

**FINANCE/TAX REDUCTION/MANDATE RELIEF - COMMITTEE**

Monday, May 16, 2022 - 10:30 AM

Thomas Scozzafava, Chairperson  
Noel Merrihew, Vice-Chairperson

Chairman Scozzafava called this Finance Meeting to order at 10:30 am with the following Supervisors in attendance: Clayton Barber, Robin DeLoria, Shaun Gilliland, Charlie Harrington, Ken Hughes, Noel Merrihew, Steve McNally, James Monty, Tom Scozzafava, Matt Stanley, Ike Tyler, Joe Pete Wilson, Margaret Wood and Mark Wright. Stephanie DeZalia and Derek Doty were excused. Roy Holzer and Davina Winemiller were absent.

Department Heads present: Laura Carson, Mike Diskin, Judy Garrison, Dave Wainwright, Dan Manning and Dan Palmer.

Deputies present: Chelsea Merrihew.

Also present: Bill Tansey, ACA and Joe Keegan - NCCC

News Media: Sun News – Tim Rowland.

SCOZZAFAVA: Good morning. We'll call the Finance committee meeting to order. We'll start with our Deputy County Clerk, Chelsea.

MERRIHEW: Good morning. Last month we brought in \$536,000, sent \$283,000 of that to the Treasurer, that was our first normal month since March 2020. We saw a significant decrease in mortgage tax as soon as the interest rates increased the refinancing came to a screeching halt. In DMV, the revenues are actually slightly up. A few months ago New York State DMV contacted the countywide DMV's and asked us if we would like to take back our registrations so we agreed to that, and we are seeing an increase of more coming in through the mail. On top of that, with the warm weather boats, ATV's and trailer registrations are up about a month before they normally are. That's all I have for today.

SCOZZAFAVA: Any questions? If not, thank you. Next we have, Laura.

CARSON: Good morning. Page one is the department head expense report. The Coroners have responded to 31 calls and the funeral homes have handled 6 removals.

As you can see, we are getting back into some sort of normalcy. We are sending people to conferences, we are having mileage expenses and so on.

Page two, is the supervisors expense report. Again, as you can see we are starting to have conferences and extra mileage so, it kind of feels good to see that.

Page three is our invoice summary. In April, we processed over 1700 invoices, we noted a little over 160 errors. We prevented over \$6,000 in overpayments and \$166,000 in duplicate payments.

Page four is the auditor budget. Page five is the Assigned counsel summary. We received 48 vouchers in April and we paid out almost \$14,000 for the month. Page six is the assigned counsel budget and page seven is the special prosecutor summary so far we received two vouchers this year and 60% of those vouchers is travel and mileage. Does anybody have any questions?

SCOZZAFAVA: Any questions? I guess not, thank you. Real Property, Dave.

WAINWRIGHT: Good morning. Besides my budget this morning, I've got a couple of other publications that was put out by the State of New York. You may have seen these already I'm not sure but one is on equalization rates and the other is the benefit of current assessments. I don't want to go through the whole thing, I don't want to take up that much of your time but the first one on the equalization rates I think is pretty important. There have been quite a few questions about, what happens if your eq. rate goes below 100, why is it so important to maintain your equalization rate and on the like the third page of this, it has other uses of equalization rates and it's where it goes into the allocation cost, the establishment of tax and debt limits, the determination of ceilings so those of you that have railroads going through your town the state values those and there's a ceiling amount, the assessor can't go any higher than that obviously you want that ceiling amount to be as high as possible as your eq. rate goes down your ceiling rates go down, the same thing with agricultural values all different lands on parcels that have an ag assessment, the assessor can assess a land at say, \$1200 an acre but if the State sets the ceiling at \$800 an acre, that \$400 difference is the exempt amount for that acre so those ceiling amounts are important as well and the other one that's down there that makes a big difference is a determination of the level of the STAR exemptions. The first year your eq. rate goes below a hundred your exemption will remain at \$30,000 of your assessed value for a basic and 74.9 whatever it is, every year the enhanced one changes but if you go two years you'll see those start to drop so you're hitting people with a little bit higher tax bill. STAR is not a big savings. For a lot of us it is capped anyway, it's anywhere from \$275 to four-hundred and some odd dollars but you know, the way things are every little bit helps. So I'll leave you with that.

