



# Onondaga County Legislature

**DEBORAH L. MATURO**  
Clerk

**J. RYAN McMAHON, II**  
Chairman

**KATHERINE FRENCH**  
Deputy Clerk

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**WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE - 2015 BUDGET REVIEW OF  
WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE DEPARTMENTS  
September 25, 2014  
Patrick Kilmartin, Acting Chair**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Mr. Kilmartin, Mr. Holmquist, Mrs. Ervin Mr. May

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Mr. Knapp, Ms. Williams, Mr. Jordan

**ALSO PRESENT:** Chairman McMahon, *see also attached list*

Mr. Kilmartin called the meeting to order at 9:15 a.m.

**LAW DEPARTMENT:** Pg. 3-108; Gordon Cuffy, County Attorney; Lori Tarolli, Senior Deputy County Attorney;  
Diane Corsaro, Fiscal Officer; Dan Hammer, Budget Analyst

Mr. Cuffy presented the following:

*The Law Department is doing well at the currently funded levels, and our budget request for 2015 is essentially the same as the 2014 adopted budget. The office works to ensure that Onondaga County meets new initiatives and continues to comply with changing state and federal laws. We will continue to meet those demands in 2015 without asking for significant additional resources.*

*As you are aware, the Law Department is involved in virtually every aspect of County government - Family Court trials, civil litigation, administrative hearings, and negotiations for special projects like the Convention Center Hotel, drafting contracts, handling real estate transactions, and drafting legislation. Overall, the Department continues to handle an increasing number of issues for the County. Our workers' compensation case load has increased, because we are handling more matters in house. We are making an increased number of appearances in Family Court, mainly because we work with the Courts and agencies, in addition to specialized courts, to provide innovative solutions to family matters. There is an increase in the overall number of cases and claims that the Office handles, including an increasing number of complex matters. Despite the increase in work load, the Law Department will continue to provide the quality of service required by the County, and we will do so with less local dollars. We have worked to address the need for additional support staff by working with BOCES and local colleges to assist the office when we are overburdened by demands for document production, which can include thousands of documents. We also use those resources so that the Law Department can remain at the forefront for converting documents to digital format, which significantly influences office efficiency.*

*We have also had some noteworthy accomplishments this year.*

**Arbitrations:**

- *The Law Department successfully defended the County in a grievance regarding correctional food services, saving the County in excess of \$2 million.*

**DSS Unit**

- *We successfully integrated the Welfare Attorneys into the Law Department, strengthening the reserve of legal knowledge in the Department and providing continued representation for the agency.*

**Environmental Unit:**

- *We continue to provide legal support on Onondaga Lake related matters, including the West Onondaga Lake Revitalization Project and the Regional Solid Waste Partnership.*
- *The Law Department continues to provide legal advice regarding SEQR for many county projects, and provides the legal backup for pursuing county enforcement actions and for complying with the ACJ requirements.*

*Family Court:*

- *Diversion is the goal set by the courts, and our goal continues to be reuniting families and keeping youth out of facilities. We continue to work with Probation and the Office of Children and Family Services, looking for solutions that do not involve increased costs to the County.*

*Municipal:*

- *We revised the County's construction contract framework, with a proposed implementation in 2015.*
- *In our Litigation Unit, we argued several noteworthy Summary Judgment motions and various appeals, and we have earned significant decisions in our favor at both the state and federal levels. We continue to vigorously defend the County's interests in an effort to limit and avoid significant exposure to the County.*
- *We have continued our internship program with Syracuse University College of Law, hiring unpaid interns who contribute many hours to the Department. This year, we increased efficiencies by adding Cornell Law School to our internship program, and we hope to see the addition of our first Cornell law students this spring semester. These programs make it possible to keep up with the legal research and needs of the office without adding costs.*

*In sum, the Law Department provides the ongoing level of service needed to protect the County and promote the County's interests. As we keep looking for ways to increase efficiencies and protect the County in the coming year, we will need adequate resources to meet the array of challenges, and we ask for your continued support.*

Mr. Cuffy said that since he has been here, construction contracts in the county have been extremely outdated; have put together a team of attorneys to work on construction contracts. It has taken a while; it is complex and there are many. They have now successfully changed the construction contracts to modernize them more efficiently and deal with changes in construction law. He expects to implement the change next year.

Chairman McMahan noted that there is an IMA, a quasi-consolidation with SOCPA with an executive director. Looking back, he would have changed the language of it. The executive and mayor have to agree to appoint this person. What happens in the event a county employee, head of this organization, is doing something, which the City Law Dept. says is OK, but the County Law Dept. disagrees; who is the boss. Mr. Cuffy said that it was a concern when the agreement was written. There was a provision put in and believes it defers back to him, but would have to look at it. He does not remember the exact contractual manner in which it was dealt with.

Mr. Kilmartin referred to the 103 line; asked for a description of what they are typically utilized for. Mr. Cuffy said that it is for temp workers, summer interns. They have been digitizing files; there is a vast amount. At one point, they hired a temp worker from SU. In answer to Mr. Kilmartin; Mr. Cuffy said that he has one part time attorney at this time. In answer to Mr. Kilmartin, Mr. Morgan said that they can be in both 101 or 103.

Mr. Kilmartin referred to the professional service line, a modest reduction, asked if is used for outside counsel. Mr. Cuffy said that it is, as well as for experts. There was \$70k left over from 2013 budget – bills anticipated to come in for outside expert counsel. It is down; they do a lot in house; try to do the work themselves. When they do hire outside counsel, they sit with them to make sure they can carry on without increasing the cost to the county. Mr. Kilmartin asked why there was a large anticipated spike from 2013 to 2014. Mr. Cuffy explained that it was multiple cases – expected some expert charges -- needed some experts help with those projects. They might hire an expert or a firm, but then he expects his attorney's to figure out what they have to do from there and take it on.

Mr. Kilmartin referred to travel and training – asked if it is predominantly CLE courses. Mr. Cuffy said it is and traveling needed for it; also is money for traveling to appellate courts. There is a case going on in Albany, and will need to have an attorney traveling back and forth for it. The line is up because they have the addition of the DSS attorneys, who are also required to do some traveling.

Mr. Holmquist asked about the addition of a deputy county attorney 1. Mr. Cuffy said that the intent is to hire someone in March of 2015. They lost a deputy county attorney 1; when that happens, they salary save for a long period of time.

