

The Legislature of Rockland County



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

MINUTES
MULTI-SERVICES COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 2012
6:00 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

LEG. P. SOSKIN, CHAIR
LEG. J. HOOD, JR., VICE-CHAIR
LEG. T. EARL, 2nd VICE-CHAIR
LEG. A. PAUL
LEG. D. JOBSON
LEG. P. MORONEY
LEG. J. MEYERS (arrived 6:15)

OTHERS PRESENT:

LEG. A. WIEDER	LEG. N. LOW-HOGAN	LEG. A. WOLFE
LEG. C. CAREY	V. ALTIERI	N. DOLINER
LEG. GRANT	K. SINCERBOX (arrived 6:30)	S. GROGAN
P. BRENNAN	E. YEGER, ESQ.	R. MCKAY, ESQ.
L. BABCOCK	K. STAVISKY	C. THOMAS
J. COE	S. SHERWOOD	M. ZIPPILLI
L. WEISSMAN	DR. C. WOOD	MEDIA

CHAIR SOSKIN CALLED THE MEETING TO ORDER AT 6:10 PM

ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES OF THE 11/13/12 MEETING

MOTION TO ADOPT:

HOOD, JR./PAUL

UNAN

1. REF. #8825 - REAFFIRMING ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO EXIST AND TAKE SUCH ACTIONS AS MAY BE NECESSARY TO DEFEND ITSELF AGAINST OUTSIDE ATTACKS
(HON. I. SCHOENBERGER, LEGISLATURE)

ADDED CO-SPONSORS: SOSKIN, HOOD, JR., EARL, PAUL, MEYERS, JOBSON, MORONEY

MOTION TO APPROVE AS AMENDED:

SOSKIN/HOOD, JR., EARL, PAUL, MEYERS, JOBSON, MORONEY

UNAN

ACTION: As the number of rockets aimed from Gaza into Israel increased from the time of writing the resolution, from 900 to 1400 rocket attacks, legal counsel will make changes to the resolution to reflect the current statistics, the increased death toll, and the subsequent cease fire that was reached.

Chair Soskin spoke about the terror experienced by his granddaughter, who is going to school in Jerusalem. He said she had been on her way to the synagogue to pray when the sirens went off, and ran to the synagogue. In parts of Israel, this is an every day occurrence. He spoke about people who say it is wrong to fire back and asked, "What would you do if rockets were falling on Monsey? On New City? Would we do nothing? No country would." He stated that he was glad his colleagues put in the resolution and that he was proud of the Legislature and those in Rockland County who have consistently supported the right thing.

2. REF. #7498 - APPROVING A SECOND OPTION TO RENEW FOR AN ADDITIONAL ONE YEAR TERM AND AMENDING AN AGREEMENT IN EXCESS OF \$100,000 WITH ADVANCED ANALYTICAL TECHNOLOGIES, INC. FOR LABORATORY ANALYTICAL SERVICES IN THE ADDITIONAL AMOUNT OF \$170,000 FOR A TOTAL CONTRACT SUM NOT TO EXCEED \$470,000 FOR THE PERIOD FROM JANUARY 1, 2013 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2013 UNDER RFB-RC-2010-027 AND AUTHORIZING ITS EXECUTION BY THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE [DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH] (\$470,000) (DR. J. FACELLE, COMMISSIONER, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH)

ADDED SPONSORS: SOSKIN, HOOD, JR., EARL, PAUL, JOBSON, MORONEY

**MOTION TO APPROVE:
SOSKIN/MORONEY**

**TRANSFERRED TO B & F
UNAN**

ACTION: Department of Health will provide the contract amounts for the last 2-3 years.

Chair Soskin asked if the amount was based on the prior year? Deputy Commissioner K. Henry stated it was. Last year, it was \$70,000, and \$152,000 the year prior. Every three years, it is mandated to do special organic testing of water samples.