The benefits of current assessments, if you've got people coming into your office that are curious about why these things are happening and what's driving the market and what's driving this change in the assessments I think this might help a little bit to clear things up.

You also have my budget. The other thing I wanted to say is we had Board of Assessment Review training, it went well. We had 18 people attend and since that time we got I think two other people trained and ready to go so right now I believe all towns have enough members to have a quorum to hold their grievance day without implementing the county board of assessment review but there's still time, if somebody drops out, if all of a sudden you say, wait a minute, I don't have enough people we still have time to get somebody trained up as long as you can get them appointed you can get them trained and they can sit on the BAR.

MONTY: Yeah Dave, a week ago I asked you for the percentages of increases in all the towns in Essex County, which you sent me but in reading that and correct me if I'm wrong, it doesn't look like Keene or Moriah did a reval?

WAINWRIGHT: That's correct. They did not.

SCOZZAFAVA: We're in the process of doing it.

WAINWRIGHT: You're working on yours, yup.

MONTY: But that's not going to be for this year? My impression was we kind of had to, to be at 100%, if we didn't but now if I understand what you said it wouldn't effect anything this year but it would be next year? Because we have just done a reval a year ago. My biggest complaint from people is the fact we did a reval last year, it went up significantly and those same properties again got hit a second year in a row significantly and know the State said, trends, trends, trends well it's

based on sales and everybody knows they call it a trend even though they can't base their revals on sales but to me it was just a money grabber by the State of New York. I've got people who are coming in who have done absolutely nothing to their homes but generally it's that their assessment has gone up and I still have an issue with it. So those three communities that did not go to reval even though Moriah is in the process of it, it's not complete right?

WAINWRIGHT: Right.

MONTY: You didn't do one and you can't tell me in Keene the price of homes did not go up substantially in Keene? And I know this is really good information here but that's got to effect the other fifteen towns as well as the county by them not doing a reval, am I correct?

SCOZZAFAVA: No you're not.

WAINWRIGHT: Well, what happens is, I believe the Town of Keene last year was assessing at, their equalization rate was 94%, they've dropped to 85% now and Moriah last year was 96% and they are down to 94% something like that. It makes a difference and the State's trends I think people don't have a clear understanding what the trend means. The trend isn't just what the things need to go up. The trend is what the difference in the sales are from last year to the prior year, so in another words if you sold or say you bought a house for \$200,000 a few years ago each trend year makes an adjustment to that sale to bring it up to current market values so that's where your trend comes in which again, I know is a little bit confusing the way the State does it but they certainly are basing those numbers on sales that's all they have to go by and you'll see if you read through this, how they get that value that equalization rate for your town by taking the total assessed value of the town, the total value of what they call sales right, what sales they've looked at their total market value and dividing it in half.

MONTY: The State never factored in Covid and there was homes that I know for a fact in Lewis that sold twice of what they were worth, sight on scene.

SCOZZAFAVA: When we had Mr. Stack here, I'm on the same page as you are believe me and I've been for thirty years complaining about how they establish equalization rates but it doesn't do any good but just and your question was, not question statement, Keene and Moriah, Moriah is at 94, Keene is at 85 does that impact the other townships? No. Unless you've got a school district that crosses boundaries, it will on your school tax but does it impact what your constituents pay toward your county tax? No. Does it impact mine? Yes. We are the ones that are penalized for having that equalization rate because as you pointed out it hits you on your STAR exemption and –

WAINWRIGHT: Veteran's exemptions

PALMER: Plus, your tax rate is different. If you have an equalization rate of 90% and the county tax rate is \$3.21 a thousand, in that town where you are at 90% you're going to be 10% higher on the tax rate so your county tax is going to be 10% more than it is at a town that's at 100%.

SCOZZAFAVA: Right. It doesn't increase your levy.