Mr. Kilmartin noted that the County Attorney's office provides a great service to the legislature and to the county; very pleased to have representatives working with the legislature day in and day out; they do a tremendous job,

are always very professional and always prepared. He complimented Mr. Cuffy on his administration of the office.

### **BOARD OF ELECTIONS, 3-91 – Dustin Czarny, Helen Kiggins Walsh, Commissioners**

Mrs. Kiggins-Walsh and Mr. Czarny presented the following:

*ScanFlow: We are on our second year with NTS ScanFlow. ScanFlow has streamlined our registration process and we no longer need to handle paper applications multiple times. This product has proved so efficient that we will not be hiring temporary employees this fall. We have over \$14,000 left in this account. This could possibly change if we have a very close election and need to bring people in to help with the recanvass.*

*Absentee Ballots: We used our new Dominion Central Count absentee system in the September primary. With the new system we will not need to use ballots provided by a vendor. We will be able to utilize the print shop to print our absentee at a significant savings. In 2010 we paid nearly \$30,000 for absentee ballots. Many thanks to the IT department for finding a solution to create our absentees in a usable format.*

*Pilot project for e poll books: NTS has developed an electronic poll book and has asked us to be a pilot county in this year's general election. Electronic poll books will allow us to review and process voter information during an election. Functions include voter lookup, verification, election district and ballot assignment, voter history update and other things like name change and directing voters to the correct polling place. The three pilot locations will be Jamesville-Dewitt High School, Nottingham High School and LaFayette Fire Station # 1.*

*Two primary elections: The state legislature has failed to change our state and local primary date from September. This will not be a problem in 2015 but that will not be the case in 2016 if this is not addressed.*

*ImageCast Voting system: The warranty on our original ImageCast voting machine is expired the end of last year. We purchased a 5 year extended warranty for these machines. Our Federal HAVA money was used for this warranty.*

*Several school districts are now using the ImageCast machines. They were also used in the CSEA contract vote.*

Mr. Czarny:

*Inspector Training: We revamped our machine training classes this year. Each Inspector is now required to perform a series of processes on the ImageCast to receive a passing grade. We found that some of our inspectors relied on others to do things with the machine.*

*We continue to try to find uses for our HAVA monies. We are trying to get reimbursement for some of our training expenses.*

*Outreach: Over the last couple of years we have continued to try and educate the public in a variety of ways. We have had several electronic chats on Syracuse.com which allowed the public to ask questions and give information to voters near election time. We have also participated in outreach programs with the League of Women Voters, Southwest Community Center and Syracuse University Maxwell School. We have also assisted to train and guide several voter registration drives to assure compliance with election law.*

Mr. Kilmartin asked what the ScanFlow process is and what it does. Mrs. Kiggins-Walsh said that ScanFlow was an enhancement to the voter registration system. A registration form comes in the office and they scan it; it becomes a document that someone can pull up on their desktop. All staff have two terminals – one for ScanFlow documents; one for the registration system. It used to be that one person registered it, one person verified it; one person would crop the signature, one person performed other processes with it. Now, it is all automated. A person can go in and do all of those processes at the same time; it has eliminated a great number of steps. She has never not had temporary employees in the fall before, but they are doing great and keeping up with everything. She is very impressed with the system. Mr. Czarny said that it scans the document into a PDF, but it also reads the signature. It captures pdfs and jpgs.

Mr. Kilmartin asked about any anticipated changes in the coming years with respect to polling locations. Mrs. Higgins-Walsh said that they always change a handful, but don't anticipate any major overhauls. Mr. Czarny said that they prefer to keep the same polling places as much as possible, but expects that some of the places will change. Sometimes there is a change in ownership or management of the place, and then they have to find a new, acceptable location.

Chairman McMahon referred to the pilot project and ask what it allows them to do. Mr. Czarny said that the law in NYS says that if you show up at a polling place that is not your own polling place and vote by affidavit ballot, that ballot will be thrown out. This project will allow the poll workers to have to the entire voter roll in front of them. They will be able to look up where that person is supposed to vote and instruct them without having to call Board of Elections. On Election Day, the phone lines are busy, especially in presidential and gubernatorial years, and it is hard for people to get through. This will allow for one point of contact and allow voters to go to the correct polling place.

Mr. Czarny said that if the pilot became permanent, which there are many steps before that could happen, it would save on printing costs, as it would replace the poll books. There would be hardware costs to continually update. It would be greener and more efficient. Mrs. Kiggins-Walsh said that if there was a county-wide system, they could track how many people show up at a particular site.

Chairman McMahon said that it helps with the affidavit process; he asked if it is live data. Mrs. Kiggins-Walsh said that it will be. Chairman McMahon asked if they will be able to sit in their office on Erie Boulevard, look at a particular polling place, and see who has voted at any point during the Day. Mrs. Kiggins-Walsh said that they will be able to do that.

Chairman McMahon asked how the 3 locations were chosen. Mrs. Kiggins-Walsh said one is the mayors, one is the county executive's, and they wanted a rural spot so they chose Mr. Knapp's. They did not want two in the city. Mr. Czarny said that they went to one of the highest traffic sites inside the city to try it out and get a good idea of what the pitfalls are. Even with this pilot, traditional poll books will still be at the sites. Mrs. Kiggins-Walsh said the state requires that both sets have to be used.

Chairman McMahon questioned why there are decreases in the budget. Mrs. Kiggins-Walsh said that 2014 is a governor's year and next year is a local year – there is a natural decrease in expenditures.

Mrs. Ervin referred to purging polling lists, noting that in her household there is an instance where someone has been on the list for 10 years, and she has asked for the 10 years to take him off, but is still there. Mrs. Kiggins-Walsh said that they send out mail check cards. If they come back undeliverable, they are put in an inactive status. They have to sit there through two federal elections as inactive, then they are allowed to purge them. If people don't return the cards, they can't remove them. If the person votes, even if a card comes back, they aren't allowed to remove them. Mrs. Ervin said that she returns the card; Mr. Czarny will look into it. Chairman McMahon asked what happens if they were inactive, but showed up at the polling. Mrs. Kiggins-Walsh said that they are allowed to vote an affidavit ballot, but are signing an oath that they are still at that address.