3. REF. #9263 - APPROVING ACCEPTANCE OF GRANT FUNDS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$45,326 (NCTD) SAFETY NET ASSISTANCE PROJECT (SNAP) PROCESS AND TECHNOLOGY IMPROVEMENT GRANT FROM THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (USDA) FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE AGENCY TO PURCHASE SCANNING EQUIPMENT AND ACCESSORIES IN ORDER TO HELP INCREASE ACCESS BY ELIGIBLE HOUSEHOLDS TO SNAP BENEFITS FOR THE PERIOD SEPTEMBER 30, 2012 THROUGH AUGUST 30, 2015 AND AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF ALL GRANT DOCUMENTS BY THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE [DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES] (\$45,326) (S. SHERWOOD, COMMISSIONER, DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES)

ADDED SPONSORS: SOSKIN, HOOD, JR., EARL, PAUL, JOBSON, MORONEY

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

**TRANSFERRED TO B & F
UNAN**

Commissioner Sherwood stated that the grant was received from the USDA, with no local share, no taxpayer money, no need to get more employees or do more paperwork, just acquire equipment to do a better job. It is a huge help, as they are receiving 30-40 food stamp applications a day. 33,000 of the 42,000 recipients are kids. Chair Soskin asked if it would stop fraud? Commissioner Sherwood said fraud is fraud, but the equipment would help DSS employees and clients by getting their information into the system. Leg. Moroney asked how they arrived at that number of children and if it has increased? Commissioner Sherwood said that if the family was eligible, then the children were, and the food stamp credit is contingent on the number of kids in the family. The food stamp caseload has doubled the last three years nationwide. The numbers match our poverty numbers. More elderly are receiving it that didn't know they were eligible. Also, some didn't know that you could get it if you worked. Chair Soskin congratulated the department for working through the storm.

4. REF. #5726 - REDESIGNATING THE ROCKLAND COUNTY EXECUTIVE'S OFFICE AS THE TOURISM PROMOTION AGENCY FOR THE COUNTY OF ROCKLAND – FISCAL YEAR 2012-2013 (S. DEGROAT, COMMISSIONER, FINANCE)

ADDED SPONSORS: SOSKIN, HOOD, JR., EARL, PAUL, JOBSON, MORONEY

**MOTION TO APPROVE:
SOSKIN/MEYERS**

UNAN

Leg. Paul asked how the department functioned now with fewer employees? K. Sincerbox, County Executive's Office, stated that this has been done for a number of years, having an existing agency to accept funding. Leg. Myers said that any agency in the county could be designated to receive funding. He said it should probably be the Finance Department that is designated, since that's where the employee works, but that is technically part of the County Executive's Office.

5. REF. #9209 - DISCUSSION ITEM – BOARD OF ELECTIONS (BOE) REVIEW OF VOTING OPERATIONS ON ELECTION DAY (HON. A. WOLFE, LEGISLATURE)

DISCUSSED

ACTION: Leg. Wolfe requested that the Board of Elections provide information as to what is involved for poll worker training.

Leg. Wolfe thanked the Board of Elections Commissioner Designee, Kristen Stavisky, for attending the meeting. He stated that he appreciates that Election Day is a crazy day and thanked the Board of Elections for all they do. He said there were challenges this election, besides the storm and because it was a presidential election, but because there was a certain political energy. Some problems occurred along the way. Some were solved simply with a phone call, but some touched on disenfranchisement. Poll workers asking for voters' identification is an issue all of the time. If identity is already