MONTY: But it does on the school tax levy? If the majority of your school district cross multiple towns?

SCOZZAFAVA: Correct.

MONTY: In Essex County. I know for a fact; we cross five maybe six.

SCOZZAFAVA: We cross two, actually we go into –

MONTY: Boquet Valley.

SCOZZAFAVA: Moriah does?

WAINWRIGHT: They have some parcels in Westport.

SCOZZAFAVA: Really?

MONTY: Yes.

SCOZZAFAVA: I didn't know that. Again, back to the point we had Stack here, we've had him Moriah a couple different times and you're right, they absolutely go by sales that's what they are going by but I have learned at one time they were going by, they don't really neighborhood I don't believe it. They were using comparables out of Ticonderoga and Westport at one time.

WAINWRIGHT: Right, they have a market area.

SCOZZAFAVA: And that is the issue.

PALMER: No it's not Tom. It would be worse for you if they didn't do that. So, in other words let's say the Town of Moriah had one sale, that was double or triple if you want the rest of your community to be based on that triple sale on one property, everybody's taxes are going to go up.

SCOZZAFAVA: Location, location, location.

PALMER: But again, if you keep looking further out for sales then it tends to equalize itself. If you're doing it by town you're going to be in trouble because you're going to have one town that may get hit really hard.

SCOZZAFAVA: Good point. Don't agree with it but it's a good point.

GILLILLAND: Dave, can you explain the effects of State land? Because my understanding is there's no reval on state land and I'm confused. I have less State land than anybody else in the county, some of the towns have quite a bit.

WAINWRIGHT: For those towns that don't maintain their assessments, they don't do their revals every four years, their state land values are locked in, they are frozen by the state. The assessor has the right to value all properties as they see fit but state land, of course, as we all know, is a little bit different so for towns that have been maintaining 100% and doing the revals and keeping values up, this year state land values went up on average, 10%. If they used the state's values last year and the state's values this year there was a considerable increase those towns that aren't doing anything that are below 100% in equalization rate their state land is frozen, they got no increase this year, not a dollar.

GILLILLAND: So when you are doing a town by town comparison, of total assessed values and you are talking about every five years I think a number of 36% of sales of assessed value, the last couple of years countywide so if we're only doing an average of 30% assessed values in the town, the town with lots of state land is only going up 10% than a town with less state land you are not looking at an apples to apples comparison in each town because they have various amounts of state land. Am I correct?

WAINWRIGHT: I think you are comparing apples to apples in that state land for the most part has gone up this year basically the same percentage whether you have one parcel of state land or you've got seventy-five parcels those towns that have an awful lot of state land has gone up quite a bit.

GILLILLAND: You said it raised 10% state land?

WAINWRIGHT: Roughly yeah and that's probably because there are no sales of 200-acre timber tracks for the most part not like these residential sales. Residential sales is what is driving this market and that's what we've got to keep up with.

GILLILLAND: So when people see that list and say, well, how come we're up say 40% on average but a town like Newcomb and stuff is up 15% on average you can't say Newcomb was treated any better by anybody a lot of times it is the State land that throws a monkey in the wrench.

SCOZZAFAVA: So, back on school district boundaries so how does one go about implementing changing those boundaries because I'm just thinking, that section in Moriah that's in the Westport school district is in a high end section, it's all the lakefront property down along Mullen Bay and we would probably love to have that so how would you go about that?

WAINWRIGHT: Years ago we had a property owner in Wilmington that came in, he wanted GIS maps, he wanted reports, he's got some parcels that are in the extra high, Ausable Valley School District compared to right next door he had somebody in Lake Placid School District so you're talking about a \$17 or \$18 per thousand assessed value vs. \$7 for his next door neighbor. He got nowhere after going to Albany, talking to the school boards it's a very tough thing. What you gain in Moriah school district you're taking from the other school district and nobody wants to lose that kind of value. I think if it's an error, if there's one parcel that's left out in the middle I've heard other directors say they were able to get that changed because that was clearly done in error but they wouldn't budge in Wilmington and the lines are crazy.

