

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: LEGISLATIVE & RULES

DATE: SEPTEMBER 5, 2019

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS STROUGH
LEGGETT
BRAYMER
WILD
MCDEVITT
DIAMOND
DICKINSON
GERAGHTY
MAGOWAN
SOKOL
DRISCOLL

OTHERS PRESENT:

RONALD F. CONOVER, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
RYAN MOORE, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
MARY ELIZABETH KISSANE, COUNTY ATTORNEY
SARAH MCLENITHAN, DEPUTY CLERK OF THE BOARD
FRANK E. THOMAS, BUDGET OFFICER
SUPERVISORS BEATY
FRASIER
HOGAN
LOEB
MERLINO
SIMPSON
TAMMIE DELORENZO, ASSISTANT TO THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
MICHAEL SWAN, COUNTY TREASURER
JEAN LAPPER, TOWN OF QUEENSBURY RESIDENT
CHRISTOPHER SCHMIDT, WARREN COUNTY RESIDENT
TRAVIS WHITEHEAD, TOWN OF QUEENSBURY RESIDENT
DON LEHMAN, *THE POST STAR*
LESLIE LOVELACE, SECRETARY TO THE CLERK OF THE BOARD

Please note, the following contains a summarization of the September 5, 2019 meeting of the Legislative & Rules Committee; the meeting in its entirety can be viewed on the Warren County website using the following link: <http://warrencountyny.gov/gov/comm/Archive/2019/legislative/>

Mr. Strough called the meeting of the Legislative & Rules Committee to order at 10:00 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Wild, seconded by Mr. McDevitt and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the previous Legislative & Rules Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

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

Commencing the agenda review with the Action Agenda/New Business Items, Mr. Strough drew the Committee's attention to Essex County Board of Supervisors Resolution No. 238 of 2019, "*Resolution in appreciation and support of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and the New York State Attorney General's Office for appealing the July 3rd, 2019 New York State Appellate Division Third Department's Decision regarding tree cutting within "Forever Wild" forest land inside the Adirondack Park and encouraging the NYS DEC to place a hold on tree cutting on public lands in the Adirondack Park until such time that the Courts have defined what the requirements will be*", which he noted had been included on the agenda at Mr. Simpson's request. Mr. Strough explained the Appellate Court's ruling indicated cutting of any tree in a Forest Preserve would now be illegal, whereas before there had only been restrictions. He continued the purpose of the Essex County resolution was to support the New York State Department of Conservation (NYS DEC) in their actions of appealing the decision.

Ms. Braymer recused herself from the meeting at 10:02 a.m.; Mr. Magowan entered the meeting at 10:04 a.m.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Mr. Simpson, who informed the Appellate Division decision had

halted development of a snowmobile trail and a commuter trail to connect the Towns of Minerva, North Hudson and Indian Lake, which was a serious blow to recreational opportunities in the Adirondack Park. He said he would ask the Committee to consider a mirroring resolution of support in an effort to appeal the decision. Mr. Simpson concluded that the current would have a negative impact on the tourism industry in Adirondack Park.

Motion was made by Mr. Wild, seconded by Mr. Leggett and carried unanimously to authorize a resolution mirroring Essex County Board of Supervisors Resolution No. 238 of 2019 and the necessary resolution was authorized for the September 20th Board meeting.

Ms. Braymer re-entered the meeting at 10:06 a.m.

Moving on to the Discussion Item, regarding the re-distribution of sales tax revenues in Warren County, Mr. Strough apprised he had asked Ryan Moore, *County Administrator*, to make his presentation on the distribution of sales tax in Warren County, once again. Mr. Moore proceeded with a PowerPoint Presentation entitled, "Warren County Sales Tax Distribution" which he reviewed in detail; *a copy of the presentation is on file with the meeting minutes*. A lengthy discussion ensued.

Mr. Beaty stated he and Travis Whitehead, *Town of Queensbury Resident*, had collaborated to develop a proposal for a one percent sales tax increase, from the collection of which \$1,000 per every student in Warren County would be earmarked to reduce school taxes for Warren County residents. Mr. Beaty expounded that the remaining additional sales tax collected would be redistributed amongst the towns based on population to help their revenue stream and infrastructure problems. He noted he discussed this proposal with Douglas Huntley, *Superintendent, Queensbury Union Free School District*, and Scott Whittemore, *Assistant Superintendent of Business, Queensbury Union Free School District*, as well as various other members of the public, who were all in favor of the proposal. Mr. Beaty indicated he and Mr. Whitehead would like to make a full presentation on their proposal at the November Board meeting. Mr. Strough asked Mr. Beaty to outline the plan and forward an e-mailed copy to him.

Mr. Diamond stated Mr. Beaty had been strongly against increasing sales tax until the proposal today. He asked how much money St. Mary's School and Glens Falls Common School District would be receiving as part of the proposal, as they were not part of the Glens Falls School District, and Mr. Beaty replied they would receive the same \$1,000 per student.

Mr. Wild commended Mr. Beaty for his idea but stated he was not in favor of increasing sales tax.

Chairman Conover opined Warren County had one of the lowest tax rates in the State because of their \$11 billion tax base and he advised caution to refrain from destroying this benefit to the County.

Mr. Thomas remarked if the sales tax were increased by 1%, the County should keep the additional revenue, rather than give it to the school districts, as the County would have no control over what was done with the money if given to the schools.

Mr. Leggett reminded the Committee that the Board of Supervisors' purpose was to determine how best to run the County; he added that both property and sales taxes were regressive and switching one for the other was not a gain. He suggested looking at property taxation for modification.

Mr. Whitehead stated when a City of Glens Falls resident received a rebate of \$1.00, a Town of Bolton or Town of Hague resident received a \$10.00 rebate, but noted it made no difference where a person lived when they bought an item in Warren County, they paid the same sales tax rate for it.

Ms. Braymer stated she agreed with Mr. Thomas' statement and felt the money should be kept in the County to help with infrastructure as that was the point of government.

Mr. Moore noted if the sales tax was increased by 1% and the County kept all of it, the City of Glens Falls Common Council would need to determine what would be done with their share, as they were entitled to keep half of what was generated within the City borders.

Mr. McDevitt commended Messrs Beaty and Whitehead for bringing the proposal forward, noting the proposal was worthy of discussion, and he suggested that Daniel Hall, *Mayor, City of Glens Falls*, as well as the Superintendents of both the Glens Falls and Queensbury School Districts be invited to attend any meeting where this was discussed further.

Based on the discussion held, Mr. Strough concluded there was no vote being brought forward and suggested that discussions continue on the matter at the November Board meeting and possibly a future Legislative & Rules Committee meeting.

Mr. Wild requested Mr. Moore gather information and develop a reporting on the results of sales tax increases in other counties.

Mr. Strough offered privilege of the floor to those members of the public who were present and wishing to address the Committee. Jean Lapper, *Town of Queensbury Resident*, stated she had attended a conference in regards to how counties should be forecasting their sales tax and questioned what the projection was when the economy slowed down.

As there was no further business to come before the Committee, on motion made by Mr. Dickinson and seconded by Mr. Wild, Mr. Strough adjourned the meeting at 11:33 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Leslie Lovelace, Secretary to the Clerk of the Board