



Onondaga County Legislature

DEBORAH L. MATURO
Clerk

WILLIAM H. MEYER, JR.
Chairman

JOHANNA H. ROBB
Deputy Clerk

401 Montgomery Street • Court House • Room 407 • Syracuse, New York 13202
Phone: 315.435.2070 Fax: 315.435.8434
www.ongov.net

WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE PUBLIC HEARING RE: 2009 COUNTY BUDGET October 9, 2008 Chairman James Rhinehart

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr. Kraft, Mrs. Rapp, Mr. Corbett, Mr. Stanczyk, Mr. Holmquist, Mr. Kilmartin, Mr. Warner, Mr. Kinne
ALSO PRESENT: Mr. Lesniak, Mr. Stott, Mr. Buckel, Mr. DeMore, Mr. Jordan, Mr. Laguzza, Mr. Masterpole, Ms. Williams, Chairman Meyer.

Chairman Rhinehart called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

BOB DOUCETTE, city resident – spoke on behalf of the Red House; thanked the County Executive for putting \$10,000 in the budget for it. It is the kind of program that makes a city an interesting place to be. It is an investment; money put in and the community gets it back from spin-off dollars from a room night, dinner, sales tax, etc. Red House is a well-run, lean organization; asked the legislature for their support.

DICK FORD, city resident – at \$.02 being cut from the budget/\$1,000; he is gaining a \$2 tax reduction. It translates to \$1.35--a cup of coffee. He would gladly pay the extra \$.02, as what he sees reflects elitism at best or racism at worst. He looks at the choices that the Ways & Means Committee dealt with; he knows of Mr. Kochian's work and commitment of the County Executive to literacy. He is aware of the fact that there might be issues in the county related to minority hiring; feels it should be in the budget. The most underpaid professionals in the community are the Symphony musicians. Their salaries are much lower than public school music teachers; there are very few musicians at the caliber of our symphony in the U.S. Feels it would be appropriate to help them with their pensions plus their Social Security. He questioned why a convention center hotel would be built if it can't be marketed.

BILL HIDER, Red House Board – Red House is a unique organization; pleased to see it in the budget; hope it survives. It is an arts center; a unique venue. He is a musician who has played and recorded 2 CDs there. There isn't any other place that doesn't seat a huge amount with a concert like setting. Artists can record their performance for a quarter of what it would cost at a recording studio. He hopes the legislature can support it.

DAN BRICE, Red House – thanked the County Executive for putting the Red House in the budget. It is a non-profit cultural center in Armory Sq. It features a diverse variety of music, plays and visual arts. It is a vital part of the resurgence of downtown; makes an important contribution to a downtown that more and more keeps its lights on after the workday is over. He asked the legislature to support the Red House.

CHAUNCEY D. BROWN, Hillside Work Scholarship Connection – an organization that works with inner city youth in Syracuse, helping them to graduate from high school. They started in Rochester by Danny Wegman after he looked at the drop out rate of students in inner city; has been in Syracuse for about 15 years. They work with students in all high schools and now are in 8 middle schools – try to make them understand the importance of high school and college. Two years ago they allowed CGR to come in and evaluate their work. After the evaluation, it was found that Hillside graduates students at 3 times the rate of other students in Syracuse City High Schools. They understand that students have issues at home and at work so they partnered the students with employers. Wegmans is a major partner; also partner with Iroquois Nursing Home and Crouse Hospital. The return on investment for Rochester has tripled—they understand that the kids that graduate, go on to college, and stay in the area will return investment back to the community. He asked that Hillside Work Scholarship be included in the budget.

DAVID HOLDER, President of CVB – *statement on file with Clerk*

DAVID DUERR, Executive Vice President of Syracuse Chamber of Commerce – spoke on behalf of Darlene Kerr, President and Board of Directors -- said that they couldn't be prouder to have David Holder as part of the CVB team. He came in the fall of 2006 and the impact he has had has been tremendous.

ROBERT ANTONACCI, COUNTY COMPTROLLER – *statement on file with Clerk*

MARY SMOTHERS – thanked County Executive Mahoney for thinking about the youth in the community. She spoke on behalf of the Red House; it is a wonderful place for youth. There are a lot of youth there that aren't getting the necessary arts that they should be receiving at school. The Red House has been very tremendous with helping with programs, allowing youth to use their facilities, perform and rehearse. The kids are experiencing a lot of things through the Red House that otherwise they would not be able to do. She asked the legislature to consider keeping the Red House in the budget.

There being no further speakers, Chairman Rhinehart adjourned the meeting at 7:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



DEBORAH L. MATURO, Clerk
Onondaga County Legislature