Mr. Holmquist asked for clarification if the federal elections are congressional and presidential. Mrs. Kiggins Walsh said that it is and someone has to be inactive for a 4-year cycle before they can be removed.

Mr. Holmquist referred to the pilot and asked if it is successful for Onondaga County, would we be allowed to do it on our own, or does it have to be done for the whole state. Mrs. Kiggins-Walsh said that the state would probably allow it on a county by county basis. They wouldn't force it on anyone. At some point there may be early voting, and this would be an absolute necessity. Early voting would permit people to vote up through the Sunday before election. Paper poll books would be printed before that, and it wouldn't be known who would have already voted. Electronic poll books would have to be used. They think they will be able to pay for the electronic poll books out of the HAVA money. With state requirements and redundancies, it won't be seen for a few years. Mr. Holmquist asked who approves it at the state. Mr. Czarny said that it would start at the state BOE coming up with guidelines. Mrs. Kiggins-Walsh said that the legislature would have to change the law to permit this type of a poll book. Mr. Czarny said that we are in the infancy of this technology in New York State, but they are used in Ohio and several other states. **Mr. Holmquist asked if next year the legislature could get a report on how the pilot went.**

Mrs. Erin asked about the status of recruiting inspectors. Mr. Czarny said it is always a struggle; had articles in the paper early on which generated some input from the public. The biggest problem is inspectors calling off a week before Election Day or even an hour before. It is a constant struggle, there is another round of training classes going on now to recruit even more. Inspectors are required to be trained every year. Sometimes people

forget that they have to be retrained, and think they can just get reappointed, and it causes some problems. Mrs. Ervin questioned if some of the folks have some trouble with all of the changes. Mrs. Kiggins-Walsh said that they now have different categories of inspectors. There are some inspectors that want nothing to do with the new technology. All they do is hand out ballots to voters. Those interested in working with technology go through a second class – hands on training.

**COUNTY CLERK, pg. 3-17, Sandra Schepp, County Clerk; Elizabeth Doucette, Account Clerk 3; Jackie Norfolk, Principal Deputy County Clerk**

Mrs. Schepp presented the following:

*Members of the Onondaga County Legislature, Department Heads, and Guests. On behalf of the County Clerk's office I want to thank you for the opportunity to speak before you today regarding our budget for the County Clerk's Office.*

*As you know, the Clerk's office is mandated by NY State Constitution, State and Local Law to perform the duties of the State Supreme Court and Combined Court System. The County Clerk is the Registrar of Judicial and Real Property Records. These records affect each and every citizen of Onondaga County.*

*In 2013 there were 247,301 documents filed with our office, current year to date we are down by roughly 11,000 documents filed. This decrease is mainly due to the long winter and in-activity on the consumer part. This translates to a decrease in our revenue; forecasts predict an upswing in the market for the calendar year 2015 where we hope to be back on track.*

*Even though E-filing has had a slight decrease on the demand of storage, it should be noted that we continue to face storage problems. With 7 vaults here at the county court house and 1,862 square feet at the Malloy Road facility, we just acquired room at the Marcellus Highway for additional storage. To date we have transferred 600 boxes to the Marcellus facility and anticipate to move another 300. We will also be transferring 500 boxes from Malloy to Marcellus, then 400 to 500 from County Basement to Malloy.*

*We are in process to look into an RFP for our software. My staff and I have looked to the other counties and of the 62 counties in NY State 56 of them use outside vendors for software. If we want to progress to the next stage we will need to explore this option sooner than later. A recent report from Info-Trends, a leading worldwide market research and strategic consulting firm for the imaging document solutions industries, states that outsourcing and new technologies are growing at a record pace and government is often the last to embrace technology.*

*We have re-arranged the office this past year which enabled us to rent additional space to our abstractors, slightly increasing our revenue.*

*The 2015 Budget, aside from personnel and benefits has no or little increase from last year. It should be noted that starting Jan 2014 one of our Clerk II employees has been working in the Sheriffs Pistol Division 3 days a week. It is my understanding she has done a great job and the application time was reduced from 15 months to 3 months. This arrangement originally was supposed to be temporary, to allow us to take over the initial application, however do to some glitches of their software they were not able to bring any of the pistol program to our office. I have currently reduced her time at the Sheriffs to one (1), day a week.*

*Thank you for your time and look forward to working closely with you on the best needs for our county.*

Mr. Holmquist complimented the County Clerk's work on the pistol permits. It has been one of the biggest issues that we have faced in the county; it is an issue that many citizens care a lot about. The collaborative work with the County Clerk's office and the Sheriff's Department has been great. He asked if the County Executive would put this on the home page of Ongov.net – it would be fantastic as it would be easily found. It is something that the county citizens really want and need, and rather than hunting and pecking for it in the Sheriff's page, it should be on the top of the county website. This is the county policy entity, and it should be up to the legislature.

Mr. Holmquist referred to technology, and asked what can be expected going forward. Mrs. Schepp said that if they can get the system up to the standards of other counties, then down the road they would be able to reduce staff. Everything is going to e-filing, e-recording, less paper, more on-line. If they went to a new system they could put the images online, and have more revenue because people would be buying the images online. It is the way to go and would look forward to that project in 2015. Mr. Holmquist asked if there is a budget request coming forward for this. Mrs. Schepp said that right now her IT budget is approximately \$2 million – she is not

exactly sure what she is getting for that. In conversations with vendors, most have come across with no upfront money. All of it will be on a month-to-month basis, and the revenue to be generated will offset a lot of the costs.

Mr. Holmquist asked if there is any grant money available to offset the costs. Mrs. Schepp said that there is; she has talked to the State and she will be meeting with State Archives in a couple of weeks to discuss it.

Chairman McMahan asked about filed document storage; asked if we own or rent the Molloy Road facility. Mrs. Schepp said it is county owned. In answer to Chairman McMahan, Mr. Morgan said that there are documents from other departments there, surplus equipment is also there. Chairman McMahan said that it is full and we are now looking at the the Marcellus County facility; we are not paying rent or outsourcing. He asked why some of it couldn't be stored at the Carnegie Building. Mr. Fisher said the he and the County Clerk have had that conversation. If the building is rehabilitated, it would make a lot more sense, as it would not have to be transported; a lot more efficient to move next door.

Mr. Kilmartin asked about overtime and how it arises. Mrs. Schepp said that they don't have a lot of it – it is really when there is a large court case going on and there is a large copy project.

