

The Legislature of Rockland County



ALDEN H. WOLFE
Vice Chairman
Legislator– District 6

CHAIR, JOINT LEGISLATIVE-EXECUTIVE TASK FORCE ON FISCAL IMPROVEMENT

MINUTES JOINT LEGISLATIVE-EXECUTIVE TASK FORCE ON FISCAL IMPROVEMENT

**WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2012
4:00 PM**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

LEG. A. WOLFE, CHAIR
LEG. I. SCHOENBERGER
LEG. M. GRANT
LEG. F. SPARACO (arrived 4:30)
S. DEGROAT
A. REDA

MEMBERS ABSENT:

LEG. N. LOW-HOGAN

OTHERS PRESENT:

R. MCKAY, ESQ.
E. YEGER, ESQ.
S. PAPAS
MEDIA
N. DOLINER

- **OUTLINE GOALS OF TASK FORCE**

Chair Wolfe stated that the goals of the Joint Legislative-Executive Task Force were to identify waste and to identify the fiscal condition of the County through better communication. The aim is to have a collaborative effort between the Legislature and the Administration. He said the purpose of the task force was to facilitate decision-making and it was important for him that it was a public process.

- **IDENTIFY SCOPE OF WORK**

Chair Wolfe stated that no votes would be taken. The task force's advisory function will be brainstorming to come up with solutions. It is not designed to usurp the authority of County Executive or to bypass the legislative process.

- **IDENTIFY ISSUES**

Chair Wolfe stated that there would be a Macro and Micro approach to identifying the fiscal temperature of the County, and he began with a discussion of the Macro. He said it would be better to assess the fiscal temperature of the County from February through June, when we are not in the budget process. This would be helpful in 2013.

The three large issues to address, as outlined by Chair Wolfe:

- 1) Summit Park –The Legislators have in mind their own solutions, but don't know what is going on in the executive branch. The task force would be a forum to share ideas.
- 2) Deficit Financing – To be addressed after the election.
- 3) Labor Negotiations

- GET AN UPDATE ON ISSUES

Summit Park Hospital

Legislature previously passed resolution requesting the County Executive to submit a plan for Summit Park within 90 days - still within 90 days.

Contract with firm for valuation of hospital and nursing home sent to CE, valuation should be done in 3-4 weeks with recommendations.

Deficit Financing

Issue is pressing and timely, but next year is not an election year so maybe Albany will look at the issue differently. However, since Albany does not appear to be helping or telling us what to do, we can budget for deficit reduction ourselves. Leg. Schoenberger is introducing a local law regarding deficit financing, whereby \$10 million will be budgeted in each subsequent budget for the purpose of deficit reduction.

General Financial Issues

We need a strategy for improved cash flow, better billing and reimbursements, timely payment of receivables, and an improved bond rating. We should meet with the County's financial consultant who interfaces between the rating agencies and the County.

Cash flow is a particularly tough issue, because the County, State, School Districts, and Federal budgets have different fiscal years – State begins in April, Federal begins in October, Schools in September.

We need a coordinated approach to seek Mandate Relief and to interface with the State and Federal agencies.

Cost of healthcare is a \$50 million issue. We need a new strategy, while meeting the needs of the employees, including exploring self-insurance. We were self-insured about fifteen years ago. With union contracts, we have to be comparable to the existing plan. Personnel staff has been participating in webinars on the Affordable Care Act, which might be helpful.

- PLAN FOR FOLLOW UP

Chair Wolfe called for monthly meetings of the task force.

- October meeting: Discuss Summit Park, 2013 Budget, Mandate Relief
- November meeting: Deficit Financing, Mandate Relief
- On-going discussion on Mandate Relief

- SCHEDULE FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

October date TBD

ADJOURNED: 4:40 P.M.

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