

# The Legislature of Rockland County



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

**MINUTES  
MULTI-SERVICES COMMITTEE  
TUESDAY APRIL 28, 2015  
6:30 PM**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

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

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

LEG. N. LOW-HOGAN  
LEG. H. CORNELL  
LEG. C. CAREY  
LEG. M. GRANT  
LEG. D. JOBSON  
LEG. J. MEYERS  
J. BIRNBAUM, ESQ  
E. YEGER, ESQ  
S. POWERS  
B. POLATSECK

DR. P. SCHNABEL RUPPERT, D.O.  
P. BRENNAN  
E. HILL  
R. MAHER, JR.  
S. PRICE  
R. TOMPKIN  
H. LENO  
M. ROSEN  
A. SOLIS  
L. DORCELLY  
W. TROTMAN  
M. HOGAN  
K. WEBBER  
R. KAUFMAN  
S. WHITE  
R. RILEY  
Y. EISENBACH  
A. WALDMAN  
M. RILEY

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

LEG. P. MORONEY

CHAIR SOSKIN CALLED THE MEETING TO ORDER AT 6:40 PM

**1. REF.# 8896**

APPROVING AN AMENDMENT AND EXTENSION TO AGREEMENT WITH TREX PLANNING ASSOCIATES FOR AN EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICE PLANNING CONSULTANT TO REVIEW AND UPDATE THE MASS CASUALTY INCIDENT PLAN AND MUTUAL AID PLAN UNDER RFP-RC-2012-021 IN THE ADDITIONAL AMOUNT OF \$70,800 FOR THE PERIOD FROM JANUARY 7, 2015 THROUGH JANUARY 6, 2016 WITH TWO (2) REMAINING ONE (1) YEAR OPTIONS FOR A TOTAL AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$190,200 FROM THE COMMENCEMENT DATE OF JANUARY 7, 2013 THROUGH JANUARY 6, 2016 AND AUTHORIZING ITS EXECUTION BY THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE [DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL SERVICES - DIVISION OF PURCHASING] (\$190,200)  
**(PAUL J. BRENNAN DIRECTOR OF DGS-PURCHASING) DL#:2015-01356**

**MOTION TO APPROVE:  
SOSKIN/PAUL**

**TRANSFERRED TO B&F 4/28/15  
UNAN**

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

Chair Soskin asked if this was a new resolution being adopted.

Mr. Brennan, Purchasing Director, replied no, it is a resolution that needs to be updated and reviewed on an annual basis.

2. REF.# **9263** APPROVING THE AGREEMENT IN EXCESS OF \$100,000 WITH CENTER FOR SAFETY & CHANGE, INC. TO PROVIDE NON-RESIDENTIAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES TO THE RESIDENTS OF ROCKLAND COUNTY IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$400,679 WHICH INCLUDES A 25% LOCAL SHARE FOR THE PERIOD FROM JANUARY 1, 2015 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2015 AND AUTHORIZING ITS EXECUTION BY THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE [DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES] (\$400,679)  
(SUSAN SHERWOOD COMMISSIONER OF SOCIAL SERVICES) DL#:2015-01115

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

**TRANSFERRED TO B&F 4/28/15**  
**UNAN**

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

Commissioner Sherwood stated that it is a contract with the sole source County provider, Center for Safety & Change of amount of \$400,679.00. 75% comes from State and 25% represents local Share. The Center provides multiple services throughout the course of the year. She also said that the Department of Social Services works very closely everyday on domestic violence issues.

3. REF # **2321A** CONFIRMING THE APPOINTMENT OF ALMAR JAVIER SOLIS, POMONA, NEW YORK TO THE ROCKLAND COUNTY HUMAN RIGHT COMMISSION  
(EDWIN J. DAY COUNTY EXECUTIVE) DL#:2015-01182

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

**UNAN**

**ADDED SPONSORS:LEGS SOSKIN, EARL, PAUL, SCHOENBERGER, WIEDER, HOFSTEIN, JOBSON, CORNELL, CAREY, GRANT**

Mr. Almar Javier Solis introduced himself as a family man who came from the Philippines and has been living in the States since 1988.

Leg. Schoenberger asked Mr. Solis to explain to the committee why he would want to be on the human right commission.

Mr. Solis answered that his love for the community and the desire to protect and defend the rights of every citizen in the United States of America are what drove him to be part of the Human Rights Commission.

4. REF.# **2321B** CONFIRMING THE APPOINTMENT OF ROBERT C. MAHER, JR. VALLEY COTTAGE, NEW YORK TO THE ROCKLAND COUNTY HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION  
(EDWIN J. DAY COUNTY EXECUTIVE) DL#:2015-01233

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

**UNAN**

**ADDED SPONSORS:LEGS. SOSKIN, EARL, PAUL, SCHOENBERGER, WIEDER, HOFSTEIN, JOBSON, CORNELL, CAREY**

Mr. Robert C. Maher, Jr. introduced himself and explained he has a 24 year of career with an organization called TOUCH, which helps people with the HIV virus. He added that this position will help him in the fight of injustice and puts him in a better place to help people facing human rights issues.