established, it is not allowed to ask. He spoke about difficulty for some non-English speaking voters. In one polling place, he said Fox News was playing and poll workers responded to complaints by saying it was informational and refused to shut it off. There were reports of an increase in surliness, defensiveness, and a lack of cooperation. He said it is a long, difficult day, but wanted to highlight this and introduced Joseph Coe, who had specific training on Election Day protocols. J. Coe, Haverstraw, thanked Legs. Wolfe and Hood, Jr. for initiating this discussion. He spoke about systemic racism and ageism in the county. As a trained election inspector, he said he understands both sides and it is not related to party affiliation. He witnessed a Latino couple at his poll, and the wife was a new citizen and only spoke Spanish. Her husband needed to translate and said poll workers told them that she wasn't registered and couldn't vote. J. Coe intervened and told them to give her a provisional ballot. The poll workers said they called the BOE and were told they couldn't give one. Kristen Stavisky, Chairwoman of the Rockland County Democratic Committee, was called to intervene, as the couple had been told they would need to go to New City and appear before a judge. J. Coe obtained poll watcher credentials and went around the polls in the county. He said numerous people in the county related that they were asked for ID. He said he believes there is an unconscious, not intentional racism, but that white voters are treated differently. Leg. Hood, Jr. stated that a couple where he votes were asked for ID, which backed up the line. Some people might have left and not voted, because it took too long. He said that some of the poll workers appear to have difficulty to deal with a situation if pressure is put on them and new workers needed to be recruited. Haverstraw needs well-trained and bright people who can translate and speak Spanish fluently. He said the Primary election went well, but the General Election was different. He spoke about the people near polls harassing voters, knocking on car windows, and making voters uncomfortable. Perhaps it could be addressed as a safety issue and the police could cordon it off and expand beyond the 100 feet allowed to campaign. He didn't want to squash the rights of free speech, but his poll site has a narrow entry and there was congestion. Leg. Hood, Jr. said that, by and large, it was well run and the department did a great job. He congratulated the workers and both commissioners. Leg. Wolfe stated that there needed to be a clear policy to err on the side of inclusion, not exclusion, and to provide an affidavit to vote. It could be thrown out afterward, if not valid. He spoke about a problem at Nyack College, where students were not given the opportunity to vote that had been displaced by Hurricane Sandy. The directive not to provide provisional ballots came from the Board of Elections. Chair Soskin said they would ask the Board of Elections to make another presentation in a few weeks. He asked if it was legal to ask for ID when arriving at the poll? Commissioner Babcock said that when a new voter doesn't give their license or social security numbers for verification, they are asked for ID the first time they vote. The Friday before Election Day, due to the storm, 60-80 polls had no power. He was told by the EOC that they were a low priority, and by Saturday, they were offered some assistance. The National Guard was a tremendous help with generators and O&R came through. 115,000 had the opportunity to vote, plus absentees. Only one site had no power by Election Day. There is a backlog and they are still counting. They weren't without ballots at any location. An executive order caused a lot of backlog. Leg. Earl thanked Legs. Wolfe and Hood, Jr. for this discussion, and Joseph Coe, who he remembered seeing that night and had still been upset by what had transpired at the polls. He said he had concerns about the training of poll workers and hoped it would be addressed before the next election. He asked where the responsibility starts and if there are poll supervisors? Commissioner Babcock invited all present to sit in on a three-hour training session, which is followed by a test. He said there were 16 phone lines ringing constantly for 15 hours the entire Election Day. There no longer are poll captains. They took it to heart and bossed people around. All poll workers are equal and call the Board of Elections and they try to handle problems over the phone. 1300 people are employed as poll workers. 99% work to interpret the rules and sometimes misinterpret them, not meaning to disenfranchise. 231 called in right before the election to not work, out of 1300. Leg. Wieder said this is a very important issue, as voting is a sacred right. People died for what makes this the greatest democracy. There have been complaints over the years of not giving people the opportunity to vote by an affidavit. Poll workers are not paid enough and work long hours, but what is the process? Commissioner Babcock said if someone claims they should vote, they try to help them find their election district, if it is a supersite. Poll workers are told not to fight, give an affidavit, not to put it in the machine, and it will be determined later if the registration is correct. Poll workers have affidavit envelopes. Leg. Wieder said that it seems like people who want to vote by affidavit, have to jump through hoops to get one. It should be automatic, if the name is not in the book, and he hoped it would be rectified. It is a horrific experience coming to the country, becoming a citizen, and being turned away your first time voting. Commissioner Babcock spoke about poll watchers wanting to see results that night and look at tapes that come out of the machine. In a big election district, the tape can be 22 feet long. Nothing can be processed until the USB stick and the tape are back at the warehouse. Copies take 15 minutes to print, so if someone is checking 22 feet of tape, it delays the poll workers, who have been there all day. They were done by 11:45 P.M.

MOTION TO ADJOURN: (7:15 PM)
JOBSON/HOOD, JR.

UNAN

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