



Office of the Broome County Legislature

Daniel J. Reynolds, Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE LEGISLATURE
DECEMBER 29, 2020
4:00 PM
VIA ZOOM VIDEOCONFERENCING

Members Present: D. Reynolds, (Chair), S. Flagg, S. Baker, K. Wildoner, K. Myers, G. Baldwin, J. Shaw, M. Hilderbrant, C. O'Brien, S. Ryan, B. Weslar, M. Kaminsky, M. Whalen

Members Absent: M. Pasquale, R. Balles

Others Present: A. Martin, C. Hall, M. Tanzini, R. O'Donnell, Legislature; K. Beebe, Town of Dickinson Resident; V. Gialanella, Town of Vestal Resident

The committee meeting was called to order by the Chair at 4:05 p.m.

Mr. Reynolds opened the meeting and stated that this Committee of the Whole meeting was to discuss the current Legislature Rules of Order and to receive feedback on whether or not changes should be made. He further stated that a survey had been distributed and that of the nine respondents, six of them felt no changes to the Rules are needed and that of several who didn't fill out the survey, Mr. Reynolds stated that those he spoke to agree with that sentiment.

Mr. Tanzini shared the results of the survey with the Committee.

Mrs. Kaminsky stated that her biggest concern is that legislators should know if the Chairman holds a piece of legislation from getting onto the agenda. Mr. Reynolds stated that is rare, if at all, but there are occasions where either the staff, the County Administration or OMB works with departments who may not have all the information to draft a resolution, or there may be questions outstanding and they work with the department to ensure all information is available before it's put on an agenda.

Mrs. Kaminsky further stated that she had a no particular issue with Mr. Reynolds, but she is concerned for the future as well, and only thinks notification is warranted if the resolution is held directly by the Chair.

Mr. Shaw stated that he doesn't believe this is an issue and that he believes the Legislators have worked well together, regardless of political party. He also echoed the sentiment that he thinks legislation shouldn't be brought forth until it has been fully thought out and reviewed.

Ms. Ryan referenced Rule 21(c) and stated that she believes it should revert back to the Rule prior to 2017 when the Committee Chairs could determine whether or not legislation makes it to the agendas, versus how it is now where the Chair of Legislature makes that determination.

Ms. Ryan also stated that she would potentially like to see something like Oneida County has, where if the Chair of the Legislature holds legislation from making it onto an agenda, the legislators can pass a petition with a certain number of signatures and that would trigger the legislation to then be placed on the agenda.

Mr. Shaw asked Mr. Martin about legislative office functions. He responded that the staff works with County Departments and the Administration on resolutions to ensure legislators have accurate resolutions with detailed information. He further stated that in his experience there usually aren't situations where the Chair is holding back resolutions but rather if a resolution faces a delay it's typically due to the staff working in partnership with the Administration and Departments to address unresolved issues. Finally, he stated that the Chairman has always directed staff to check with the Administration and Departments on if a particular resolution is time sensitive so as to not cause a delay even if additional issues need to be resolved as part of the committee process.

Mr. Weslar suggested a rule change that would maintain the authority of the Chair to set the agenda but would require notification to legislators if a resolution is held from the agenda.

Mr. Whalen spoke on some of the history of the Legislature and the Rules of Order. He also expressed some concerns if there is a time where a Legislative Chair and an Executive didn't get along and started withholding legislation.

Answering a question from Mrs. Myers, Mr. Reynolds stated that the main reason the rule regarding the Chair setting the agenda was for administrative reasons. He further stated that the legislature also then required additional financial information for departments on their resolution requests.

Mr. Martin and Mr. Reynolds referenced that the Legislature may need to consider adding a rule regarding virtual meetings as was also suggested by another Legislator in the survey. This is due to the current pandemic and the Governor's executive orders about meetings being held virtually.

There being no further business to come before the Committee at this time, Mr. Baker made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mrs. Myers. The meeting adjourned at 4:48 p.m.