Mr. Kilmartin asked about the division between travel and training in the line item. Mrs. Schepp said that it is mostly mileage going to and from Molloy Road or Marcellus.

Mr. Kilmartin asked what has been seen with mortgage filing this year and what the anticipated trend might be. Mrs. Schepp said that it flattened out in the winter months. The prediction is that it is going to come back and is on a slow upswing. It is predicted that 2015 will be back to where 2013 was. Chairman McMahan asked what the year to date revenue is. Mr. Morgan said that the most recent forecast was \$3.7 million. Mrs. Schepp said that the year-to-date is approximately \$2.2 million. Chairman McMahan questioned what that would do to the overall budget for 2014. Ms. Ducett said that right now, if they were to go with the same figures from September to December as last year, the 2014 budget will be short by \$717,000. They are losing out on county clerk charges that they collect -- mostly mortgages and deeds. Chairman McMahan asked about the overall budget and the costs to offset it. Ms. Ducett said there will be a little cushion, salary reimbursement went up \$200,000. Chairman McMahan said it is safe to say that there is structural deficit predicting in the County Clerk's budget. Mr. Morgan agreed that right now there is; with the revenue being down, and their expenditure accounts being in line with what they budgeted; there won't be enough surplus to offset the revenue decrease. It will have to be absorbed with other surpluses in the budget.

Mr. Kilmartin questioned the significant spike in the interdepartmental charges. Mr. Morgan said that 90% is the IT charges, as a result of their applications being on the mainframe. Mr. Fisher said that over decades departments have been charged for the cost of the mainframe based on their usage. As departments stop using the mainframe, they stop being charged. Allocations get re-spread to everybody else. The Clerk's office is close to having their mainframe operations turned off. They wouldn't be charged for it, but it would be spread to someone else when they do. Eventually the charge is gone and no one will get charged.

Chairman McMahan asked what happens to the IT Department when nobody gets charged – there is a \$2 million hole. Mr. Fisher said “no”, because we would not be spending the money, it is how it is billed. IT is a \$0 department; we bill out to claim the IT charges where recoverable. “If we don't spend the money, we don't tax for it.” Chairman McMahan said that the mainframe is a system, questions if because the Clerk's office is on there, someone is consistently working on that system from IT. Mr. Fisher said that there is a console operator who is retiring next year; they won't replace her. They may change the work and put someone in to support PeopleSoft, but the charges from IBM, don't have to be given to anyone else. When they take the cost of the software, or the IBM lease away, it doesn't get spread anywhere – they save that money. Chairman McMahan said that the trend is to get off the mainframe, and asked if there was a concern that IT will be overstaffed. Mr. Fisher said that like a lot of county departments, they are under staffed – if they can stay where they are and redeploy them into supporting everything else that is needed, it will increase service levels to departments.

Mr. Kilmartin asked Mrs. Schepp to work through the committee process in the ending months of 2014 to better educate the legislature about thoughts and plans related to updating the County Clerk's office, digital technologies, cost benefit analysis, possible decrease in expenses and increase in revenue. It might be good to

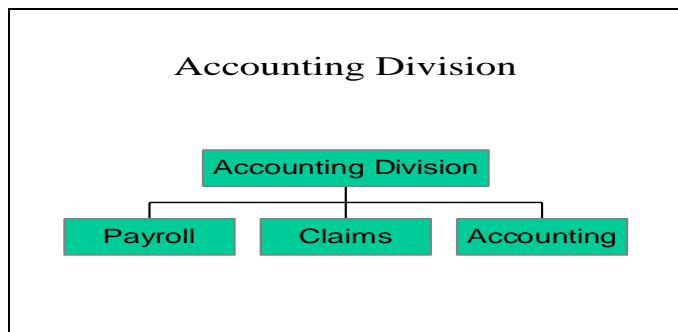
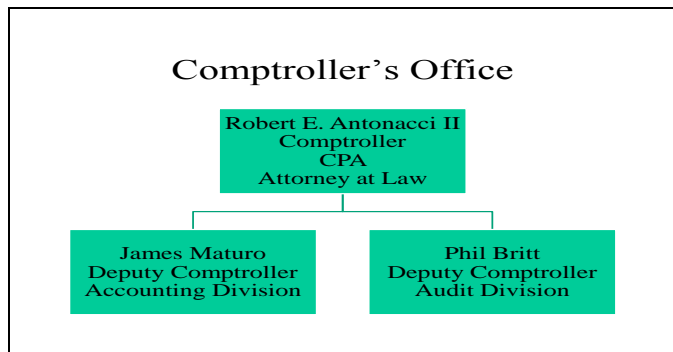
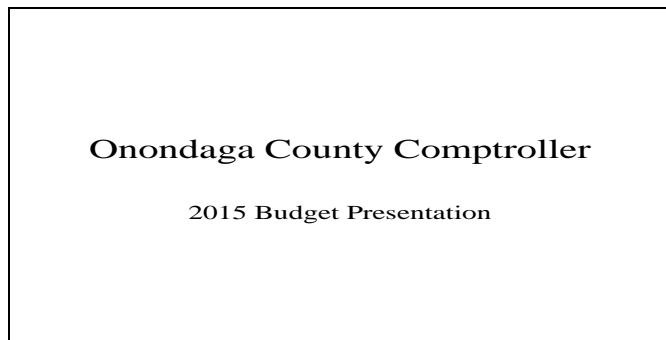
have a continuing conversation about it for the legislature to better understand it, analyze the financial and then budget for it.

Mr. Holmquist asked who else is on the mainframe. Mr. Fisher said that the Sheriff and Probation uses CHAIRS; the IT Department is close to moving them to CHAIRS II, which doesn't run on the mainframe. That is by far the biggest system. There are also systems running in the jail; Real Property Tax Services uses an application to collect delinquent taxes – they hope to come to the legislature or find the money elsewhere to replace it. Personnel Dept. uses an application to track exams for Civil Service – have the money budgeted to move to another system. It will take more than a year for it all to go away. Mr. Sexton is looking at moving the application from the data center to a commercial vendor that could host it for us at less expense. They are also talking to OCM BOCES about having them host the mainframe applications; they host the mainframe application for NYS Medicaid in the counties. In answer to Mr. Holmquist, Mr. Fisher said that there are also some smaller applications in county departments.