5. REF.# **3544A** CONFIRMING THE APPOINTMENT OF ELLA HILL, SPRING VALLEY, NEW YORK TO THE ROCKLAND COUNTY DISABILITY ADVISORY COUNCIL  
(EDWIN J. DAY COUNTY EXECUTIVE) DL#:2015-01232

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

UNAN

**ADDED SPONSORS:LEGS. SOSKIN, EARL, PAUL, SCHOENBERGER, WIEDER, HOFSTEIN, JOBSON,  
CORNELL, CAREY**

Mrs. Ella Hill said that she is very happy to serve in that position.

Chair Soskin congratulated Her on her position and added that he believes she will serve well.

6. REF.# **3544B** CONFIRMING THE APPOINTMENT OF ANN O'MALLEY, CONGERS, NEW YORK TO THE ROCKLAND COUNTY DISABILITY ADVISORY COUNCIL  
(EDWIN J. DAY COUNTY EXECUTIVE) DL#:2015-01181

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

UNAN

**ADDED SPONSORS:LEGS. SOSKIN, EARL, PAUL, SCHOENBERGER, WIEDER, HOFSTEIN, JOBSON  
CORNELL, CAREY**

7. REF. # **7792** CONFIRMING THE APPOINTMENT OF DR. PATRICIA SCHNABEL RUPPERT, D.O. AS COMMISSIONER OF HOSPITALS FOR THE COUNTY OF ROCKLAND  
(EDWIN J. DAY COUNTY EXECUTIVE) DL#:2015-01234

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

UNAN

**ADDED SPONSORS:LEGS. SOSKIN, EARL, PAUL, SCHOENBERGER, WIEDER, HOFSTEIN, JOBSON  
CORNELL, CAREY**

Dr. Patricia Schnabel Ruppert, D.O. said that she is very glad to perform this additional service fro the County during this transition time for summit Park Hospital and Nursing Home.

Leg. Schoenberger said he is concerned with her undertaking of two major positions knowing the responsibility that both positions require.

Dr. Ruppert explained that she has assistance from Dr. Fried and reassures the Committee that she is able to perform in both positions.

Leg. Paul congratulated her on her great performance and new appointment.

Chair Soskin reminded Dr. Ruppert that she has the whole Committee that supports her and job well done.

8. REF. # 8116                      REQUESTING THAT THE NEW YORK STATE SENATE PASSES BILL S.3821-2015 AND THE NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY PASSES BILL A.5355-2015- TO AUTHORIZE THE COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION TO APPOINT A STATE MONITOR TO OVERSEE THE EAST RAMAPO CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT AND ESTABLISH THE POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE STATE MONITOR  
**(HONS. NANCY LOW-HOGAN, HARRIET D. CORNELL, CHRISTOPHER J. CAREY JAY HOOD JR., ANEY PAUL, LON M. HOFSTEIN, MICHAEL GRANT, TONEY L. EARL, JOSEPH L. MEYERS DOUGLAS J. JOBSON LEGISLATURE)**

**MOTION TO APPROVE:  
EARL/PAUL**

**FAILED**

**3 AYES: LEGS EARL, PAUL HOFSTEIN  
3 NAYES: LEGS SOSKIN, SCHOENBERGER, WIEDER**

Chair Soskin laid out the plan for the discussion in reference to this resolution by giving everyone who signed up a chance to have their voice heard.

Mr. Willie Trotman president NAACP stated that this is a civil rights matter, and therefore asking the board to approve this resolution. If this issue is not addressed now they might be facing a civil lawsuit. You either believe in integration or segregation. They are asking for equal opportunity for our children to get an equal education. The East Ramapo School board is composed of people who don't value public education. High legal fees are hurting the district. If this bill doesn't pass, there will be a civil rights war. Without a good education, kids might join gangs. This resolution will give people a chance at an education.

Mr. Steve White said he works for economically disadvantaged people, and the community is in need of strong education in order to succeed. The independent monitor said there was mismanagement in the school district. District lawyers are making \$650 an hour. This resolution has wide support from Rockland officials, because it is so critical. This resolution should be allowed to come to a vote of the full Legislature. He explained that he works with all the communities and he asked that this vote not be blocked and to let it go forward for the sake of the children who are in the public schools and for the sake of the harmony of our communities that they can all get together for our precious resource, our children.

Mrs. Melissa Rosen said she went to school board meetings, but what went on didn't help students. There are students who don't speak English and need help.

Mr. Stephen Price provided information about his background, including his service as a school board member. While he agreed with legislator Wieder on certain issues, he disagreed with him on his position about this resolution. The board approved finance reports they knew were false, which resulted in a total of \$15 million in deficits. The district added more debt, and cut support and other services. State aid did not cause the deficits as it increased. This issue has impacts on all of Rockland, such as when it delayed millions in payments to BOCES. Mr. Price added that this issue cost \$7 million in legal fees to the district while the district only budgeted \$3.2 million. How does East Ramapo affect the State of New York in terms of expenses mostly on legal fees? Oversight is urgently needed in East Ramapo. Without Oversight, East Ramapo will continue adversely to impact the students.

