

# The Legislature of Rockland County



**PHILIP SOSKIN**  
**LEGISLATOR-DISTRICT 7**  
**CHAIR, MULTI-SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES**  
**MULTI-SERVICES COMMITTEE**  
**TUESDAY MAY 26, 2015**  
**6:30 PM**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

LEG. P. SOSKIN, CHAIR  
LEG. T. EARL VICE CHAIR  
LEG. A. PAUL 2ND VICE  
LEG. I. SCHOENBERGER  
LEG. L. HOFSTEIN  
LEG. P. MORONEY

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

LEG. A. WIEDER

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

LEG. C. CAREY  
LEG. N. LOW-HOGAN  
LEG. A. WOLFE  
LEG. M. GRANT  
LEG. L. JOBSON  
LEG. J. MEYERS  
J. BIRNBAUM, ESQ  
DR. D. HAMMONEL  
DR. D. KRAUSHAAR  
DR. P. SCHNABEL RUPPERT D.O.  
M. McCARNEY-HAESCHE  
S. POWERS  
M. LEITZES  
R. HANSEN  
G. WREN, JR.  
J. GOLDSMITH  
J. FALLE  
J. KRIEGER  
J. SCHWARTZ

CHAIR SOSKIN CALLED THE MEETING TO ORDER AT: 6:45 PM

ADOPTION OF MINUTES OF APRIL 28, 2015, AND MAY 12, 2015 MEETING.

**MOTION TO ADOPT:**  
**MORONEY/PAUL**

**UNAN**

1. REF.#8862

APPROVING THE ACCEPTANCE OF A CONTINUATION GRANT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$530,538 [NCTD] WHICH IS FEDERALLY FUNDED BUT ADMINISTERED BY THE WESTCHESTER COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO HELP FUND ROCKLAND COUNTY'S RYAN WHITE PART A MEDICAL CASE MANAGEMENT, EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES AND HOUSING GRANT FOR HIV/AIDS PROGRAMS FOR THE PERIOD FROM MARCH 1, 2015 THROUGH FEBRUARY 29, 2016, APPROPRIATING \$1,200 [NCTD] OF EMPLOYEE HEALTH INSURANCE REIMBURSEMENT IN CONNECTION WITH THESE PROGRAMS, APPROVING THE ACCOMPANYING AGREEMENT WITH THE WESTCHESTER COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND AUTHORIZING THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE TO EXECUTE ALL NECESSARY DOCUMENTS INCLUDING THE AGREEMENT [DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH] (\$531,738)  
**(PATRICIA SCHNABEL RUPPERT COMMISSIONER OF HEALTH DEPARTMENT)**  
**DL#: 2015-01309**

**MOTION TO APPROVE:**  
**PAUL/MORONEY**

**TRANSFERRED TO B&F 5/26/15**  
**UNAN**

**ADDED SPONSORS: LEGS. SOSKIN, EARL, PAUL SCHOENBERGER, HOFSTEIN, MORONEY, JOBSON**

Deputy Health Commissioner Ron Hansen, stated that this grant is to help fund the County's Ryan White Part A medical case Management Program. The services provided through this program is ambulatory and outpatient medical care, early intervention and housing

Chair Soskin asked if there were any County dollar involved.

Mr. Hansen answered no County tax dollars are required to accept these grant funds.

Chair Soskin asked who the recipient of the services were.

Mr. Hansen answered that about 175 patients benefit from medical care services and others receive housing assistance.

Chair Soskin asked what the duration of their stay.

Mr. Hansen answered that it depends on the nature of the disease, for HIV/AIDS patients it could be years.

2. REF.# 8983                      APPROVING THE AGREEMENT WHICH MAY BE IN EXCESS OF \$100,000 WITH TIMOTHY HILL CHILDREN'S RANCH, INC., A LICENSED FOSTER CARE AGENCY, TO PROVIDE THE SERVICES REQUIRED BY SOCIAL SERVICES LAW § 398 FOR THE PERIOD FROM JANUARY 1, 2015 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2015 WITH TOTAL EXPENDITURES NOT TO EXCEED THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES' 2015 BUDGET FOR POSTER CARE SERVICES AND AUTHORIZING THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE TO EXECUTE THE ACCOMPANYING AGREEMENT [DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES]  
(SUSAN SHERWOOD COMMISSIONER OF SOCIAL SERVICES) DL#: 2015-01732

**MOTION TO APPROVE:  
SOSKIN/MORONEY, PAUL, EARL, SCHOENBERGER**

**TRANSFERRED TO B&F 5/26/15  
UNAN**

**ADDED SPONSORS: LEGS. SOSKIN, EARL, PAUL, SCHOENBERGER, HOFSTEIN, MORONEY, JOBSON**

Chair Soskin asked Mr. Fella to clarify that this resolution involved a new provider and also asked him if the services were offered in multi languages.

