

**Ways & Means Committee
Special Meeting Minutes**

DATE & TIME: December 5, 2022 – 4:00 PM
LOCATION: Legislative Chambers, 6th Floor, County Office Building
PRESIDING OFFICER: Chair John Gavaris
LEGISLATIVE STAFF: Amber Feaster & Natalie Kelder, Legislative Financial Analyst
PRESENT: Legislators Brian Cahill, Dean Fabiano and Legislative Chair Tracey Bartels
ABSENT: Legislator Ken Ronk, Jr, Eve Walter
QUORUM PRESENT: Yes

OTHER ATTENDEES: Legislators Phil Erner, Joe Maloney, Kathy Nolan, Laura Petit, Abe Uchitelle; Victoria Fabella, Clerk of the Legislature; Acting County Executive Johanna Contreras, Deputy Executive Chris Kelly; Comptroller Gallagher & Deputy Comptroller DeMarco – UC Comptroller’s Office; Commissioner Gulnick, Deputy Budget Director Quesnell and Accountant Sweeney - Department of Finance; Director Juras - Budget and Innovation; Director Alan Macaluso, Information Services; Supervisor Mike Baden, Town of Rochester; Elizabeth Mills; Ilona Rose

Chair Gavaris called the meeting to order at approximately 4:06 PM

Chair Gavaris opened the floor budget amendments

Proposed Budget Amendment No. 55 – WITHDRAWN

Chair Gavaris explained that this amendment to adjust the salaries of the County Attorneys would require additional study and he planned to bring this back to the floor in January or February when he had done the necessary research to justify the salaries

Legislative Chair Bartels asked to take Proposed Budget Amendment No. 56 out of order.

Proposed Budget Amendment No. 56 – County-wide Budget Line - Item Cuts These lines have historically come in well below the budgeted amount. This will reduce the amount of inflated expenses that continue to be listed.

Motion No. 3: MOTION TO DISCUSS Proposed Amendment 56 AS PRESENTED

Motion By: Legislator Cahill
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Fabiano

Discussion: Chair Gavaris shared that some edits were made resulting in cuts of \$710,000 with approximately \$100,000 moved into contingency and the remainder into the fund balance.

Legislator Maloney felt that was not enough noting that several departments have been overfunded for 5 years in a row. He liked Legislator Petit’s approach to making 5% cuts across all departments He said this was a good start, but cuts should have been more aggressive.

Legislative Chair Bartels agreed it was a good start and suggested the legislative financial analyst should monitor those lines so legislators could make a more informed targeted decision in the next budget cycle. She recalled that when “across the board” cuts were made in the past they were a directive in advance of the budget proposal discussions the executive staff has with department heads rather than doing it blindly at this point in the process. She would be opened to doing it with that approach in the future.

Chair Gavaris said he was not 100% satisfied and would prefer zero-based budgeting approach but with the tight budget timeline that was not possible this year.

Voting In Favor: Legislators Bartels, Cahill, Fabiano, and Gavaris
Voting Against: None
Votes in Favor: 4
Votes Against: 0
Disposition: **Amendment APPROVED WITH AMENDMENTS AS PRESENTED**

Proposed Budget Amendment No. 42 - Overall Expenditure Reduction - This amendment results in a 0.97% total budgetary reduction to reduce the risk of reserves being drawn down. The 0.97% reduction shall apply within a program or purpose of any department, agency, office or unit as the Department Head feels fit.

Motion No. 1: **MOTION TO DISCUSS Proposed Amendment 42**

Motion By: Legislator Cahill
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Fabiano

Discussion: None

Voting In Favor: Legislator Fabiano,
Voting Against: Legislators Bartels, Cahill and Gavaris
Votes in Favor: 1
Votes Against: 3
Disposition: **Amendment DEFEATED**

Proposed Budget Amendment No. 51 - Historically Overbudgeted Accounts - To reduce the 2023 Executive Recommended Budget for accounts historically over-budgeted for by the average variance from 2018 to 2021.

Motion No. 2: **MOTION TO DISCUSS Proposed Amendment 51**

Motion By: Legislator Cahill
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Bartels

Discussion: Legislator Maloney praised the legislative financial analysts for their hard work in doing the research and reminded members that these departments have historically been over budgeted for at least 4 years. This amendment would make modest cuts to those department budgets and allow department heads to redistribute the funds as they see fit. He noted that the legislature gives the

Budget and Finance department carte blanche to move these excess funds at the end of each year to fill gaps in the budget with no legislative oversight. He states that this happens in other counties, but each budget move is approved by the legislature.

Chair Bartels appreciated work of the financial analyst and the intent of the resolution and hoped the information could be tracked during the year and used to inform budget discussions next year.

Voting In Favor: None
Voting Against: Legislators Bartels, Cahill, Fabiano and Gavaris
Votes in Favor: 0
Votes Against: 4
Disposition: **Amendment DEFEATED**

Resolutions for December 5, 2022 Special Session

Resolution No. 610 – Adopting The Ulster County Budget For Fiscal Year Commencing January 1, 2023 And Making Appropriations For The Conduct Of County Government

Resolution Summary: Approves the 2023 Ulster County Budget

Motion No. 43: **MOTION TO DISCUSS Resolution No. 610**
Motion By: Legislator Cahill
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Bartels

Discussion: None

Voting In Favor: Legislators Bartels, Cahill, Fabiano, and Gavaris
Voting Against: None
Votes in Favor: 4
Votes Against: 0
Disposition: **Resolution APPROVED**

Resolution No. 611 – Adopting Ulster County Capital Program For 2023 – 2028

Resolution Summary: Approves the Capital Program for 2023-2028

Motion No. 44: **MOTION TO DISCUSS Resolution No. 611**
Motion By: Legislator Cahill
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Fabiano

Discussion: None

Voting In Favor: Legislators Bartels, Cahill, Fabiano, and Gavaris
Voting Against: None
Votes in Favor: 4
Votes Against: 0

Disposition: **Resolution APPROVED**

New Business:

Old Business:

Chair Gavaris asked if there was any old or new business. Hearing none:

Adjournment

Motion Made By: Legislator Fabiano

Motion Seconded By: Legislator Cahill

No. of Votes in Favor: 4

No. of Votes Against: 0

TIME: 4:21 PM

Respectfully submitted: Natalie Kelder

Minutes Prepared by: Fawn Tantillo

Minutes Approved: December 13, 2022