Mr. Michael Hogan, Nyack, a Teacher at Long Island University expressed his concerns. The district is in crisis. 77% of students live in poverty, high percentage are English language learners and they are doing very poorly on the State exams. They need full day kindergarten, summer school programs, and teachers. They will not become productive members of society if they don't provide all the necessary resources.

Mr. Kalman Webber stated that. This subject is a civil rights issue and does not support the appointment of a monitor. After hearing all the negative statements from previous speakers he stands by the fact not to appoint a monitor to the East Ramapo school district. Appointing a monitor would disenfranchise voters. The legal expenses were necessary to defend board members from frivolous lawsuits filed by opponents of the board. The district took in 200 Haitian children after the earthquake, and no federal aid was given. Other districts with failing schools never had a proposal to install a monitor over it. The problem with the school district is not the board it's the lack of money. East Ramapo is the poorest district in the State.

Mr. Rafeal Kaufman said he did not feel the district was traded equitably, particularly with regard to income. The school formula is incorrect and needs to be revised. A monitor will not help in this situation.

Mrs. Rose Riley said she has two biological children and adopted 4 from the County. Her mission is to advocate for all of the children in East Ramapo. Every child deserves an education. Her children said the buildings are falling apart, and she is paying for private music lessons since the marching band was cut.

Mr. Yisroel Eisenbach said he sends his child to private school, and is concerned about the criticism facing Yeshivas that have rented public school buildings. The school budget is the only municipal budget voted on by the public, why take that away from the residents? There should be no monitor overriding that.

Mr. Benny Polatseck thanked the committee for listening to the public on this issue. Albany representatives did not meet with any parents. Every child deserves a good education, including the ones with special needs and the students in the private school community. Services are routinely denied by the board because of lack of funding.

Mrs. Lisa Dorcelly said that she believes that a third party needs to be brought to the board to help resolve the issues of accusation of favoritism. A monitor would ease tensions and solve problems that exist in the district. The district needs a strategic plan for the long term.

Mr. Ari Waldman said that tough decisions were made to keep mandated services and cut elective services. If private school students entered public schools, all resources would be drained.

Mr. Michael Riley said he went to the rally in Albany today in favor of the monitor, and passing it would help the children of the district. He asked the board to consider appointing a monitor to the district so the kids can get the education they deserve and stay off the streets.

Chair Soskin stated that he was very happy to hear both sides and added that they must all remember that it's all for the children.

Leg. Low-Hogan said the resolution is to reform the school. Checks and balances had been built into the State bills and the changes seemed reasonable rather than overbearing. Without a solid education, the students are at risk of ending up on welfare or in the criminal justice system. And also "the monitor is not there to run the district", the monitor is there to monitor the district.

Leg. Cornell said that she was also on the Albany trip, and met with legislators on the issue. She agreed with the assessment, arguing a fiscal monitor would do more to mend divisions within Rockland than to work against the community's interest.

Leg. Wieder stated that Mr. Greenberg never met with him or other Jewish school board members. He also never praised the board for restoring kindergarten. This bill would violate everyone's voting right. He said he is only speaking for himself, and he will stand up for civil and voting rights for citizens of this County. East Ramapo is being targeted, because of the religious composition of the school board. And also he strongly alluded to the fact the board was predominantly made up of Orthodox Jews who sent their children to private schools and suggested strong opposition to the board was due to its makeup.

Leg. Schoenberger stated that he has deep roots in the East Ramapo School District. He said he will support a law that supports what he believes will do the right thing, not the unconstitutional thing. He read a letter that he and other Legislators sent to Governor Cuomo about the district. Supporting a monitor that could override the board is not the correct way to solve the challenges in East Ramapo. There should be a better compromise than the one proposed.

Leg. Earl said that he was also on the Albany trip, he listened to his constituents. 400 jobs were cut, and services were eliminated in schools. There is definitely a need for a monitor, and this should be approved.

Leg. Paul said this proposal is about what is best for children.

Leg. Hofstein said that an independent party is needed to put all sides at ease, and that is what the monitor will do.

Leg. Meyers believes that the board was under an obligation to concede some power in an effort to move the entire community forward. There should be nothing to fear and he thinks that is the route they have to take to heal this deep division. Those with power should yield to those with less power for the sake of cooperation.

Leg. Carey said he represents over 500 homes in East Ramapo, and supports the monitor.

Chair Soskin said he was glad to hold the discussion, because he wants what is best for all children. He also said that he never investigated the operation of a school board nor the private schools his kids went to. He attended public school, he believes in education and education for everybody. Chair Soskin added that he delayed this resolution coming to the committee because he wanted to find out more about the district. He received a full report which has been distributed to everyone sitting on the board and after reviewing it showed some concerns. East Ramapo system has change materially over the last few years. Things changed, because the population changed. If there is take a monitor installed, then it should be all over Rockland County school district. They need money, money is the problem.

**MOTION TO ADJOURN:9:20 PM**  
**WIEDER/SCHOENBERGER**

**UNAN**

**Respectfully, Submitted**

**Lesly Senatus, Committee Clerk**