SCOZZAFAVA: Do they look the practicality of if you're in the area, even though it is in Westport School district, you're seven miles from Moriah Central School and you're twenty miles from –

TYLER: Tom, there's no more Westport School District I just want to clue you in.

SCOZZAFAVA: Boquet Valley but do they look at that?

WAINWRIGHT: The buses are constantly crossing each other and going and picking kids up and it's double mileage but I suppose you could start with someone in Albany and try to work that out but Boquet Valley won't be happy about it.

STANLEY: So, back on the Ausable Valley School district and assessments and that's really in

the Town of Jay we are the second highest increase to assessed value in Essex County along with Chesterfield just behind us with 16.8% I think we're in that Ausable Valley School District that we don't even know what the two towns that are in Clinton County have done so with us, our assessments going up in Jay 18% and Black Brook, the Town of Ausable in Clinton County only go up 5% my school taxes are going to go through the roof and as of my neighbors, my friends and family so that's a difficult thing with people coming into our town office and Tim has done a great job diffusing lots of situations but it's tough when you're talking \$17, \$18 and I mean, my assessment on my house went up \$46,000, so if we're talking about that I mean I'm going to have to sell my kids to pay, she is a State Champion by the way. *(laughter)* Both of them.

WAINWRIGHT: I also live in Ausable Valley in Wilmington and my assessment went up \$38,500, but I look at my total assessment now and honestly, if I were to put it on the market I would sell it for more, I think I would probably get, not by a lot but I'm pretty sure I would get it because of the way the market is. Jay and Wilmington are two extremely high areas though.

STANLEY: Which goes to another point of and this is the other question not with the school taxes but with the short term rentals since Roy isn't here to bring this up, short term rentals are really driving a lot of the costs in those two towns people buying and I'm sitting here thinking if I were to buy a short term rental right now in the town of Jay how would I make my money back on it? I mean, there's one rental that Tim was showing me that has doubled in assessment values from like \$150,000, to some of them are over \$500,000 now so that is almost tripled on this one road so it's crazy and it is based on sales because like there's only 10 houses on that road and 5 of them have sold for three times the market value sight on scene.

WAINWRIGHT: The New York State Assessors Association has been talking with the State about possibly creating a new property class code for vacation rentals which would be – a lot of the assessors have put them in their own neighborhood and maybe value them a little bit differently. I don't know how that would work because the state says you can't value this person at one percentage or rate or percentage of full market value and then assess the next door neighbor or the person across the street at something different but they are aware of the issue and they are thinking about it and working on it and we've got a lot of hopefully good people there trying to get the State to do something to see that this is a huge issue.

SCOZZAFAVA: So, let me ask a question on this so if you do improvements I know in Moriah I've heard feedback from people who have had increases in their assessment but it was primarily those who have done improvements on their property is that the case that you guys are talking about or is that a reval? You said you went up \$46,000.

WAINWRIGHT: Yes, Mr. Stanley. Mine went up \$38,500 but that is just doing the reval I didn't do a thing to my house.

SCOZZAFAVA: Because I remember years ago you just eluded to, that you can't just arbitrarily go out and raise somebody's assessment because it was \$100,000 and it sold for \$160,000 without doing a total, neighborhood revaluation of that area. Is that correct?

WAINWRIGHT: Right that is, it was more true years ago lately, because Essex County basically all towns except for a couple maintaining 100% and the assessors look at their values every year, the State considers that a reassessment not a project or revaluation project but a reassessment and as you long as you maintain every year and you look at the parcels and you look at the sales

you can do that.

MONTY: So having listened to this and understanding some, not necessarily agreeing with it I truly believe it was the Covid trend that drove up the cost, the sales. Next year there is a five-year trend, with nobody buying anything, you can't move any property. Is the State going to drop it? Honestly?

WAINWRIGHT: I'm sorry I didn't hear the last part.

MONTY: Okay we've raised everything because of trends okay? Next year, the market crashes, the next five years you can't give away a piece of property is the State going to drop it?

PALMER: Sure they will drop it.

