

The Legislature of Rockland County



JAY HOOD, JR.

Legislator – District 3

Chair, Public Safety Committee

Members Present:

Leg. J. Hood, Jr. Chair
Leg. B. Kantrowitz
Leg. C. Carey
Leg. P. Soskin (Late)
Leg. D. Jobson (Late)

Members Absent:

Leg. T. Earl, Vice Chair
Leg. J. Meyers

Others Present:

Leg. A. Wolfe
Leg. P. Moroney
M. Barbera
S. Powers
D. Casteliero

Leg. H. Cornell
E. Yeger, Esq.
L. Falco
M. Hook
J. Kralik
Leg. M. Grant
K. Stavisky
R. Van Cura
C. Jensen

MINUTES
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 2014
5:15 PM

ROLL CALL

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ADOPTION OF MINUTES, MEETING OF OCTOBER 28, 2014

MOTION TO APPROVE:

UNAN

CAREY/SOSKIN

1. REF. #9252 - ACCEPTANCE OF GRANT FUNDS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$122,627 (NCTD) FROM THE NEW YORK STATE DIVISION OF HOMELAND SECURITY AND EMERGENCY SERVICES TO HELP OFFSET BUDGETED FIRE & EMERGENCY SERVICES PERSONNEL FUNDS SPENT IN SUPPORT OF AUTHORIZED EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OPERATIONS FOR THE PERIOD OCTOBER 1, 2013 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 30, 2015 AND AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF ALL NECESSARY GRANT DOCUMENTS BY THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE
[OFFICE OF FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES] (\$122,627)
(GORDON W. WREN, FIRE AND EMERGENCY)
DL# 2014-04677

MOTION TO APPROVE:

UNAN

JOBSON/KANTROWITZ

TRANSFER TO B&F 11/25/14

ADDED SPONSORS: LEGS. HOOD, CAREY, JOBSON, KANTROWITZ, SOSKIN

2. REF. #9361 - ACCEPTANCE OF GRANT FUNDS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$11,950 (NCTD) FROM THE NEW YORK STATE DIVISION OF HOMELAND SECURITY AND EMERGENCY SERVICES (GRANT #WM14839849) FOR THE SHERIFF'S CANINE EXPLOSIVE DETECTION UNIT FOR THE PERIOD OCTOBER 2, 2014 THROUGH AUGUST 31, 2016 AND AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF ALL NECESSARY GRANT DOCUMENTS BY THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE
[OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF] (\$11,950)
(LOUIS FALCO, SHERIFF)
DL# 2014-04575

**MOTION TO APPROVE:
CAREY/KANTROWITZ**

**UNAN
TRANSFER TO B&F 11/25/14**

ADDED SPONSORS: LEGS. HOOD, CAREY, JOBSON, KANTROWITZ, SOSKIN

3. REF. #5327 - *DISCUSSION ITEM: REVIEW OF THE "OPERATONAL ANALYSIS OF THE POLICE DIVISION OF THE ROCKLAND COUNTY SHERIFF A BLUEPRINT FOR PROGRESS" SUBMITTED BY LOUIS R. ANEMONE, ANEMONE CONSULTING INC. OCTOBER 3, 2014*
(HON. JAY HOOD, JR., LEGISLATURE)

Sheriff Falco related the sequence of events surrounding Mr. Anemone's review of the Sheriff's Department. Mr. Anemone told the Sheriff that the report would focus on efficiencies, and not relate to any layoffs. The county executive provided Sheriff Falco with the report, and told him it would have no bearing on the 2015 budget for the Sheriff's Department. The helicopter was upgraded with county funds, but the report recommended it be sold, despite the fact that the county cost to operate the helicopter is only \$40,000.

Legislator Hood stated that he was disappointed that Mr. Anemone failed to attend this meeting to discuss and defend his report. He asked Sheriff Falco to discuss the Mounted Unit.

Sheriff Falco said the Mounted Unit is in all towns and villages, and is requested to perform duties such as crowd control at school events across the county. The unit also patrols county property including RCC. Mr. Anemone wrote in a different report that one mounted patrol officer is equivalent to eight people on the ground, but in his report on Rockland called them a "glorified petting zoo." Sheriff Falco noted that tonight at the protest in Spring Valley and tomorrow in Nyack, the Mounted Unit will be present at the request of the villages to preserve public safety.

Leg. Low-Hogan asked who provided Sheriff Falco with the Anemone report. Falco replied saying the county executive gave it to him and said, "You're going to like what's in this report." Leg. Low-Hogan asked if anyone from the towns or villages were interviewed by Mr. Anemone, and the answer was that there were many such officials.

Legislator Kantrowitz said that at the county executive's unveiling of his budget, he asked Mr. Day if the Anemone report said that the patrol unit should be cut. The county executive replied that the report said that it "could be cut." Legislator Kantrowitz then asked Mr. Day what the impact on towns and villages would be, to which the county executive responded, "zero." In the Anemone report, it is written that the patrol unit cannot be replicated by towns and villages without additional costs on those levels.

Days after the budget announcement, the county executive then said that the decision to cut the unit was a last-minute one, made because of the need to pay off the deficit/deficit bond. Legislator Kantrowitz pointed out that it is hard to balance the statement the county executive made about there being "zero" impact on towns, with the report that states there will be an impact. Additionally, the point about this being a last-minute decision is confusing with the facts.