Mr. Holmquist asked if CHAIRS II is for next year. Mr. Fisher said that they are close; the towns are now testing it. Once they accept it, the old will be turned off and the CHAIRS II will be turned on (not on the mainframe).

**COMPTROLLER: pg. 3-6: Robert Antonacci III, Comptroller; James Maturo, Deputy Comptroller-Accounting; Phil Britt, Deputy Comptroller-Auditing**

Mr. Antonacci presented the following:



- Payroll-process payments over \$225 million
- Claims-process over 100,000 vendor claims, we pre-audit per charter
- Accounting-processed over 100,000 adjusting entries, critical to our total financial presentation, risk/financial integrity-bond rating, State & Federal aid
- Continued implementation of PeopleSoft Modules

- Services & Projects**
- Green auditor
  - PeopleSoft software implementation including Payroll
  - CSI-Onondaga

Mr. Antonacci:

- Straight forward budget; down a little bit this year; continue to make budget every year
- Budget review is a time to give a story and talk about the philosophy of the office
- This year's budget is a reflection of where they are going in the future – he won't be here forever and Jim Maturo will retire at some point
- Mr. Maturo continues to be an absolute valuable employee of Onondaga County government; can't put a price tag on this service to PeopleSoft
- Plan is to move Phil Britt to Chief Governmental Accountant, which has been a part time position due to the early retirement incentive program
- Comptroller's office participated in the ERI and had to find all of the savings within the office
- With the Chief Governmental Accountant, they went one extra year at part time with Tony Calogero, an unbelievable governmental accountant, who is ready to really retire
- Phil Britt came in to the department on the audit side and runs the department very well, but has a love for accounting - feels it is an appropriate time to make the move
- Financial statements are put out timely
- Onondaga County is the envy of other communities – have a well-run government; watch the buck; bond rating is the highest in the state – administration, legislature and comptroller should be proud of those efforts
- Continue to do audits
- CSI Task Force-- Dewitt did not ask for help; helped in Lysander with the fire department, Camillus and Geddes with the police discussion of merging; Elbridge with consolidation issues
- Have been able to assist at no cost to the municipalities with the legislature's and executive's support

Mr. Holmquist said that he appreciates working with the comptroller's office; the level of service is world class. He noted all of the services to the local municipalities and appreciates the audits – the Jazz Fest findings was phenomenal. It is the kind of thing that the legislature needs to know about. He referred to the information on CenterState CEO – how it was bought up last week during budget review. The letter was read in and the presentation went from a half an hour to two hours, and it should have. It was very appreciated – it is shining light and there was transparency -- does not know what we would do without the Comptroller's department.

Mr. Antonacci noted that some audits don't get the light of day; feels the OCRRA audit was phenomenal; it was groundbreaking and an audit that needed to be done. Those negotiations are going on right now; publically it has been agreed that the Cortland deal needs to be looked at – seems to be some economies of scale there. He referred to the Route 81 issue, noting that as a community we often sell ourselves too short. If a boulevard can be built and keep the boulevard people happy, and potentially keep Rt. 81 flowing with a tunnel, then why not. NYS is coming into approximately \$4 billion in fine money and penalties for legal settlements – has advocated that the money should go toward infrastructure.

Mr. Kilmartin said that he appreciates the Comptroller's service, being a great resource in addition to the great team at the Finance Department with the entitles working very well together. It is a tremendous benefit.

### **COUNTY EXECUTIVE, pg. 3-24 – William Fisher, Deputy County Executive**

Mr. Fisher:

- The budget request is very simple
- No change in budgeted positions; the total salaries are up to less than \$6,000 due to salary step increases
- Step increases do not include the county executive – continues to take the salary at the level it was in 2008
- Direct Appropriations are budgeted at the 2014 levels
- Intend to finish the year at or below budget for all lines
- Employee benefits decreased by approx. \$32,000 due primarily to reduced costs made to the NYS Retirement system
- Interdepartmental changes
  - Slight increase in Law Dept. charges -- receive a lot of service from them
  - Majority of increase in IT Charges – increase when PC's are deployed in 2015 – part of 5 yr PC refresh plan
- County executive has significant roles/responsibilities under Code and Charter
- Staff assists county executive anyway possible and is on call 24/7, 365; staff interacts positively with legislative branch



Mr. Kilmartin thanked Mr. Fisher and county executive for their hard work on the budget process and throughout the year. The legislature and county executive' office work well together on many issues; the level of cooperation is better than it has ever been.

**COUNTY LEGISLATURE, PG. 3-50 – Deborah Maturo, Clerk of the County Legislature; Jamie McNamara, Assistant Clerk**

Mrs. Maturo:

- Budget is straight forward, stays fairly consistent every year
- Total budget is approximately \$2.54 million, a decrease of \$9.37 million from last year – a net of moving monies from other entities into the legislature budget during the review process last year
- Approximately 67% is comprised of personnel, wages and benefits, 30% is allocated to interdepartmentals; leaving approx. 3% for direct appropriations
- All accounts are budgeted below 2014 BAM, with the exception of 101, which is a result of structured MC step increases.

Mrs. Maturo discussed a successful project that she started this year through Docuware. It is a records retention, filing and indexing system. Docuware can be manipulated and structured for individual departments' needs. With the help of IT, that has been done and is implemented in the department. Since February, the staff has successfully indexed 34 years of documents – primarily committee minutes. Currently work includes budget review minutes, legislation, public hearing, etc. The project has been rolled out in phases, which will continue and ramp up even further next year. She said she was very happy to report that it has not cost a dime. She noted that there has been a lot of discussion about records retention during the budget process; it is global concern and her office is in that category as well. Many records are stored offsite going back to the 1800s -- records that have to be kept in perpetuity, and the department is running out of room. It is costly to bring the files back and forth from the offsite facility and there is a lot of research done in the office. She is in the files constantly, and there are research projects every week.

The project and program will allow a savings on storage expenses in the long term. It will also provide a county-wide resource, wherein in other departments will have the ability to look at documents, complete research projects at on their laptops. She noted that the project is very labor intensive, but it is being managed, noting that the cost to bring in a firm to scan and store the documents is very expensive.