Mr. Fella explained that it is indeed a new provider being utilized for specific situations and services are provided in foreign language.

Chair Soskin asked what was the age range for children beneficiaries of this program.

Mr. Fella answered that it is for up to 18 year and old it is a residential placement, hoping that the person would be able to return both home and to a home environment.

Chair Soskin asked if most of these individual were from Rockland County.

Mr. Fella replied that any individual eligible for this program must be a Rockland resident.

Leg. Schoenberger asked for additional information on the licensed foster care agency and also wanted to know if this program is audited.

Mr. Fella explained that OCFS's job is to evaluate a service that can assist the person taking them from the most restricted environment into the less restricted environment. He also confirmed that this program is audited.

3. REF # 2973 APPROVING THE ACCEPTANCE OF A DONATION IN THE AMOUNT OF \$500 FROM FOUR WINDS HOSPITAL TO BE USED TOWARD THE PURCHASE OF MEALS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH'S ANNUAL CHILD AND ADOLESCENT CONFERENCE SCHEDULED FOR MAY 14, 2015 AT THE STONY POINT CENTER (DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH)  
(MICHAEL LEITZES COMMISSIONER OF MENTAL HEALTH) DL#: 2015-01438

**MOTION TO APPROVE:**  
**SOSKIN/PAUL, EARL, SCHOENBERGER**

**TRANSFERRED TO B&F 5/26/15**  
**UNAN**

**ADDED SPONSORS: LEGS. SOSKIN, EARL, PAUL, SCHOENBERGER, HOFSTEIN, MORONEY, JOBSON**

Michael Leitzes, Commissioner of Mental Health, stated that this resolution is to approve the acceptance of a donation from Four Winds Hospital.

Chair Soskin asked if this program existed before.

Mr. Leitzes confirmed that this program has run in the past, including last year in 2014.

4. REF.# 9019 APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$40,000 FROM VARIOUS COUNTY AND NON-COUNTY SITES THAT USE PARTICIPANTS IN THE YOUTH BUREAU'S ENVIRONMENTAL CORPS INTERNSHIP PROGRAM FOR THE PERIOD JUNE 1, 2015 THROUGH AUGUST 7, 2015 [YOUTH BUREAU] (40,000)  
(MARIANNE McCARNEY-HAESCHE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF YOUTH BUREAU) DL#: 2015-00960

**MOTION TO APPROVE:**  
**SOSKIN/PAUL**

**TRANSFERRED TO B&F 5/26/15**  
**UNAN**

**ADDED SPONSORS: LEGS. SOSKIN, EARL, PAUL, SCHOENBERGER, HOFSTEIN, MORONEY, JOBSON**

Marianne McCarney-Haesche, Assistant Director of Youth Bureau, stated that this is an Environmental corps internship program for people at least 17 years of age who want to perform environmental community service this summer in the County.

Chair Soskin asked how long has this program been in effect?

Mrs. McCarney-Haesche answered that this summer program has been in existence now for 13 years.

5. REF.# 8886 SETTING A DATE FOR A PUBLIC HEARING: A LOCAL LAW AMENDING CHAPTER 349 OF THE LAWS OF ROCKLAND COUNTY TO INCLUDE, AMONG OTHER THINGS, THE SMOKING OF ELECTRONIC CIGARETTES  
(HON. ANEY PAUL LEGISLATURE)

**MOTION TO APPROVE:**  
**PAUL/SOSKIN, SCHOENBERGER**

**UNAN**

**ADDED CO-SPONSORS: LEGS. SOSKIN, EARL, SCHOENBERGER, HOFSTEIN, MORONEY, JOBSON**

Leg. Paul explained that E cigarettes still raises health and safety concerns. Studies show that the use among young adolescents is increasing.

Chair Soskin stated that this item after being discussed will be sent to the full Legislature and they will set a date for a public hearing.

6 REF. # 8220

SUPPORTING THE ROCKLAND CODES INITIATIVE LAUNCHED BY COUNTY EXECUTIVE EDWIN J. DAY TO COMBAT ILLEGAL AND SUBSTANDARD HOUSING IN ROCKLAND COUNTY  
(HONS. CHRISTOPHER J. CAREY, LON M. HOFSTEIN, AND JOSEPH L. MEYERS)  
SUBJECT TO APPROVAL OF PPW

MOTION TO DISCUSS:  
SOSKIN/SCHOENBERGER

DEFERRED

**ACTION: Requesting backup for the Resolution from the County Executive and the Department of Health detailing the initiative. We currently only possess press releases.**

**We need the County Executive and the Department of Health to provide the specific language of the Sanitary Code to be invoked.**

**Requesting from Gordon Wren the minutes/summary of meetings regarding the Housing Initiative since January 2014.**

Housing Initiative Discussion:

Chair Soskin did not want to solicit motions to vote without further information from the County Executive, including a written report on the proposal. He explained that our Legislators only possess information that was provided to the press, and lack detail from the County Executive and Department of Health on the utilization of the Sanitary Code for housing enforcement. He supports our emergency services personnel, but wants to proceed in a legal fashion.

