

**February 23rd, 2006
Meeting Minutes****Location**

6th Floor Legislative Conference Room, Broome County Office Building, 44 Hawley Street, Binghamton, NY

Attendance

Constituent Members: Supervisor Debbie Preston, Town of Conklin; Mayor Kevin Burke, Village of Port Dickinson; Deputy Mayor Tarik Abdelazim, City of Binghamton; County Executive Barbara Fiala, Broome County; Councilman Don Benjamin, Town of Nanticoke; Supervisor Margaret Turna, Town of Chenango; Supervisor Lois Dilworth, Town of Barker; Supervisor Peter Andreasen, Town of Vestal; Mayor Gerald Mackey, Village of Lisle; Mayor Joan Hickey Pulse, Village of Endicott; Supervisor Mike Marinaccio, Town of Dickinson; Mayor Harry Lewis, Village of Johnson City

Associate Members: Jim Dimascio, Greater Binghamton Coalition

Other Attendees: Darcy Fauci, Broome County; Frank Kelly; Rita Petkash and Jeremy Evans, Broome County Department of Planning and Economic Development; Ron Keibel, Broome County Legislature; Tom Sinclair; Catherine Schaewe, John Perticone, John Sejan, Broome County Board of Elections; Mary Johnson, League of Women Voters

Convene

Supervisor Debbie Preston convened the meeting at 4PM.

Board of Elections Update

Supervisor Preston said that the main purpose of the meeting was to clear up some confusion about new elections requirements. At the last meeting there were questions about a resolution that the Board of Elections had requested municipalities to pass. Supervisor Tim Whitesell suggested that municipalities should not pass it. Supervisor Preston explained that representatives from the Board of Elections were in attendance to resolve those concerns.

Supervisor Preston said that one of the concerns was that the Board of Elections was paying some municipalities to store voting machines but not others.

Elections Commissioner Catherine Schaewe stated that the Board of Elections is not paying municipalities to store the voting machines except when the municipality leases space for storage.

Supervisor Preston asked if the Board had received all of the resolutions and Ms. Schaewe said no.

Ms. Schaewe then gave an overview of the new state mandated voting machine policy. She said that the State gave county board of elections the authority to take control of all voting machines. Title was transferred to the counties on January 15th. Counties are now responsible for storage, transport, and setting up voting machines for elections. New York State is behind schedule in choosing new electronic voting machines. It is unlikely that new voting machines will be ready for elections this November.

Deputy Commissioner John Sejan said that they need time to educate and train people about the new voting machines and he does not believe the County will be ready either because the State has not chosen the machines yet. He said that the County was going to use the old machines for one more year. All voting inspectors are now employed by the County and the municipalities are not paying anyone. Mr. Sejan said that the Board of Elections is asking the towns to store the machines and move them to the polling locations.

Supervisor Margaret Turna asked if some towns will get paid to store the voting machines. Ms. Schaewe responded that the County is only paying to lease storage space for the Town of Union.

Supervisor Preston asked Mr. Sejan what a town should do if it was short on voting machines and he said that there are spare machines available and that the Board of Elections would take care of it.

Supervisor Mike Marinaccio asked what will happen to the old machines once they are outlawed in 2007. Mr. Sejan said that the towns should hold onto them until 2008 and then the County will pick them up.

Mr. Sejan also explained that there will be a couple of new polling stations and cited the new Chenango Town Hall as an example. These new locations have been contacted by the County and voters in affected districts are being contacted by personal letter about the changes.

Deputy Mayor Tarik Abdelazim asked if old voting machines could be used by school districts. Mr. Sejan said that the old machines cannot be used after September 2007 except for historical purposes.

Deputy Mayor Abdelazim then asked if a model had been chosen for the new voting machines. Mr. Sejan and Ms. Schaewe responded that the State is a long way from that decision. Mr. Sejan added that they may not even be ready for use in 2007.

Deputy Mayor Abdelazim asked if the County could lose Federal money from not being in compliance. Mr. Sejan said sure but that it was the State's fault, not Broome County. Ms. Schaewe added that Broome County is as far out ahead on this issue as any other county in the State. Mr. Sejan concluded the discussion by pointing out that schools would not be left out under the new policy.

Shared Services Update

The Council discussed municipal health insurance. Executive Assistant Darcy Fauci said that the County was still awaiting official word from Mr. Brigatti about whether the School District consortium would allow municipalities to join. She added that Mr. Brigatti had said that it probably wouldn't be a problem but was waiting for confirmation. The County will then determine whether it makes sense to join and if it does, municipalities will be able to join as well. Joining the consortium probably won't lead to huge health costs savings but should reduce the astronomical increases.

The Council then discussed courts. Supervisor Preston noted that the Villages of Johnson City and Endicott, along with the Town of Union, are seriously studying the formation of a District Court. The Supervisor asked if it was easier for villages and the town that they are located in to create a district court than multiple towns to do so. Ms. Schaewe said no, that the same procedure applies. Several Council members expressed interest in studying the district court concept.

Executive Assistant Darcy Fauci updated the Council on other shared services activities. Deputy County Executive has collected 17 highway superintendent surveys. They will be put online on the Council of Governments Shared Services website. She said that the Parks group met in January and decided to join the local Public Works Association.

Economic Development Planner Jeremy Evans updated the Council on the Shared Services Grant that was submitted in January. He said that over 200 grant applications had been received by the State. He reminded municipalities that had submitted letters of intent to forward a copy of their resolution to him so that he could submit them before March 14. Grants should be awarded in May.

Ms. Fauci announced that the Bicentennial Ball is approaching along with the Bicentennial Parade, which will be held on June 3rd. Every municipality is encouraged to be represented in the parade and in a time capsule. All of the Bicentennial information is available at www.gobroomecounty.com.

Supervisor Preston said that a meeting was not necessary in March but that the Council would hold an April meeting. In April, the Council would get updated on highway and courts shared services activities. She suggested that the Council invite a representative from the New York State Office of Court Administration to the next meeting.

The Council talked about previous efforts to consolidate court and central booking functions. Most members agreed that logistics and transportation were the biggest impediments to county-wide court consolidation. Commissioner Rita Petkash said that at one time the county had set up video conferencing equipment for video arraignments but that after a short time it was no longer used. She said that technology has progressed and personal computers can be used for video conferencing. Mayor Kevin Burke suggested that police departments need to be included in discussions of consolidated courts and booking.

Ms. Schaeve noted that Village of Deposit recently attempted to eliminate their Village Court. At present the Village is home to the Town of Sanford Court, Town of Deposit Court, and Village of Deposit Court. However, voters chose to keep the Village Court.

Mayor Harry Lewis and Mayor Joan Hickey Pulse talked about their efforts to combine court functions. Mayor Pulse said that in order to make any progress on shared services, elected officials needed to stop being territorial.

Supervisor Preston commented that she and Supervisor Gordon Kniffen discussed submitting a shared services grant application to study consolidation of the two Towns just to see what the results were and to have the facts but the Town of Kirkwood Board refused to support the idea.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 4:40 PM

Recorded and edited by: Jeremy Evans

Approved by: Debra A. Preston