
**BROOME COUNTY LEGISLATURE
SPECIAL SESSION
THURSDAY, MAY 15, 2008**

The Legislature convened at 4:55p.m. with a call to order by the Chair, Mark R. Whalen. The Clerk, Eric S. Denk, read the fire exit announcement and called the Attendance Roll, Present-19, Absent-0).

The Chair, Mr. Whalen, led the members of the Legislature in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

RESOLUTIONS INTRODUCED AT THIS SESSION

RESOLUTION NO. 259

By County Administration Committee

Seconded by Mr. Shafer

RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE CO-CHAIR STRUCTURE FOR EMPIRE STATE DEVELOPMENT

WHEREAS, currently there is a dual approach to New York's Empire State Development structure, with an Upstate Chair and a Downstate Chair, and

WHEREAS, having representation through an Upstate Chair is critical in getting projects and funding for Upstate New York, and

WHEREAS for the first time in Upstate NY, an Empire State Development Chair has taken the time to understand Upstate issues and champion a new Upstate vision and

WHEREAS the Upstate economy has been in decline for more than a decade and a comprehensive, focused approach is what is needed and that is what we have been receiving under Dan Gundersen and the current Co-Chair arrangement and

WHEREAS, Governor Paterson has been advised that the co-chair system isn't working, and is looking to eliminate the co-chair structure, and

WHEREAS, eliminating the co-chair system would be a huge disservice to the people of Broome County and of all of Upstate New York, now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that this County Legislature wishes to express its support for the continuation of the current co-chair structure for Empire State Development, and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be sent to New York State Governor David Paterson, Majority Leader Joseph Bruno, Speaker Sheldon Silver, New York State Senator Tom Libous, New York State Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo, New York State Assemblyman Clifford Crouch, and New York State Assemblyman Gary Finch.

Carried, Ayes-19, Nays-0

RESOLUTION NO. 260

By County Administration Committee

Seconded by Mr. Shafer

RESOLUTION CALLING ON THE GOVERNOR AND STATE LEGISLATURE TO OPPOSE PROPOSED STATE LEGISLATION, ASSEMBLY BILL 9393-A AND SENATE BILL 6457-A, THAT WOULD INTERFERE WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENTS' ABILITY TO RESPONSIBLY ADDRESS POLICIES REGARDING HEALTH BENEFITS OF RETIREES AND FUTURE RETIREES

WHEREAS, Governmental Accounting Standards Board has issued Statement number 45 which requires all governments to ascertain and report the total cost for medical benefits for retirees; and

WHEREAS, Broome County and other counties across New York State have undertaken a process to thoughtfully examine the specific nature and extent of our unfunded post employment liabilities; and

WHEREAS, the total unfunded liability for retiree and future retiree health insurance for Broome County, its municipalities, and school districts is likely in excess of \$ 1 billion net present value; and

WHEREAS, unfunded liabilities damage our competitiveness, place a heavy burden on our children, and must be paid for with future tax increases; and

WHEREAS, this pending legislation, Assembly Bill 9393-A and Senate Bill 6457-A, will create a 12 member taskforce on retiree health insurance, in which local governments who are responsible for paying these costs are given only a minor non-decision making role; and

WHEREAS, this pending legislation will bar local governments from making any changes to retiree health benefits for a year; and

WHEREAS, similar legislation affecting school districts across New York State were enacted in 1994, and renewed annually every year since, thereby preventing school boards from rationally addressing this issue; and

WHEREAS, counties and all other municipal employers are finding themselves overburdened by the skyrocketing cost of health care coverage. Despite the increasing cost of these benefits, almost all counties provide some form of health insurance benefits to their retirees, often at little or no cost to the individual; and

WHEREAS, this legislation limits potential cost savings options of local governments that are seeking ways to meet the financial challenges of rising health care costs; and

WHEREAS, the Commission on Local Government Efficiency and Competitiveness, which was chaired by former Lt. Governor Lundine, issued a report urging the State Legislature to give more control over health care costs of public workers to local governments; and

WHEREAS, former Lt. Governor Lundine stated that more local government responsibility for health care costs and greater flexibility for local governments to negotiate health care agreements, is one way for local governments to restrain the growth of local property taxes; now therefore be it,

RESOLVED, that the Broome County Legislature calls on our Assembly members and State Senators to vote down this pending legislation, Assembly Bill 9393-A and Senate Bill 6457-A, so that Broome County and other local governments can manage our costs for retiree medical benefits in a timely, effective, and considerate manner; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that should this ill conceived legislation pass the New York State Legislature, we respectfully request Governor Paterson to veto this legislation and any subsequent legislation which prevents New York State Counties and other local governments from addressing this issue; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Clerk of the Broome County Legislature shall forward copies to this resolution to Governor Paterson, New York State Senate Leader Joseph Bruno, New York State Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, New York State Senator Thomas Libous, New York State Assemblywomen Donna Lupardo, New York State Assemblyman Clifford Crouch, New York State Assemblyman Gary Finch, and all others deemed necessary and proper.

Carried, Ayes-16, Nays-3 (Sanfilippo, Hutchings, Howard)

Mr. Mather made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Whalen. **Motion to adjourn Carried**, Ayes-19, Nays-0. The meeting was adjourned at 5:07 p.m.