WAINWRIGHT: Sure.

MONTY: Okay.

PALMER: No, but they will.

SCOZZAFAVA: That's a good question. What happens when, we've been in a situation, North Hudson has been in a situation, what's the impact on your taxpayer when the equalization rate shoots up to 115% now they are saying you're 15% over value. Do I get 15% more on my STAR?

WAINWRIGHT: Do you get more? No, because the State caps it at 100%. It doesn't work both ways.

SCOZZAFAVA: Exactly.

WAINWRIGHT: Because that would allow assessors to over value things and say, now we are going to let our people get a better exemption here, a better exemption there so you can't do it for that reason.

TYLER: Yeah, you talk about Tim he is your assessor, he's our assessor in Westport and he has done a fantastic job in a difficult time. I highly recommend him. He does his work and he puts his time in and he's very good with people coming and I had a lot of people coming in and complaining and after they leave with him, they are not complaining anymore. He makes it understandable for them and he's definitely a value to the county for sure.

WAINWRIGHT: Well, good. I will let him know you said that.

STANLEY: I second that.

SCOZZAFAVA: So, and the last question on it, if they raise your like they did with Mr. Stanley they increased his assessment does he get impact statement with that too based on the current year's budget or no?

WAINWRIGHT: He gets a change of assessment notice.

SCOZZAFAVA: Okay but no impact?

WAINWRIGHT: No those impact statements –

SCOZZAFAVA: Are only on a reval

WAINWRIGHT: Well, yes and they are only on properties that fall below I think 80% of market value there eq rate has to be low and now they are bumping them up to 100 and the problem with those impact statements is it assumes your levy is at identical to last year so you know, it says, your taxes may go up to this without the levy nobody knows what.

SCOZZAFAVA: Alright, anything else?

DELORIA: About a week ago they said in Newcomb assessments going up and because we had that dual tax rate down there with the homestead and non-homestead my numbers show up because the whole value of the entire residential parcels in Newcomb because that went up significantly I think we are the only ones in Newcomb that our tax rate per thousand is actually going to go down.

WAINWRIGHT: If your levy remains the same.

DELORIA: So people are knocking on the doors of the assessors first but mine comes just before theirs if you take that first immediate right, but the fact remains if in Newcomb, if the budget stays the same I'm not promising anything that the tax rate will go down and as long as your assessment goes up along with everybody else you should pay up it's simple but I'm not going to go full into the frying pan and I'm not jumping out in front of the bus either but that should be true with all of the towns on this revaluation the revaluation goes up, your budget stays the same but realistically you should be in arrears in that per thousand.

SCOZZAFAVA: That's right.

STANLEY: Could you explain this homestead?

SCOZZAFAVA: No. Listen, you don't want to hear it. If you really want to get beat up in your town let him explain.

WAINWRIGHT: It's almost not an option for towns in Essex County anymore because towns maintain their 100%. Years and years ago when this came into effect, if you had just done a reval and your residential portion was way down here as far as the equalization rate and your commercial was way up here if you got into that homestead, non-home stead program at that time those rates were pretty much locked so now, they enjoyed the residential portion enjoys that old, really low tax rate and their town wide equalization rate maybe 100 but their tax rate for the residential portion is very low and commercial is very high and it may or may not effected the commercial in your town.

DELORIA: When you think about that there is always cause and effect and you know, if your businesses is going to come in you are going to be paying a significant amount per thousand then the residential property is going to be hurting.

SCOZZAFAVA: Yes.

STANLEY: Well, this has been brought to my attention by several residents why is there not homestead tax credit?

SCOZZAFAVA: We, years ago I think when we went to 100% George Canon at that point decided they wanted a homestead, it made sense for Newcomb. If you have a community where you've got a lot of business, commercial properties they are going to get hammered, they won't be there anymore you'll residential will enjoy it. Correct? I mean that's a simple way of explaining it.

PALMER: To a certain extent.

WAINWRIGHT: It is but like I say now that towns have been for the past how many years maintaining right along, pretty much 100% there is no big difference anyway.

