of Elections have to travel to the Municipal Center daily to pick up and send out mail. They need a mail box and that will also be looked into.

COUNTY ADMINISTRATION - Melissa Fitch, County Administrator, addressed the following items:

- Title VI Plan – NYDOT asked for additional changes to the Title VI plan: minor changes such as website reference, refer to County as Washington County and add the Washington County logo. A resolution will be presented for consideration at the next Board to adopt this plan with the changes and copies will be provided to Supervisors prior to the meeting.

- Carryover Vacation Balances – Several requests have come forward in the last few months to carry over vacation balances because employees are unable to use the time. This is not widespread and most employees are taking their vacation time. COVID has impacted some departments: Public Health, Public Safety, and Information Technology. Inquired if the Board was interested in paying out vacation balances for those employees who cannot use their time before their next vacation date. The basic advantage is paying out the time at this year's rate prior to any raises in 2022 and with no cap on the amount of vacation time bought back. It should be made clear to departments that the County does not plan on carrying vacation time over again or paying it out again noting this is a one-time opportunity. Recommending that department heads provide the names of employees and amount of time to buy out so they can get a payout total. Mr. Campbell, Budget Officer, stated the need to reiterate that we are not rolling this over again. Mrs. Fedler stated they also need to be advised this is a final decision. Directed to bring back a payout number for the committee to consider.

The joint committee meeting adjourned at 11:45 AM.