

FINANCE/TAX REDUCTION/MANDATE RELIEF COMMITTEE

Monday, March 15, 2021 - 10:30 AM

Clerk's note - This meeting was held virtually.

Thomas Scozzafava, Chairperson
Noel Merrihew, Vice-Chairperson

Chairman Scozzafava called this Finance Meeting to order at 10:30 am with the following Supervisors virtually in attendance: Clayton Barber, Robin DeLoria, Archie Depo, Stephanie DeZalia, Shaun Gilliland (in person), Joseph Giordano, Charlie Harrington, Roy Holzer, Kenneth Hughes, Steve McNally, Jim Monty, Noel Merrihew, Jay Rand, Tom Scozzafava, Jeffrey Subra, Ike Tyler and Davina Winemiller. Joe Pete Wilson was excused.

Department Heads present: Laura Carson, Dan Palmer (in person), Judy Garrison, Jim Dougan, Dan Manning, David Wainwright and Joseph Provoncha. Mike Diskin was previously excused.

Also virtually present: Sun News, Tim Rowland and Joe Keegan - NCCC.

SCOZZAFAVA: I will call the Finance meeting to order. First on the agenda is our County Clerk, Joe Provoncha. Good morning.

PROVONCHA: Good morning sir. The month of February is a continuation of a very busy year and March is as well. It's looking like and I spoke to Mr. Giordano about this that in Ticonderoga we are going to try and re-open the DMV in May and we're going to try to open for a soft opening in the Town of North Elba, the Lake Placid one with the grand opening a little later. The month of April has always been donate Life Month so I'm requesting the board to consider designating the month of April for Donate Life.

SCOZZAFAVA: Can I have a motion on that?

DEZALIA: I will move it.

SCOZZAFAVA: Unanimous second, thank you.

RESOLUTION DESIGNATING APRIL 2021 AS DONATING LIFE MONTH. DeZalia, unanimous

PROVONCHA: Thank you. We're also going to be starting in March, we're going to the end of March we will do our semi-annual report for your mortgage tax for this half of the year just to let you know what we're doing in that way. So you should be getting a check sometime probably in May on that and mortgages have been strong so hopefully that'll benefit your towns.

SCOZZAFAVA: Okay, any questions for Joe?

HOLZER: I have one. Joe, what kind of operation hours are we doing at your DMV office right now?

PROVONCHA: In the one in Elizabethtown?

HOLZER: Yes.

PROVONCHA: Eight to four.

HOLZER: Eight to four? So they are open normal? No appointments needed now?

PROVONCHA: No, you still need appointments but we're hoping – Charlotte and I have talked about weaning that out.

HOLZER: Now, is that your call or is it still up to the state dictating this?

PROVONCHA: Still up to the State.

HOLZER: Yeah, I don't understand why it's taking so long? I mean, they actually have local courts that were closed, just re-opened like a week and a half ago it's just, it's time to start slowly turning these things back on.

PROVONCHA: Right and that's up to him.

HOLZER: Are you pushing for that at all?

PROVONCHA: Yes. Yes, and he's just recognized in a letter, in his press conference said, he now considers DMV employees and County Clerk employees' essential personnel that'll help get the Covid shots but –

HOLZER: Thank you.

SCOZZAFAVA: Is there anything else Joe?

PROVONCHA: I have a retirement letter from Bonnie Markwica from the Town of Westport. Just to put a note out there, she's been an excellent employee, she's done all our verifications but she's going off into the sunset to start a new career, a new journey as she calls it. She will be missed.

TYLER: I'd like to do a resolution of appreciation for Bonnie Markwica.

PROVONCHA: Thank you.

DEZALIA: I'll second that.

**RESOLUTION OF APPRECIATION AND CONGRATULATIONS TO BONNIE MARKWICA
UPON HER RETIREMENT FROM ESSEX COUNTY CLERK'S OFFICE. Tyler, DeZalia**

SCOZZAFAVA: All in favor, opposed – carried.

PROVONCHA: And that's all I have sir.

SCOZZAFAVA: Any questions for Joe? If not, thank you.

PROVONCHA: Thank you.

SCOZZAFAVA: Laura Carson, Auditor.

CARSON: Yes, good morning. We've been very busy in the office working on Munis but we have managed to prevent about \$4,000 in overpayments this year and \$12,000 in duplicate payments. You'll notice on the Department head expense report we've always included Coroner information and now I am including funeral home data, just under the Coroners there. Does anybody have any questions for me?

SCOZZAFAVA: Any questions? If not, thank you.

CARSON: Thank you.

SCOZZAFAVA: Real Property, Dave.

WAINWRIGHT: Good morning. Other than my budget, I'm asking for a resolution to accept the Real Property annual report. I gave that to you last month but I didn't do the resolution so I'm asking for that now.

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING AND PLACING ON FILE THE 2021 REAL PROPERTY ANNUAL REPORT. Tyler, Depo

SCOZZAFAVA: Discussion? Being none, all in favor, opposed – carried.
Okay anything else Dave?

WAINWRIGHT: I got an email last week from the State and is aimed at the towns that did reval projects in 2019, so Crown Point, Essex, Etown, Westport as the cap town and the Town of Newcomb. It says, due to budgetary constraints related to Covid 19, the 2019 State aid payment you received in late August, 2020 was reduced by 20%. We're happy to inform you that the reduce funds have been restored and your municipality will be receiving the balance of the initially allocated 2019 State aid. So, hopefully there's a little bit more money coming to those towns that did projects.