Mr. Kilmartin said that it would be worthwhile to do a holistic approach to document retention and digitizing the county. It would be a good endeavor to work with Finance and Comptroller's office regarding contracts and process and try to find the best means to do it in other departments. Especially if there is an opportunity to save money, retain documents, and cut down on storage. Possibly we could wean information from BOE, as it sounds like they had a good process with their pdf and jpg system, as well as what the legislature has done to date on its system.

Mr. Holmquist said that it is an honor to be part of the legislature – each and every member of the staff is a pleasure to work with, collaborative, and really hard working. He said that he calls probably every day and more than once or twice a day, and he really appreciates everything that Mrs. Maturo and the entire staff do. If every county department was run this way, we would be even greater.

Mr. Kilmartin thanked Mrs. Maturo and the entire legislative staff for all that they do day in and day out. It is a tremendous team, and legislators could not do it without them, especially during the difficult budget process with many late nights and weekends; noting that he is very grateful.

**COUNTY GENERAL, Pg. 3-36 – Steven Morgan, CFO**

Mr. Morgan presented the following:

ROT Distributions by Year

2014

2015

	<u>Adopted</u>	<u>Executive</u>
<u>ROT Projections</u>		
ROT Revenue-CTY General	\$ 6,262,846	\$ 6,335,500
Total Revenue	\$ 6,247,846	\$ 6,335,500
 <u>ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS</u>		
Comptrollers Office	\$ 49,433	\$ 49,433
Law Department	\$ 34,705	\$ 34,705
Finance Department	\$ 83,249	\$ 83,249
Management and Budget	\$ 26,620	\$ 26,620
<u>Sub-Total</u>	\$ 194,007	\$ 194,007
 <u>AUTHORIZED AGENCIES - FINANCIAL</u>		
CNY Arts	\$ 697,666	\$ 1,171,514
Contingency	\$ 405,000	\$ -
Leadership Greater Syracuse	\$ -	\$ -
Landmark Theatre	\$ 50,000	\$ -
<u>Sub-Total</u>	\$ 1,152,666	\$ 1,171,514
Arts and Culture % of ROT		
 <u>AUTHORIZED AGENCIES - HUMAN</u>		
St. Patrick's Day Parade	\$ 15,000	\$ -
 <u>AUTHORIZED AGENCIES - PHYSICAL</u>		
Baltimore Woods - Center for Nature Ed.	\$ 12,500	\$ 12,500
 <u>COUNTY GENERAL OTHER ITEMS</u>		
Contracted Services		
Syracuse CVB	\$ 1,250,000	\$ 1,835,000
Syracuse Nationals	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000
CenterState CEO	\$ -	\$ 25,000
CVB - AAA All-Star Game Budget Adjustment - per Peter		
Seitz		
Contracted Services - Total	\$ 1,275,000	\$ 1,885,000
Onondaga Historical Association (OHA)	\$ 158,555	\$ 161,265
Erie Canal Museum	\$ 60,005	\$ 61,031
Contingency	\$ 375,000	\$ -
County General Other Items - Total	\$ 1,868,560	\$ 2,107,296
 <u>OTHER DEPARTMENT ALLOCATIONS</u>		
FM - OnCenter Carrier Proj Debt	\$ -	\$ -
FM - OnCenter Maintenance	\$ -	\$ -
FM - OnCenter Heating & Cooling	\$ -	\$ -
FM - OnCenter Service Contracts	\$ -	\$ -
Jazzfest via County Promotion Fund 30	\$ -	\$ -
PARKS (GRANT #77044-002)	\$ 35,000	\$ 35,000

PARKS Carp Brook	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000
PARKS - Budget Support	\$ -	\$ -
PARKS -Alliance Bank	\$ -	
LEGISLATURE - Tourism Incentive	\$ 175,000	\$ -
Other Departments Total	\$ 260,000	\$ 85,000

**ONCENTER REVENUE FUND**

Oncenter - Operating Subsidy	\$ 1,500,000	\$ 1,300,000
Oncenter - Capital Reserve Fund	\$ 250,000	\$ 250,000
Oncenter - Charges from FM	\$ 972,972	\$ 1,215,183
Oncenter - Charges from Law	\$ 22,141	\$ -
Total Oncenter ROT	\$ 2,745,113	\$ 2,765,183
Current Distribution Totals	\$ 6,247,846	\$ 6,335,500
ROT Revenue Projection	\$ 6,247,846	\$ 6,335,500
<b>Surplus/(Deficit)</b>	\$ -	\$ -

*For the Countywide funds I will go in the same order as the budget.*

*The County General Other Items budget is shown on page 3-36. This budget includes funding for the CVB, Erie Canal Museum, OHA, the County's memberships and dues, and our contribution to the Village Infrastructure fund.*

*The Contractual Expenses account includes \$6.4 million for the following:*

- *Village Infrastructure Fund - \$4.5 million*
- *Convention and Visitors Bureau - \$1,835,000 whose budget was previously reviewed*
- *Centerstate CEO - \$25,000*
- *Syracuse Nationals - \$25,000*

*The OHA is funded at \$161,265. There's also \$100,000 of ROT fund balance proposed for capital improvements at the Skanah center. These funds will be administered by Facilities Management.*

Mr. Morgan noted that it isn't seen in the budget; there is a separate resolution that appropriates ROT fund balance.

*The Erie Canal Museum is funded at \$61,031.*

*The all other expenses line is for countywide memberships and dues for NYSAC, NYS County Executive's Association, audit fees for the County's deferred savings plans and other County wide expenses.*

*The transfer to grants line of \$500,000 is continued support for the Land Bank. Since implementing the Land Bank, prior year property tax collections in the City have increased significantly. In 2013, the County experienced a 54% increase in prior year collections as compare to the previous year.*

Mr. Morgan noted that the 2014 Budget included \$500,000 for the Land Bank.

*The first revenue line, Non Real Property Tax Items, is the ROT required to fund CVB, OHA, and the Erie Canal Museum.*

*The County Services revenue line is monies collected from 401B plan vendors to cover the cost of plan audits.*

*Miscellaneous revenues include write-offs for stale dated checks.*

*OnCenter Revenue Fund shown on page 3-38 is the fund created to account for OnCenter operations. Budgeted at \$2.8 million, it includes \$1.3 million for the OnCenter subsidy including the SMG management fee, \$250,000 for capital improvements, and \$1.2 million for Facilities Maintenance support.*

County General Undistributed Personnel Expense Budget is on page 3-40. As mentioned in the County Executive's presentation on Monday, the \$1.9 million budget is the value of the CSEA agreement recently agreed to by management and union leadership, but voted down by the members. This funding is being proposed to fund a potential finalized agreement in 2015.

