

**INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**  
**KENNEDY, OBERACKER, MARIETTA, FARWELL, SHANNON**  
**June 25, 2019**

Absent: Representative Oberacker, Representative Marietta  
Also Present: Jim Wallace, Herkimer County Administrator, via conference call

**COUNTY GOVERNANCE- JIM WALLACE, HERKIMER COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**

Representative Kennedy, prior to the meeting, emailed Herkimer County's local law establishing the position of County Administrator, which was adopted in 1976.

Representative Kennedy called Jim Wallace, the Herkimer County Administrator, via conference phone, and introduced him to the Committee to discuss the role of the County Administrator in Herkimer County. Representative Kennedy explained that Otsego County has been discussing the idea, and asked if Mr. Wallace could give some insight into his experience.

Jim Wallace reviewed the following, including but not limited to:

- 31 out of 57 NYS counties have a County Administrator (excluding NYC boroughs)
- Mr. Wallace has worked for different departments of Herkimer County, including Social Services department, as the Youth Bureau Director, and for the department of employment and training, before ultimately becoming the County Administrator
- Herkimer County has a Budget Officer/Purchasing Agent, about 40% of Mr. Wallace's time is spent on budget issues, especially since the budget has grown more complex over time
- the population of Herkimer County is approximately 64,000 residents (similar to Otsego County, which is slightly smaller)
- Herkimer County has the 4<sup>th</sup> largest highway system in NYS (\$19 million dollar Highway budget, 15 towns incorporated their roads into the County)
- the Ways & Means Committee creates and oversees the budget with the help of the County Administrator and the department heads
- there are 10 Committees of the Board:
  - Administration/ Veteran's Affairs
  - County Planning & Development
  - County Properties
  - Education
  - Highways

Human Resources  
Information Services  
Natural Resources  
Public Safety & Emergency Management  
Ways & Means

- the County Administrator holds regular meetings with department heads
- the Board of Supervisors hires department heads with the input of the County Administrator
- department heads make staffing decisions for their department
- the County Administrator acts as the County's press/public information officer
- works closely with New York Association of Counties (NYSAC), emails with them daily, NYSAC is a great resource
- works closely with the Herkimer County IDA, allocates approximately \$700,000 annually to the IDA
- the Planning & Development Committee functions as Herkimer County's economic development department

The Committee thanked Mr. Wallace for the information, ended the call, and continued the conversation.

## **OTHER**

The Committee discussed Otsego Now's leadership changes over the years, how to have a meaningful impact on economic development, and Oneonta's Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) including the Rail Yard project and attempts to develop housing in Oneonta.

The Committee discussed recently proposed marijuana legalization legislation, how it did not pass into law, and the sentiment that legalizing marijuana may not be a good idea with regard to public health.

The Committee discussed the 13 businesses that are offering recovery friendly workplaces in Oneonta in response to the opioid crisis.

The Committee discussed this year's loss of NYS Aid and Incentives for Municipalities (AIM) funding. Representative Kennedy called NYSAC and left a voicemail inquiring about an estimate of the total loss of AIM funding in Otsego County.

The Committee discussed the next steps regarding the County Administrator position, including making final changes to the draft job description and consulting the County Attorney for feedback.

There being no further business to discuss, the Committee adjourned until Tuesday, July 9, 2019 at 9:00am in the County Office Building.