

# The Legislature of Rockland County



**JAY HOOD, JR.**

*Legislator – District 3*

Chair, Public Safety Committee

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Leg. J. Hood, Jr., Chair  
Leg. T. Earl, Vice Chair  
Leg. C. Carey  
Leg. E. Day  
Leg. A. Paul  
Leg. A. Wieder  
Leg. A. Wolfe

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

E. Yeger, Esq.  
Leg. Soskin  
Chief Van Cura  
J. Hunderfund  
L. Toole

Leg. Jobson  
Chief O'Shea  
Chief Osborn  
R. W. Hamilton

S. Mathews  
Chief Sullivan  
Lt. Delo  
M. Szotyory

MINUTES  
***PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE***  
TUESDAY, MAY 8, 2012  
**5:00 PM**

ROLL CALL

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ADOPTION OF MINUTES, MEETING OF APRIL 24, 2012

**MOTION TO ADOPT:  
DAY/CAREY**

**UNAN**

1. REF. #6704 - APPROVING AN INTERMUNICIPAL COOPERATION AGREEMENT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$150,000 BETWEEN THE COUNTY OF ROCKLAND AND THE TOWN OF RAMAPO POLICE DEPARTMENT FOR REIMBURSEMENT FOR ONE POLICE OFFICER TO THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S SPECIAL INVESTIGATION UNIT TO WORK ON CARP (CRIMES AGAINST REVENUE PROSECUTION) FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2012 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2012 AND AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF THE AGREEMENTS BY THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE (OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY) (\$150,000) (THOMAS ZUGIBE, DISTRICT ATTORNEY)

**MOTION TO APPROVE:  
EARL/CAREY, DAY, WOLFE**

**UNAN  
TRANSFER TO B&F 5/8/12**

**ADDED SPONSORS: LEGS. HOOD, JR., EARL, CAREY, DAY, PAUL, WIEDER, WOLFE, JOBSON, SOSKIN**

2. REF. #6704 - APPROVING PURCHASES IN EXCESS OF \$100,000 IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$136,160 FROM EDUCATION & ASSISTANCE CORPORATION FOR DRUG COURT CASE MANAGEMENT CONSULTATION SERVICES UNDER RFP-RC-2011-025 FOR THE PERIOD FROM JANUARY 1, 2012 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2012 WITH ALL PURCHASES TO BE MADE BY FORMAL PURCHASE ORDER (DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE) (\$136,160) (THOMAS ZUGIBE, DISTRICT ATTORNEY)

**MOTION TO APPROVE:**  
**DAY/CAREY, PAUL**

**UNAN**  
**TRANSFER TO B&F 5/8/12**

**ADDED SPONSORS: LEGS. HOOD, JR., EARL, CAREY, DAY, PAUL, WIEDER, WOLFE, JOBSON, SOSKIN**

3. REF. #9361 - APPROVING ACCEPTANCE OF GRANT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$343,746 (NCTD) FROM THE NEW YORK STATE OFFICE OF HOMELAND SECURITY – LAW ENFORCEMENT TERRORISM PREVENTION PROGRAM (LETPP) GRANT (NO. WM11972912) FOR THE PERIOD SEPTEMBER 1, 2011 THROUGH AUGUST 31, 2014 AND AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF THE NECESSARY GRANT DOCUMENTS BY THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE (SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT) (\$343,746) (LOUIS FALCO, SHERIFF)

**MOTION TO APPROVE:**  
**EARL/WOLFE, PAUL, CAREY**

**UNAN**  
**TRANSFER TO B&F 5/8/12**

**ADDED SPONSORS: LEGS. HOOD, JR., EARL, CAREY, DAY, PAUL, WIEDER, WOLFE, JOBSON, SOSKIN**

4. REF. #9480 - DISCUSSION ITEM: ROCKLAND COUNTY OFFICE OF MEDICAL EXAMINER AND INTERACTIONS WITH ROCKLAND COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENTS (HON. JAY HOOD, JR., HON EDWIN J. DAY, LEGISLATURE)

**RESCHEDULED FROM THE APRIL 24, 2012 MEETING**

Piermont Police Chief Michael O'Shea, speaking as President of the Rockland Police Chiefs Association, stated there is a total lack of cooperation and no relationship with Dr. Taff, the Medical Examiner. Chief O'Shea noted that Dr. Taff's management style and his lack of communication has alienated him from the police who say he doesn't show up for crime scenes and is indifferent to the needs of law enforcement. Police officers and detectives have had to wait hours for the Medical Examiner's office to respond to crime scenes. This affects the victims and the families they are trying to help.