SCOZZAFAVA: There isn't? Okay

DELORIA: We go back to 1990, and again you had to have an approved assessing unit at the time which we were so it goes back that many years.

SCOZZAFAVA: Anyone else? If not, thank you.

WAINWRIGHT: Your welcome.

SCOZZAFAVA: Mike Diskin

DISKIN: Good morning. Alright, we'll start with sales tax. Sales tax is still going up obviously a lot of it is based on as you know, gas tax. If you look outside today we are at almost \$5.00 a gallon, in some places you are getting very close to it. Last week I went to a conference out in Syracuse before I left town it was \$4.50 something and by the time I got back it was \$4.89, that's how fast things are moving but we're still running about 21% for the year, actually 18% it was 21% for the month. During the time I was out at that training school we talked about sales tax and Essex County I think I told you this before, Essex County is the only county in the state where travel accommodations are the number one driver of sales tax most of them of the top ten or twenty they are somewhere in the middle maybe eight or ten, Essex County is number one in the state as far as the number sales tax driver for us along with those gasoline and food beverage establishments and that obvious goes along with travel, people come here and they need to eat when they are here and they also buy gas those are three of the big sales tax drivers for us. If there are no questions on that I will go to the occupancy. There was a slight dip in the number, it almost broke even from last year. I think what we are starting to see now is that we're getting to that more even place as we are not getting as many short term rentals as we were for the last year or so when we kept building up on it. We're not seeing that many coming in now so I think you are going to see where it is going to even out a little bit for the rest of the year. And I gave you my year to date budget and that's pretty much it.

SCOZZAFAVA: Any questions?

TYLER: Yes, when you were just talking about the gas tax and I was just wondering if there was any interest in this board and maybe you can give some expert opinion on that Mike on curtailing

our gas tax in Essex County like the State is going to do?

DISKIN: Today was the final day you could pass something to get it done for the month of June.

TYLER: We've got time.

DISKIN: You would have to hold a special meeting today, by the end of the day today. They extended, it had to be done by May 1<sup>st</sup> I believe before to get it into the June 1<sup>st</sup> quarter they gave it an extension for fifteen days but that's gone because today is the fifteenth day so the only next time you can do it is September 1. You can do it for a quarter, or you can do it until the end of the year, you can do it for two quarters it's pretty much however you want to do it. The State, the way they set it up originally was been set up so you had to opt in each quarter which would be September, October, November you would be out of it by December then the State passed their section that said they were going to give up 16 cents worth of their tax per gallon and that was going to run until January 1<sup>st</sup> it obviously didn't match up with ours so they then changed it so the county could go to somewhere between the quarters which was January 1 or you could extend it all the way out until the end of February.

TYLER: It just seems to me you know, the way the gas prices are we should try and help out our constituents here if Essex County could do something with that. If we did something in September, would that be like the last quarter?

DISKIN: It would include September, October and November.

TYLER: The last quarter?

DISKIN: Yes and then if you wanted to extend through December you could, it would be one month into the next quarter.

TYLER: I think it would behoove this group to look at something like that because by then the gas prices will probably be \$8.00 a gallon.

DISKIN: Well, they could go the other way. It's hard to say.

TYLER: They could.

DISKIN: I believe and maybe Mr. Manning has some better info, there's a cap there \$2, \$3 or \$4 which would be they are capping it at 8 cents a gallon, 12 cents a gallon, or 16 cents a gallon anything over that obviously, \$4.00, we are paying close to \$5.00, we are giving them 4 cents on every gallon at 5 cents you are getting close to the 20 cents a gallon.

SCOZZAFAVA: How much is the Federal tax on gas?

DISKIN: Seventeen maybe, eighteen cents something like that or maybe higher.

SCOZZAFAVA: I see there is some discussion about dropping the Federal tax.

DISKIN: The State I believe is 16 cents on the tax on fuel, besides their sales tax but capping would have to be done at this point you're going to have to wait until the quarter is over.

SCOZZAFAVA: I just ran my town budget numbers from January through April 1<sup>st</sup> and we were like almost \$40,000 higher so it's got to be impacting this county, impacting everywhere.