Leg. Schoenberger expressed his concerns about the potential exclusion of dwellings smaller than three-family homes and whether or not the Sanitary Code would be changed, which is a decision that would require further legal analysis. However, he has questions about the program and wants to see it adopted and implemented correctly. He said that he has only seen information from the press, or what the press had said that the County Executive promotes. He stated that the resolution should be tabled until all the facts had been gathered. He understands that the registry will only apply to multifamily homes of three families or more, but since the goal is to help protect our emergency services personnel he questioned if the program should be applicable to all homeowners. He said that he has not seen a proposed change to the Sanitary Code yet and would like to see the document that they are being asked to support, endorse and approved, which he doesn't think that is an unreasonable request. He does not know whether the County Executive's initiative will pass the multi-prong test established by the Court of Appeals and he also believes this resolution to be premature.

Patricia Schnabel Ruppert, Commissioner of Health Department, stated that she is happy to correct any misunderstanding and explain it to the public. There is no need to change the Sanitary Code, which they have no authority to do. The Sanitary Codes amendments are only done through Albany.

The initiative is divided into 4 phases:

- 1) Target illegal, unsafe housing.
- 2) Online reporting from which individuals can submit reports of suspected illegal housing ( worst landlord)
- 3) Multiple dwelling registry for rentals.
- 4) Enhanced adjudication process.

The Legislature requested that Dr. Ruppert provide a written report including details on the four phases.

Leg. Carey stated that he spoke of Gordon Wren's recent discussion at the Rockland Municipal Planning Federation. Mr. Wren was very upset about housing conditions, and said action now is a life and death issue. Emergency services personnel are putting their lives on the line.

Leg. Low-Hogan said she fully supports this initiative and agreed with what has been stated by several people that this is a priority issue. She said is in favor of getting a copy of the initiative with all the specifics before they can consider this in this committee or any other committee. Leg Low-Hogan stated that her concerns were that this resolution doesn't reference the Sanitary Code, which is necessary. The DOH addressed pollution control and the safety of mercury storage in use from the Sanitary Code. Leg Low-Hogan explained that she is bringing these things up because the County Executive is asking us to support this initiative. She wants the County Executive to provide the language of the Sanitary Code to be invoked.

Chair Soskin explained that the Sanitary Code is meant for specific items. He is for the firefighters and the emergency service workers as they put their lives on line.

Leg Hofstein asked Chair Soskin to let the firefighters and their senior representatives present their concerns. The County Legislature had recently warbled on for an hour about a "statue" but could not seem to stop whining about the proposed resolution for half an hour to hear the concerns of those who had come to address their representatives.

Gordon Wren, explained how the situation of illegal housing is dire. Illegal conversions occurring every day. Town of Ramapo and Village of Spring Valley complaints that local zoning codes are not being properly enforced. Complaints continue unabated. Conversions are lucrative to landlords. Tenants pay in cash. People are living in illegally converted basements and attics. The most serious dangers are in multi-family, multiple dwellings. Mr. Wren stated that the failure to create effective means of housing enforcement is reflective of years of frustration with dysfunctional government bodies at all levels and this is deadly serious.

Chair Soskin explained that this is not a memorialized resolution, because it is leading to something much more serious.

Leg Meyers stated that though there was nothing wrong with further exploration of the issue. It should not hold up a mere memorializing resolution, much less provoke panic on a matter where controversy was technical rather than substantive. He doesn't understand why everybody is getting so shrill unless there is something that is more than meets the eye, which is possible.

Mike Kramer, from the Rockland County Fire Advisory Board, spoke about how illegal housing is putting emergency service responders in severe danger. It is time for a new mind set for fire inspectors, housing inspectors, code enforcement officers, prosecutors, judges, town planning board members and elected officials. An illegal room is worth \$125.00 in cash per week, how much is a firefighter's life worth?