County Wide Taxes are shown on page 3-42. This page depicts our estimates of property tax, sales tax, and anticipated use of fund balance incorporated into the 2015 budget.

The first line item includes our proposed property tax levy, adjusted by estimates of unpaid current year taxes and payments of delinquent taxes. Our estimates for deferred and uncollectable taxes as well as prior year tax collections are based on historical data. We anticipate approximately \$11 million of deferred and uncollectable taxes and \$8.2 million of prior year tax collections in the 2015 budget.

The property tax levy is \$140.9 million, exactly the same as the 2014 levy. As you know, this levy amount does not cover the cost of state mandates our taxpayers are required to pay. In fact we are short approximately \$32 million, which has to be made up with a portion of our sales tax distribution. We have budgeted a grand total of \$407 million of local dollars in the 2015 general fund budget.

The second line labeled "Non real Property Tax Items" is our \$257 million estimate of sales tax revenue. We estimate 2014 sales tax collections will finish 2.8% higher than 2013 actual collections. This budget assumes sales tax growth of 2.5% above our estimate for 2014.

The last line is the \$4 million required in fund balance to balance the 2015 budget.

Interfund Transfers are on page 3-44. These are simply the transfer of general fund dollars into OCC, the Road Fund, Library and so forth. It is the local dollar portion of those budgets. You will review these items when you review the budgets for Transportation, OCC, Library, and Community Development.

The debt service portion is the amount needed to cover debt for OCC and Oncenter complex.

The services other gov't – education revenue is college chargeback revenue used to offset OCC debt and is being budgeted at \$600,000.

The interdepartmental revenue line is the offset to indirect costs which is prepared by the Comptroller's office.

Debt Service costs are on page 3-46 and reflect countywide debt service including WEP, Water and the General Fund. The 2015 budget includes gross debt service payments of \$62.5 million, up \$9 million from 2014. Increases in gross debt payments are primarily for WEP, transportation, facilities, parks, and IT related projects.

Transfers from the General fund into the debt service fund were mitigated by using \$7.6 million of RBD, allocating \$600,000 from our college chargeback collections to partially offset OCC debt, and recognizing \$2.8 million in surcharge revenue from our land line and wireless surcharge to help mitigate the debt service cost associated with the radio project.

Countywide Allocations on page 3-48 depicts a number of budgetary items.

The "All Other Expenses" line is the estimated \$2 million cost of college chargeback for County residents attending a community college outside Onondaga County. As you know the amount we pay to each county is based on how much the county subsidizes its community college. We basically hold that county harmless from the local cost of one of our residents attending their college.

The next expense is the expected cost of tax certiorari settlements budgeted at \$200,000. This is the estimated payment back to residents who successfully challenge their assessment and are due a refund of improperly assessed County tax.

The final expense item is the \$88.3 million sales tax revenue we share with the City and schools.

In the revenue section, the \$10.1 million in "Other Real Property Tax Items" consists of two items:

- PILOTS of \$2.9 Million
- \$7.2 million of interest and penalties on delinquent taxes.

The Interest and Earnings account is our investment income. Our investable balances earn an estimated .27% return in the 2015 budget.

Mr. Holmquist said that years ago there was a dedicated meeting -- possibly a Fiscal Ways & Means Committee -- dedicated to talking about debt -- looked at what debt we had and where we were on the debt schedule. He noted that the county has taken on a lot of debt in recent years, there is plenty on the horizon. He suggested that perhaps, in working with Chairman Knapp and Mr. Morgan, a meeting could be set up to dedicate some time and take a look at where we are. When we are entertaining some of the big projects coming down the pike, to understand the implication that they may have on the bond rating and other factors. Mr. Holmquist said it would be a good exercise to re-remind ourselves where we are, what we have obligated ourselves to, and how it will affect us going forward. Mr. Morgan agreed and said that the CIP publication that accompanies the budget has a lot of that information in there, but there is no reason why it couldn't be discussed at a Fiscal Ways & Means meeting. He knows that the comptroller's office has been working on compiling a debt report, which they worked on in concert with his staff, to outline the debt, scheduled debt, authorized unissued debt, and proposed future debt for general fund, sewer fund, and water fund. The information is there and he would be happy to sit down and discuss it. Mr. Holmquist said that there is a lot of value in having a dialogue and meeting to dedicate our time and discuss it -- it gives a chance to digest it and understand where we are.

Chairman McMahon said that this budget doesn't touch the 2013 \$5 million debt service reserve. Mr. Morgan agreed, noting that it leave that intact.

Chairman McMahon referred to \$2 million reserved for chargebacks for other counties from community colleges, and asked what the actual numbers are for 2014. Mr. Morgan said that so far we have been charged back \$1.3 million; the actual in 2013 was almost \$2.4 million; the budget in 2014 was \$1.9 million. Chairman McMahon asked what the traditional timing is of those chargebacks. Mrs. Venditti said that it follows along with the school semester - payments are received in spring, summer, and fall. Chairman McMahon asked what the payments are for the fall; Mrs. Venditti said that they don't know. He said that in the event there are savings in that line item, i.e. it is \$1.6 million instead of \$1.9 million -- what happens to the \$300,000. Mr. Morgan said that it will fall to the bottom line. In 2013, for the same period of time that the \$1.3 million refers to, \$1.1 million was paid out, and ended at \$2.4 million. The fall payment ended up being over half of what the annual amount was. **In answer to Chairman McMahon, Mrs. Venditti said she was not sure of when the bill is received, but will report back to him on it.** Every single community college bills.

Chairman McMahon asked if there is an earmark for Leadership Greater Syracuse. Mr. Morgan said that it is in authorized agencies; it is a new item. Chairman McMahon noted that it wasn't brought up during the discussion of authorized agencies. Mr. Morgan said that he doesn't think it was specifically reviewed -- the larger authorized agencies presented to the committee. Chairman McMahon asked what the mindset was with LGS. Mr. Morgan said that the LGS approached the county and wanted to have a discussion about potential subsidization of their program. Years ago the county supported them.