DISKIN: That's why you have to be careful if you are going to give away and I don't mean give away sales tax but if you're going to reduce your sales tax coming in because our expenses have gone up and we maybe over budget on some of this stuff so you don't want to be giving away sales tax at a time like this in my opinion, personal opinion.

MANNING: If you really take a close look at it and you do what other counties have been doing, it's really about, I think it's 80 cents on a full tank of gas so it sounds like you're saving a tremendous amount of money if you go that route but you're really not right now we go about 4% percentage basis, most of the counties I think are doing what, 3 cents? Instead of doing a percentage those counties are doing 3 cents per –

DISKIN: Yeah, they are doing it on either 8 cents a gallon, 12 cents a gallon, 16 cents a gallon freezing it at that. If it goes to \$5.00 and you're taking 4 cents a gallon, if you buy 15 gallons of gas it's 16 cents or so.

MANNING: It has to be done by Local Law so that takes, you are going to be at least if you want to rush the Local Law through two weeks but now, you've missed the deadline.

DISKIN: If you want to do something the time to do it is going to be July or at your August meeting probably.

SCOZZAFAVA: And then you don't know if the consumer is really going to save it at the pump anyway because there is so much price gouging going on right now by big oil. I remember we had this conversation on fuel oil, heating oil, number 2 oil years ago all taxes were dropped on it you know, I just bought 100 gallons it cost me \$5.99 a gallon so I mean our elected officials at the State and Federal level aren't doing anything for us.

DISKIN: There was a study done the last time this came up and we talked about gas cap a few years ago and the Albany County Comptroller did a study between Albany County and Rensselaer County just looking at gas prices and what he found out that as the gas cap took effect the price didn't really change because he, the middle man was taking that 4 cents gallon and absorbing it, bumping up the price so they were making more money. The consumer wasn't seeing the savings.

SCOZZAFAVA: If you use Stewarts, Stewarts would be the prime example because they pump more gas in this county than anybody go check out their price here, check out their price in Port Henry and check out their price in Ticonderoga there's always a difference. You know, I don't know why?

DISKIN: It's based on market competition

GILLILLAND: I was going to say, you know Mike pointed out this county is dependent upon the travel and tourism dollars, the only thing that's going to change, absent of the Russians in the Ukraine and the oil needing to be turned back on and saving Europe is the only thing that's going to change the price of gasoline is the change in demand. When change in demand happens everything else is going to crash, they are not coming up here to the hotels, they are not coming

up here for the sights and sounds and we will be the first ones crashing into recession so I'm just saying, and the towns and stuff like that we have to pay for our heating oil, we are going to have to pay for our diesel trucks and stuff, it's going to be a tough year next year with all this increased cost of everything. So right now, I understand but I think they are saying correctly if we cut out that gas tax, you know that will reduce our sales tax and it's going to be less revenue to pay for these other things so we are going to have to pull it out of the taxpayers pocket next year so it's a vicious cycle that we are going to be in but I personally think the only resolution to this is going to have a massive effect on our county's economy.

SCOZZAFAVA: Okay, anymore on that? Go ahead Mike.

DISKIN: I'm all set. Unless there are questions.

SCOZZAFAVA: Do you want to talk about the tax sale?

DISKIN: Not really.

SCOZZAFAVA: Okay, good bye.

DISKIN: What do you want to talk about?

SCOZZAFAVA: Nothing. I didn't know if you wanted to?

DISKIN: We are close and I think Dan has the paperwork filed. We are just waiting for an order and we'll set a date and then we'll look at the properties that are in it when we get ready to do that see if there is anything that the towns want to pull out or if you want to hold off. We need to sit down and there is a committee and I need to look back and see who it was, I know you're on it Tom and myself to talk about some of the things we want, the terms and conditions we want to put and what we want to do with this sale and how we want to conduct the sale as well. Like I said to you last month, there's been some highly successful sales that were completely done online. I have some concerns and I know I talked to my counter partner in Clinton County she has the same concerns with our local people not having really good internet access and not being able to participate so it's difficult to do a completely online sale. Some of the counties where they do, they have close to 100% internet access our broadband here is not that good especially in some parts of the county and I wouldn't want to exclude somebody that said I wanted to bid on the price but I couldn't get through because I didn't have internet, I don't have a way to bid on the property so I think we need to look at that when we do it. We do an internet sale as it is, we do a live simultaneous bidding online and we actually sell some properties to people who bid online, the auction company provides someone to monitor that and enter the bids for those people so we do internet bidding as it is that we also do live at the same time.