SCOZZAFAVA: Good. Okay, any questions for David? If not, thank you.

WAINWRIGHT: Alright, thank you.

SCOZZAFAVA: Mr. Diskin has been excused. So, I'll move to our County Manager, Dan.

PALMER: I didn't have a lot but the comptrollers had come in and did a I guess a sort of mini audit on our budget as it relates to the 2021 budget that we pass basically they were looking at a whole range of counties to see what the impact of the pandemic was on our 2021 budget and they came back with a letter of no findings. So essentially that just means that they found nothing wrong with what we did in 2021, so I just wanted to make the board aware of that. Other than that, I didn't have anything but I'm certainly welcome to answer any questions anybody may have.

SCOZZAFAVA: Any questions for Dan? Okay, I have one Dan. How are you going to formula or are you putting together a – the stimulus money? Of course, I know we haven't received it yet

but if it is forthcoming how do you, do we have any idea what it even can be used for yet?

PALMER: We have some guidance in terms of what they asked for the last time they, the last time they gave stimulus money they gave it to counties with populations of 500,000 and over and they issued a set of guidelines within that but it was not for counties under 500,000 population. We've kind of looked at that, NYSAC has provided that but they are dissipating that the guidelines for this will be even looser than what they were as it relates to that one. We have not seen guidelines, but we are aware of kind of the general idea and we certainly will be ready. We've already Mike put together a report last year as it relates to what our spending looked like or what the lack of revenue looked like for us during that 2020 year. So, I think we can hit the ground running as soon as we get the guidelines and when we do, we'll provide that documentation to the board as to what we can use it for and how much we can anticipate being able to claim. We will obviously maximize the claim as much as we can, and we certainly will provide the board, with that documentation.

SCOZZAFAVA: Okay, good. Thank you. Any questions for Dan? Okay, Joe Keegan are you with us Joe?

KEEGAN: I am Tom. Can you see me?

SCOZZAFAVA: I can't.

KEEGAN: You can or cannot?

SCOZZAFAVA: Cannot.

KEEGAN: How about now?

SCOZZAFAVA: No.

KEEGAN: About now?

PALMER: Yes, can now.

KEEGAN: Alright, great, nice to see you all. I do have a short report for you Tom and I hope you're all doing well and staying warm. I want to thank you for your ongoing support of the college and our efforts as I think we all recognize the sort of a grim anniversary last Friday was the last day we were all together as a campus community. We shuddered on effective this week, March 16, 2020 and it's been now going into our second year in response to Covid and I'm sure you all are similarly taking note of that.

You know, while it's been a challenge there's been a lot of gratitude for people that have helped to keep the college running, to keep classes operating, our doors open, bills paid and we're really grateful for that. We're anticipating a successful completion of this semester, we're already at midterm and we're already planning for the upcoming one.

A couple of hopeful signs, one of them has been we've had our LPN students as well as our Massage Therapy and RAD tech Freshmen on campus this semester and it's been just great to have students back on campus. We had another hopeful sign was the successful vaccine pod that Essex and Franklin County did. Together we're able to host the group at our Sparks Gym last February 25th and we're going to be holding another one here on March 25th. I have to say that the Essex County and Franklin County Public Health Departments and their emergency corps are just top notch, they were able to move 580 people through last time with vaccines, and brought

a lot of hope to our communities which was great.

I want to give a shout out to Joe Pete Wilson, your colleague, who was participating in a panel discussion on managing recreation in the High Peaks as part of our North Country live series. If you've not been able to take advantage of that, it's a free continuing education series that is focused on different topics. This current theme that we're in right now is environmental related and JoePete was part of a panel that had intersection between the town perspective or governmental perspective, advocacy groups, recreation users, law enforcement which was really well done and you could go out to our website and just watch that if that was an interest of yours. This upcoming Thursday will be the third in the educational series, where we'll have a co-sponsor presentation with the wild centers youth climate group and it's focusing on climate change. And then the middle one, which was just this past Thursday, was looking at road salt contamination in our communities and that may be of interest as well. And again, these are free. It's part of an effort we stood up during the onset of the pandemic and they have really continued to generate interest so we'd love you to share that and come visit.

I think, like you all, are probably anticipating the State budget we are too. Our fingers are crossed. We learned today that the one house bills were moving towards their resolution and then we'll come to the sort of the final decisions for us all including North Country and what our funding is going to look like.

And the final thing I wanted to share with you was just about a year ago that we were looking to resubmit our core sponsorship for EMT courses. We were advised at the time to hold onto that application as the Department of Health was full on in response to the pandemic. We have recently talked with partners and it looks like this might be a good time for us to resubmit that application so we will be taking some steps in the near future to do that and as the county's both Essex and Franklin they've been generous to give us a resolution in support of that, I don't believe we'll ask of anything of you at this time we'll just keep you in the loop as we know more. We've been advised it's a fairly long process but it's one where we are hoping to be able to have and then we'll be able to offer courses as we desire. So, that's it Tom. I'll take questions if anybody has any?

SCOZZAFAVA: Any questions for Joe? Okay, if not, 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 10:42 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Garrison, Clerk
Board of Supervisors