Mr. Holmquist recalled that when it was an authorization agency in the budget it wasn't subsidized by ROT funds, it was in the general fund. Mr. Morgan agreed. Mr. Holmquist noted that he doesn't have a copy of the request, and asked Mr. Morgan if he had a copy of their budget request. Mr. Morgan explained that he didn't. Their director and board chair came in and met with him. It was a verbal request for general support of their program. There wasn't an actual submission of any documents. Mr. Holmquist asked if there was a one page explanation on what the money is for. Mr. Morgan said that there isn't, but he can get it. It was billed to him as general support to subsidize their operations.

Mr. Holmquist noted that the county certainly supported them, believes it was once through ROT and then general fund. The reason they haven't been in the budget in recent years is because they really don't fit ROT funds. In the beginning there was a justification when Mayor Tom Young and County Executive Nick Pirro instituted the plan. It was meant to get them going; it was never meant as a subsidy. The legislative body felt it was not an appropriate use for general funds, and then in around 2010, the legislature directed them to ODCD. He asked if LGS has requested funds there. Mr. Morgan did not know. **Mr. Holmquist asked Mr. Morgan if he would find out if they have applied to ODCD.** Mr. Holmquist noted that even if it was appropriate, there isn't a request. **Mr. Morgan said that he can get a formal request from LGS.**

Chairman McMahon noted that in 2013 OHA was given \$75,000 in 2013 for the Skä-noñh Center, and OHA was supposed to match the \$75,000. They came back and said that they did match it, and it was found later on that

they matched it with in-kind funds, no cash. Going forward, if this is done right, it will be a very good attraction for our history. The county owns the property and are continually being asked to make investments into the property. He asked if OHA pays the county rent for the property; Mr. Morgan said that he didn't believe so. Mr. Fisher said that he didn't know, but if they do, it is de minimis.

Chairman McMahon said that we should be looking at this like a real estate deal – noting that the county could give them the property, and then whatever upgrades they want to make, then they do them. The deal right now as proposed, really doesn't make a lot of sense even if the county supports the end goal. The county owns the property, OHA isn't paying any rent, and the county continues to make all of the upgrades and improvements there, so that OHA can get something going and charge fees, while the county has nothing to do with it. It makes zero sense. Mr. Fisher said that there is a different way to look at it. Overtime, the St. Marie Among the Iroquois Park remains a park. It is difficult to sell it under NYS law. It is his understanding that the county has a hard time keeping it open; it wasn't a good experience for people. Every year it was a challenge for the Park's Commissioner to explain how to keep it going and not bring in all kinds of complaints. Along came someone who had proven his ability in taking a teetering OHA and make it viable. Chairman McMahon said that he is very confident in Mr. Tripoli's ability to delivery on what he says he will deliver. This is a real estate relationship, and has never seen one like it. Mr. Fisher disagreed – it is county property – look at it as a park. Chairman McMahon said at the same facility, we charge Soil and Water Conservation District for rent. Mr. Fisher said that they are not an attraction – they aren't building something that people go to see. It is felt that the lake and Skä-noñh Center and the story of the Haudenosaunee is a great story and Mr. Tripoli will tell it really well. It is being outsourced to him, as he is in the business of operating museums, where the county isn't. If he is in that business, why not pay him to do it for us, \$.20 on the dollar – a \$500k project with \$100k appropriation. Chairman McMahon question who makes the money when revenues are generated. Mr. Fisher said that he hopes Mr. Tripoli plows it back into the operation, the same way the zoo does. It is designed to make it a great experience for citizens and visitors. Chairman McMahon asked if he would pay the county back. Mr. Fisher said “no”, that is not the proposal. The proposal is to invest into a museum that has been poorly managed and not an asset to the county. We will not sell that property; leaving it vacant doesn't seem like the best idea.” The County Executive was willing to entertain supporting it with County dollars because of Mr. Tripoli's record. He has done a terrific job of turning OHA around – “we hope to reward success”.

Chairman McMahon asked what kind of skin in the game the Onondaga Nation has financially. Mr. Fisher said that Mr. Tripoli has an ask out to the Nation and is optimistic that they will step up. Chairman McMahon said what has been presented to the legislature has been very vague; it feels like there are two people at the table pushing this – the County and OHA. There is a third partner here, the Onondaga Nation. **He asked for a detailed business plan on how this will be proposed.** There are a lot of other relationships in Parks, that when we make an investment in them, and there is someone else leasing them, we typically like to share some of the upside. If that is not the case here, the third partner, Onondaga Nation, really needs to step up. **He asked that a strong memo be put together with an accurate understanding of the Onondaga Nation's involvement in the process, so that the legislature knows what the partnership of this relationship will look like going forward.**

Chairman McMahon noted that the legislature is being asked to spend ROT fund balance dollars. The fund balance if allocated as whole, is very small. There are very tight margins; checks are written to these organizations as we collect the dollars. There is not a lot of room for error. He wants the business plan to be bullet proof.

Mr. May said that the appropriation of ROT dollars generates sales tax – its' that simple. He is not certain this application will do that, but thinks it is a decent application of the funds. Seeing the information requested by Chairman McMahon will be helpful.

Mr. May noted that this is a 1.2 billion budget – we tend to focus on the levy and the local dollars – what it will cost to operate the county. It is vetted out the best we can in the time frame that we have, and if the past few years have come up with some pretty good answers for taxpayers. The one thing that doesn't get addressed enough, as Mr. Holmquist touched on, is the debt service component and an understanding at a real high level. The capital plan addresses a lot it, but unfortunately the capital plan doesn't necessarily fit this process. As we go through the year and are ready to address projects, that is when they are put under a microscope. During

the committee process, we tend to lose sight of the bigger picture. He suggested more than a CIP review in committee. He suggested a dedicated work session review, where there is a discussion at a very high level about the mean revenue streams, where we are going with the debt, and how things fit. Mr. Kilmartin said that it would be a worthwhile exercise before the end of the year – look at the macro issues that allow us to plan for the years ahead.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:07 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Deborah L. Maturo*

DEBORAH L. MATURO, Clerk  
Onondaga County Legislature

ATTENDANCE

COMMITTEE: *Ways and Means Review of Ways and Means*

DATE: *9/25/14*

NAME

DEPARTMENT/AGENCY

PLEASE PRINT	
<i>Ann Debejian</i>	<i>Personnel</i>