John Krieger, Chairman of the Rockland County Illegal Housing Task Force, Deputy Fire Coordinator in Rockland County, a volunteer firefighter in west Haverstraw and retired firefighter from New York City said that he went to too many funerals and saw too many people get hurt down in the City and now in Rockland. In 2005 he lost 2 brothers and 2011 saw his captain in West Haverstraw go down and almost got kill in an illegal housing. They are all volunteers and they are here to correct the system. They are not here to attend funerals and take out body bags. The multi-family fire that recently happened in Brooklyn will certainly happen here. This is not a warning. This is not a threat. It's going to happen.

Justin Schwartz, volunteer firefighter for Spring Valley for over 35 years, proud member of this task force said that the Town of Ramapo and the Village of Spring Valley failed at housing enforcement.. He added that the task force has been collecting court records for the last 6 month, and they have not complied with the minimum standards to require to uphold the law relating to certificates of occupancy and temporary certificates of occupancy. Also fire and property safety inspections have not complied with the minimal standards. Some of the buildings in Spring Valley haven't been inspected for over 13 years. Constructions without permits occur all the time. Properties have no working smoke detectors. Inspections fail. The lives of emergency personnel are placed in jeopardy. They don't give a damn about the people's lives. They are pontificating on legalese. Their Legislators are fiddling while the county is burning.

Chair Soskin reminded the public that most of the Committee is in favor of protecting all fire personnel, but the must follow procedures. Chair Soskin explained that the Sanitary Code is meant for specific items. "He is for the firefighters and the emergency service workers as they put their lives on the line. The office of the County Executive does anything they want and they expect us to approve it. We value the lives of the men and women out there and want to make sure everybody is protected. The law is the law is an approval process, this needs to be done in a proper basis.

Leg Cornell stated that she can't think of a more critical issue, she has heard enough over the years to know that illegal housing is a big problem. It is like drugs, there is money and this is what keeps it going. They have to protect the lives of tenants and first responders who are at risk due to illegal unsafe housing condition cause by unscrupulous landlords.

Chair Soskin said once again they are out to protect the fire fighters, but they don't have all the details. They are missing details on the Sanitary Codes.

Leg. Schoenberger asked why they should default the process if they don't have all the documents.

Chair Soskin stated that they passed a resolution to discuss the matter.

7. REF. # **2871A** CONFIRMING THE APPOINTMENT OF DAVID H. KRAUSHAAR, DDS, WEST NYACK,  
NEW YORK TO THE ROCKLAND COUNTY BOARD OF GOVERNORS  
[COUNTY EXECUTIVE]  
(EDWIN J. DAY COUNTY EXECUTIVE)

**MOTION TO APPROVE:**

**SOSKIN/SCHOENBERGER, EARL**

**UNAN**

**ADDED SPONSORS: LEGS. SOSKIN, EARL, PAUL, SCHOENBERGER, HOFSTEIN, MORONEY, JOBSON**

Dr. David H. Kraushaar, DDS. in West Nyack, introduced himself and mentioned his experience on Medicare and Medicaid and his eight years serving on the Board of Health.

Leg. Schoenberger and Leg. Jobson congratulated Dr. Kraushaar on his appointment.

Chair Soskin said he was very impressed with Dr. Kraushaar tremendous record and believes that the county will benefit from his experience.

8. REF. # **2871B** CONFIRMING THE APPOINTMENT OF HOWARD N. HELLMAN, MONTEBELLO,  
NEW YORK TO THE ROCKLAND COUNTY BOARD OF GOVERNORS  
[COUNTY EXECUTIVE]  
(EDWIN J. DAY COUNTY EXECUTIVE)

**MOTION TO APPROVE:**

**DEFERRED**

9. REF. # **2962** CONFIRMING THE APPOINTMENT OF DR. DONALD N. HAMMOND, NYACK,  
NEW YORK TO THE ROCKLAND COUNTY OFFICE FOR THE AGING ADVISORY  
COUNCIL  
(EDWIN J. DAY COUNTY EXECUTIVE)

**MOTION TO APPROVE:**

**SOSKIN/PAUL**

**UNAN**

**ADDED SPONSORS: LEGS. SOSKIN, EARL, PAUL, SCHOEBERGER, HOFSTEIN, MORONEY, JOBSON**

Dr. Donald N. Hammond thanked the County Executive Office for and the Legislature for this appointment. A life time resident of Rockland County with 30 years of not-for-profit work experience. Dr. Hammond presently serves as president of Meals on Wheels. He state that it is really an honor and privilege to join the Office for Aging Advisory Council. Their goal is to make Rockland County a better place for all seniors to live.

Chair Soskin congratulated Dr. Hammond on his new appointment.

**MOTION TO ADJOURN: 8:16 PM**

**SCHOENBERGER/SOSKIN**

**UNAN**

**Respectfully, Submitted**

**Lesly Senatus, Committee Clerk**

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