Stephen Powers replied that the county executive made a decision not to follow everything in the report. Since the county executive saw the statistics that the Sheriff's Patrol Unit "underperformed" by responding to only 11% of the calls around the county, and accounting for only 0.5% of the arrests, he believed the department could reorganize after the unit would be cut.

Mr. Powers stated the Anemone report did not say the unit should be cut, and the decision was made by the county executive who saw that the unit underperformed. Legislator Kantrowitz asked if the county executive told Mr. Anemone not to attend this meeting, and Mr. Powers said no.

Legislator Hood said it did not make sense to email all the questions legislators had so that answers to those could be sanitized by the county executive. Sheriff Falco said that the unit responds to many calls that are turned over to a town or village police department, which is reflected in the statistics.

Chair Wolfe said the Anemone report is a solution in search of a problem, and asked Mr. Powers how the consultant was selected by the county executive. Mr. Powers said that Mr. Anemone worked in the NYPD, and the county executive was in the NYPD. Mr. Powers said that the county executive selected him because he knew him and knew he worked on such reports. Chair Wolfe asked where the funds to pay for this study came from and Mr. Powers replied that he did not know.

ACTION: Finance Department should report to the committee as to the source of funds used to pay for the Anemone report.

Chair Wolfe said the contract never came before the legislature, and that he only recently obtained a copy of the contract. In Schedule A of the contract, the deliverables are outlined for Mr. Anemone to perform. Among them is the review of the report by the county executive, and the presentation of the report was to be made "to an audience selected by the Rockland County Executive." Additionally, the contract says that Mr. Anemone would only answer questions to individuals approved by the county executive. Mr. Anemone's absence today and the requirements dictated by the contract prove that the contract was basically between the county executive and himself, and as such, the county executive should refund the taxpayers the \$10,000 that was paid to Mr. Anemone.

Chair Wolfe also pointed to the list of individuals interviewed for this report, which says that four civilians were interviewed, but their names were not provided. Sheriff Falco said that he was told by Mr. Anemone that Mr. Day provided the names of residents to be interviewed about their opinions on the Sheriff's Department. Chair Wolfe responded that it was clear that the entire report was dictated and directed by the county executive.

Stephen Powers stated that every consultant that is contracted by the county is responsible to a department, and in this case the department this consultant reported to was the county executive's office. The report was released in the beginning of November, but the legislature did not immediately request an audience with Mr. Anemone. The county executive believed that Mr. Anemone has already fulfilled his obligations to the county. Chair Hood stated that if the legislature had commissioned the report and its author refused to address government officials in Rockland, the legislature would be crucified for such actions.

Legislator Grant stated that the contract called for a PowerPoint presentation by Mr. Anemone. The presentation said that the mission of the report was to create efficiencies and remove costly duplication of services. Sheriff Falco said the entire department submits annual reports and has worked on creating efficiencies that have also returned money to the county's bottom line. There are some points in the report that are good, and there are some that are incorrect. There are positions and programs in the Sheriff's Department that are funded by other governments as well.

Legislator Grant pointed to the part of the Anemone report that criticized the Sheriff's Department for being too top-heavy. Sheriff Falco noted that management has been downsized, but there are 65 part-time officers that equate to 30 full-time officers including the transport unit, and that requires more supervisors. Legislator Grant also pointed out that the report proposed the creation of a corporal, and officers who utilize bikes and Segway's. Sheriff Falco replied that this part of the report would increase the costs of the department. Legislator Grant also noted other parts of the PowerPoint presentation.

ACTION: The county executive's office will provide the names, addresses, and phone numbers of the individuals who were interviewed as part of Mr. Anemone's report to the legislature.

Mr. Powers replied after being asked that he did not know who the civilians were. Legislator Soskin stated that report was written by a former NYPD officer, and operations of the NYPD are far different than those in our suburban department, which utilizes individuals with very specific and diverse expertise.

Legislator Jobson and Legislator Moroney expressed their displeasure at various aspects of the study and report. Legislator Moroney added that he was concerned about the surge in drug activity in communities, and that underlined the need to preserve the Sheriff's Department. Sheriff Falco said that his department has been working with town police departments on the drug issue and will continue to do so.

Chair Hood said that the process involved with this study is problematic. A friend of the county executive's was hired, residents were picked to interview, the announcement was held in a controlled environment, and Mr. Anemone refused to attend and was probably told not to. There were many contradictions in various statements made by the county executive, and lies were told to the Sheriff and legislators. Sheriff Falco has been more than gracious during this politically motivated process.

ACTION: Counsel should research the possibility of billing the county executive for this report, and what the procedure would be to send a bill to Ed Day to pay for this report.

ACTION: Counsel should research the procedure to subpoena Mr. Anemone to answer questions before the legislature.

ACTION: County Executive's office should inform the legislature as to what the process for hiring Mr. Anemone was.

DISCUSSED

**MOTION TO ADJOURN: 6:45 PM
CAREY/JOBSON**

UNAN

"The Rockland County Legislature is committed to full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. To that end, the Legislature is committed to creating an accessible environment for all. To request accommodations that you may require, please call Damaris Alvarez at 845-638-5248 (845-708-7899 for TTY/TDD). Please request these accommodations three (3) days in advance so that we can seek to meet your needs."