

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: BUDGET

DATE: OCTOBER 16, 2019

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS THOMAS
MERLINO
WILD
BEATY
DICKINSON
GERAGHTY
FRASIER
MCDEVITT

OTHERS PRESENT:

RONALD F. CONOVER, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
RYAN MOORE, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
MARY ELIZABETH KISSANE, COUNTY ATTORNEY
AMANDA ALLEN, CLERK OF THE BOARD
SUPERVISORS BRAYMER
HOGAN
MAGOWAN
SIMPSON

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

SUPERVISORS: STROUGH
SOKOL
DIAMOND

MICHAEL SWAN, COUNTY TREASURER
ROBERT LYNCH, DEPUTY COUNTY TREASURER
TAMMIE DELORENZO, ASSISTANT TO THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
RACHAEL SEEGER, TOWN OF QUEENSBURY RESIDENT
DON LEHMAN, *THE POST-STAR*
MOLLY GANOTES-GLEASON, LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

Please note the following contains a summarization of the October 16, 2019 meeting of the Budget Committee; the meeting in its entirety can be viewed on the Warren County website using the following link:
<https://www.warrencountyny.gov/gov/comm/Archive/2019/budget/>

Mr. Thomas called the meeting of the Budget Committee to order at 10:02 a.m.

Copies of the meeting agenda were distributed to the Committee members and a copy of same is on file with the minutes.

A motion was made by Mr. Wild seconded by Mr. Beaty and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the previous Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Commencing the agenda review, Mr. Thomas informed the only action item pertained to establishing reserves; he then reviewed the listing of reserves he recommended creating, as outlined in the agenda packet. He noted that the suggested reserves, which totaled \$980,000, would be funded through a combination of \$330,000 to be supplied in the 2020 Budget and an appropriation of \$650,000 from the current General Fund balance.

Mr. Wild questioned the impact to the General Fund through this action and Mr. Thomas informed the General Fund balance was currently \$19,959,373, and plan he proposed would decrease the balance by \$650,000 to \$19,309,373. In reference to information presented at the last Finance Committee meeting pertaining to a recommendation from the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) that general-purpose governments such as Warren County should maintain an unrestricted fund balance in their General Fund of no less than two months of regular general fund operating expenditures (16.7% for Warren County), Mr. Beaty commented he did not comprehend why such a high balance was recommended when schools only maintained a 4% balance. Mr. Thomas inquired what percentage the County's current fund balance represented and Ryan Moore, *County Administrator*, replied they were currently at 14.4%. Michael Swan, *County Treasurer*, notified the idea behind the recommendation was to ensure the County had enough money on hand to cover two months of operating expenses, which equaled 16.67% for Warren County. Mr. Thomas indicated the balance of the General Fund was contingent on sales tax revenue collections.

With regard to the reserve suggested for SUNY Adirondack, Ms. Braymer suggested working on a future partnership with Washington County. She spoke of capital projects and the planning required for them and she suggested establishing a reserve for planning purposes, following which a brief discussion ensued.

A motion was made by Mr. Dickinson, seconded by Mr. Wild and carried unanimously to approve the list of reserves as suggested by the Budget Officer and refer same to the Finance Committee for approval to appropriate funds from the General Fund balance.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Mr. Swan who spoke regarding his concerns about the 2019-20 enacted State Budget which eliminated Aid and Incentive for Municipalities (AIM) program funding and the State's plan to make these payments by reducing sales tax distributions to counties. He explained that through this action, the counties would essentially be paying the AIM payments themselves, equating to a loss of \$224,000 for Warren County. Mr. Moore confirmed the State was planning to take money from each county's sales tax distributions to make the AIM payments to the towns which the State used to pay. He informed he had been talking with NYSAC (*New York Association of Counties*) about possible litigation, stating he believed the concept was wrong. He commented that rather than taking funds from the State's 4% sales tax revenues to make the AIM payments, they were dipping into the County's 3% share which only existed because of local authorization and he felt this should be investigated. Mr. Swan opined the State was setting a dangerous precedent through this action and he was worried this overreach may be expanded in the future. He advised the Governor indicated the funds would be made up through internet sales, but he did not believe this would occur. He stated the majority of sales tax revenues were already being collected from internet sales and he did not foresee additional sales tax collections to offset the loss. He suggested that NYSAC or someone else should take action. Mr. Geraghty inquired if the County had made an official statement opposing this activity and Mr. Moore replied in the negative.

A motion was made by Mr. Geraghty, seconded by Mr. Dickinson and carried unanimously to authorize a resolution opposing use of County sales tax revenue for the funding of AIM payments to be presented at the October 18th Board Meeting. Mr. Geraghty suggested that the resolution include language indicating that it should be distributed to the County's legislative representatives, as well as to the Intercounty Legislative Committee of the Adirondacks to encourage mirroring action by other counties.

There being no further business to come before the Budget Committee, on motion made by Mr. Dickinson and seconded by Mr. McDevitt, Mr. Thomas adjourned the meeting at 10:29 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Molly Ganotes-Gleason, Legislative Office Specialist