Clarkstown Police Chief Michael Sullivan echoed concerns about the slow response and the need for more cooperation. He stressed the need for the Medical Examiner to be part of the team and work with them.

Suffern Police Chief Clark Osborn agrees with the criticism and about problems getting information from Taff.

South Nyack-Grand View Police Chief Robert Van Cura said that this particular Medical Examiner has had very little contact with them and what contact they have had has been negative. Dr. Taff doesn't like to send staff to unattended deaths which means they can be stuck with a body for hours until the office responds or they find another doctor familiar with the person to sign the death certificate.

Clarkstown Detective Lt. Charles Delo spoke about a particular incident where police officers and detectives had to wait hours for the Medical Examiners office to respond and this was very upsetting to the family members.

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Chair Hood, Jr. questioned whether these delays caused overtime for the departments to which Chief O'Shea said yes it can.

Richard Hamilton, a former investigator for the Medical Examiners office under Dr. Zugibe, said that they had worked on building a good office over the years and knew how to deal with both law enforcement and the public. This Medical Examiner is rude and crude.

Sean Mathews, Chief of Staff, stated that Rockland County has been blessed to have had very competent Medical Examiners over the years with Drs. Zugibe and Thanning. There is a residency requirement and a high level of credentials that come with this position and make it difficult to place. Mr. Mathews said they are looking at all factors.

Leg. Day said he was cringing listening to the Chiefs; to have a Medical Examiner with a 3 hour response time is unacceptable. Leg. Day also noted the Chiefs had stated they had no call/contact list and this should be remedied immediately.

Leg. Wolfe questioned Mr. Mathews on whether they were searching for a replacement. Mr. Mathews said they were just hearing about these specific problems. Dr. Taff was hired for his credentials; they are not actively searching but have discussed the situation with Dr. Facelle and the Personnel Department.

Leg. Wolfe said he has had his own issues with Dr. Taff over the organ donation issue and has heard many complaints regarding his management style. Leg. Wolfe stated he has an impeccable resume and recognizes he is a very qualified individual but is deeply concerned about the complaints surrounding the office and its responsiveness to the needs of the Community and therefore would in no way vote to approve his reappointment.

Chair Hood, Jr. asked why Dr. Taff was not present even though he had been invited to attend. Mr. Mathews stated he told both Dr. Taff and Dr. Facelle that he would represent the Administration at the meeting tonight and they did not have to come.

Leg. Earl requested that Dr. Taff attend the next Public Safety meeting so the members would have an opportunity to ask questions. Mr. Mathews said he would not commit to his appearance but would take it under advisement. At this time, they have not come to any decision regarding his reappointment; it could go in either direction.

Chair Hood, Jr. stated if Dr. Taff was not going to be considered for reappointment then there was no need for him to attend the next meeting and he would accept that. Chair Hood, Jr. stated he hoped they would be putting out a request for other potential candidates and he was ready to not vote for Dr. Taff's reappointment.

Leg. Jobson stated he hoped the County Executive office would be looking in another direction rather than reappointing Dr. Taff after listening to what the Police Chiefs have said tonight and he would not support his reappointment.

Leg. Day agreed with Chair Hood, Jr. that if the County Executive was not going to submit a referral for Dr. Taff's reappointment, there was no reason for Dr. Taff to come to a meeting.

Mr. Mathews suggested the Police Chiefs set up a meeting with Commissioner Facelle directly to voice their concerns.

**ACTIONS:**

- **Committee requested the County Executive office implement a contact/call list immediately**
- **Committee clerk to invite Medical Examiner Dr. Taff to the next Public Safety meeting on May 29<sup>th</sup>**
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**MOTION TO ADJOURN: 6:00 PM  
DAY/WOLFE**

**UNAN**

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