ERIE COUNTY LEGISLATURE

92 Franklin Street - 4th Floor
Buffalo, New York 14202

To: Member s of the Erie County Legislature

From: Karen M. McCarthy, Clerk of the Legislature

Date: October 30, 2014

Re: Supporting Materials Given During Public Hearing Regarding the Recommendations of the Citizens' Salary Review Commission

Please see attached.

COUNTY OF ERIE

October 30, 2014

STEFAN I. MYCHAJLIW
COMPTROLLER

Ms. Karen McCarthy
Clerk of the Erie County Legislature
92 Franklin Street – Fourth Floor
Buffalo, New York 14202

RE: Salary Review Commission's Recommendation

Dear Clerk McCarthy:

I would like to thank the volunteers who served on the Salary Review Commission for their hard work and public service. Together, they spent many hours deliberating whether or not elected officials in Erie County deserve a pay raise, a subject that is complicated and controversial. Their dedication to this mission is admirable and I am grateful for their efforts and opinions.

Ultimately, the Commission decided to leave the pay of the Erie County Legislators alone and propose increases for the Countywide Elected Executive, Comptroller, Sheriff and Clerk. While I understand their reasoning, and am humbled at their suggestion, I cannot in good faith accept a pay raise. I ran for the office of Comptroller twice in two years. Each time I was fully aware of the term of office I was running for and the compensation. I strongly feel it would be disingenuous of me to accept an increased salary at this time. If the Legislature feels differently and provides one, I pledge to donate the raise to charity for the remainder of my term.

As Comptroller, I serve as the County's Chief Financial Officer. I am intimately familiar with the finances of the county and have recently started meeting with our vendors to learn more about their operations. As I sit down with folks from these businesses, I realize there is a direct connection between an expanding government that taxes and spends too much and the struggles businesses face every day. These folks deserve elected officials that will lead by example and put a stop to the ever growing tax burden.

Many taxpayers at home have had to do more with less over the past few years. I think it's appropriate that those elected to serve them don't enhance their income any further at this time. Instead, while the 2015 proposed budget lay on the table, we should be talking about how we can reduce government spending and lower taxes.

Sincerely,

STEFAN I. MYCHAJLIW
Erie County Comptroller

ERIE COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING • 95 FRANKLIN STREET • ROOM 1100 • BUFFALO, NEW YORK • 14202-3972
TELEPHONE: (716) 858-8400 • FAX: (716) 858-6195 • INTERNET: www.erie.gov

ERIE COUNTY PUBLIC HEARING – October 30, 2014 – 5:30 PM
Comments by Lynda Stephens, Buffalo resident

SALARY INCREASES FOR ELECTED OFFICIALS

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. It seems to me elected officials should promote the public good, balancing costs of government, including services, salaries, and governing activities, with ability of the community to pay.

COMMISSION'S SALARY RECOMMENDATIONS

1.The Citizens Salary Review Commission was formed under the Erie County Charter. It is a legitimate body which appears to have performed with due diligence. The Commission's recommendations were made after deliberations which included a review of salaries in other NYS counties. (The report is available online at: www.erie.gov)

2. Salary increases are proposed for the Sheriff, Comptroller, Clerk and County Executive. These salaries have not been increased since 1996 – 18 years ago. They are full time positions.

3. I support the recommendations of the Commission to increase the salaries of the County Executive, Sheriff, Comptroller, and Clerk. The Commission's salary recommendations are prudent, generally similar to salaries in other large counties, and are less than some counties with substantially smaller populations. The total annual increase for these full time positions is $77,305. This cost is reasonable considering the county budget is $1.3 billion.

4. I am disappointed the Commission did not recommend a salary change for Erie County Legislators. Your salaries are enormously larger than the $20,926 average salary of other county legislators in New York State. Erie County legislators receive $42,588 for part time work. Erie County taxpayers are burdened with an annual **overage** cost of $238,282. This overage is three times higher than the salary increases recommended by the Commission for our full-time elected officials.

5. The high, out of line salaries of Erie County legislators present a potential financial conflict of interest. Are legislators acting to promote the public good, or are they pandering to their constituents to ensure re-election to keep what for most of us is a large chunk of income - $42,588?

DECISION MAKING PROCESS

6. Listening to TV a couple weeks ago, I heard about an online poll related to the proposed salary increases. I had to google for more information and found an online article in the "Orchard Park Bee" telling me how to find the salary poll. Go to erie.gov and click on Legislature and then click on "Majority Caucus". Amazing! Does anyone really think this online poll is secure OR scientific? Of course not! This is a stunt - pandering to constituents! The Legislature should ignore this poll and the Majority Caucus should remove it from their website.

7. In an open meeting legislators should inform the public of the Commission's salary recommendations including the Commission's rationale and, if you differ from the Commission's recommendations, explain your opposition to the community.

Sir:

I, along with many others are very against salary raises for our elected officials

It's enough our taxes are very high!! Everyone keeps complaining but no one does anything about it. Our dear politicians keep using our money like water.

As a widow for 20 years, I live on $29,000 a year.

The oficials' present salaries of $103,248 & $80,613 sound like heaven to people like us. If these poor politicians feel that their present salaries are too low - they should quit & find new jobs for themselves

No Raises for for elected officials or Politicians!!

Sincerely,

Mrs Endrews