SCOZZAFAVA: Okay, thank you. Alright, next on our agenda is our County Manager.

PALMER: I didn't have anything specific but if anybody has any questions, I'd be happy to answer them.

SCOZZAFAVA: Any questions? Okay, Joe, North Country. I have a perfect location you can move that whole operation to tomorrow.

KEEGAN: Thank you very much. Good morning everyone, nice to see you all and I just want a few things to mention. Number one, I want to thank you for your ongoing support for the college. We graduated students on Saturday, it was a really nice event first time we've been in person in three years and it was really, it was heartwarming to see students and their families fill our gymnasium up and all the celebrations that come with it so it has been a tough few years but it was a treat to get to see that so thank you all for your ongoing support from the county.

I also want to thank Mr. Tyler, and this committee as well as the full board for the resolution of congratulations around our reaccreditation. It was really meaningful and I can tell you the faculty and the staff were really pleased to hear that so thank you.

The New York State budget was particularly good for the colleges and community colleges. We got a 21-22 floor set which is helpful against a drop in enrollment and I think perhaps the largest impact is going to be felt by full TAP for part-time students before there was a pool of TAP dollars, New York State tuition dollars that helped students in need to be able to via for now they are going to be able to get it, if they are at six credits or more they are going to be able to get full TAP if they are eligible. That's a game changer for students because it really helps with the tuition costs. I think you know we've, our Board of Trustees elected to establish our tuition fees and keep them flat for this year so understanding that it's still a difficult budget environment for folks. We've got our nursing labs and science labs projects moving forward we've expect to break around next May. I'm hoping that fuel costs and all costs are down by then and a couple of things that this board has been very helpful with. We were able to get a core sponsorship application, thank you Shaun and we were able to get that turned into the Department of Health and so within a few months we hope to be able to offer EMT courses both basic and advance under our own core sponsorship agreement with the Department of Health and we were able to get the course for the wastewater operator to DEC and we are expecting them to approve that and hopefully going to be watching that in the fall, we'll keep you in the loop and let you know about that and it was a treat also to get back out and visit with Supervisors. I started that by going over to Newcomb two days after the storm Robin and went over the mountain and had a nice visit with Robin to see if the college can support interest in folks to the community there so looking forward to catching up with you Matt and you Mark and others so that's it. I'm happy to take questions Tom.

SCOZZAFAVA: No questions? Thank you very much. Before we close, I've got resolution of condolences that I would like to offer the following former county employees; a resolution of condolence to the family of Joan Orr who worked at the Department of Motor Vehicles for a number of years.

**RESOLUTION OF CONDOLENCE TO THE FAMILY OF JOAN ORR. Scozzafava, unanimous**

SCOZZAFAVA: The second is for Nancy Carr who also worked at the Department of Motor Vehicles. She recently passed away and Louise Johnson who was just our RSVP Volunteer last month, for the year, she recently passed away so I'd like to move those.

**RESOLUTION OF CONDOLENCE TO THE FAMILY OF NANCY CARR. Scozzafava, unanimous**

**RESOLUTION OF CONDOLENCE TO THE FAMILY OF LOUISE JOHNSON. Scozzafava, unanimous**

SCOZZAFAVA: Thank you. Okay, anything further? Dan, did you have anything?

MANNING: No.

SCOZZAFAVA: Anything further to come before this committee? If not, we stand adjourned.

As there was no further discussion to come before this Finance committee it was adjourned at 11:20 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Garrison, Clerk  
Board of Supervisors