

Introduced by:

Hon. Toney L. Earl, Sponsor  
Hon. Michael M. Grant, Sponsor  
Hon. Alden H. Wolfe, Sponsor

Referral No. 7621  
September 4, 2018

**RESOLUTION NO. 458 OF 2018  
RECOMMENDATION OF THE ROCKLAND COUNTY LEGISLATURE WITH RESPECT TO THE  
DRAFT 2018 ROCKLAND COUNTY SHARED SERVICES PLAN**

**EARL/WOLFE: UNAN.**

WHEREAS, the New York State Legislature adopted the County-wide Shared Services Initiative, enacted as General Municipal Law 239-bb, requiring there to be in each county a Shared Services Panel ["Panel"] that must consist of the chief executive officer of the county and one representative from each town or village in the county, and may include representatives of school districts, BOCES, and/or any special improvement district such as fire districts; and

WHEREAS, the goal of the Panel is to develop a county-wide shared services tax property tax savings plan for shared, coordinated and efficient services among the various municipalities within the County; and

WHEREAS, the County Executive provided the Legislature with the Panel's draft Shared Services Plan on July 27, 2018, and subsequently held three (3) public hearings to accept public input on the proposed Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Shared Services Initiative gives the Legislature the authority to issue an advisory opinion making any recommendations deemed necessary; and

WHEREAS, the Plan includes a number of ideas for shared services such as a county-wide animal shelter, inter-municipal agreements to standardize and share tax and property data, shared IT services among smaller municipalities, shared Highway Department equipment, and a County-wide Purchasing cooperative, all of which are excellent ideas for potential municipal and tax savings; and

WHEREAS, the Plan also included a proposed County-wide retiree health insurance pool, projected to save \$4,500,000 County-wide in both 2019 and 2020; and

WHEREAS, based on the presentation made by the administration to the unions and the email setting it up, it seems obvious that the Administration expects to realize these unsubstantiated savings by switching retiree health insurance from traditional Medicare plus NYSHIP to an Aetna Managed Medicare plan; and

WHEREAS, County law requires that we provide our retirees with the same level of health benefits they had on the day they retired; and

WHEREAS, based upon research comparing traditional Medicare and Managed Medicare, as well as upon the information we have received from numerous outraged retirees, there is no question that such a switch would result in diminished benefits to our retirees; and

WHEREAS, despite the Legislature's requests, it has not received a detailed Aetna proposal detailing costs and benefits, nor has it received any numbers or actuarial data to justify any projected savings; and

WHEREAS, it appears that other health care consortiums in NY manage to achieve savings through economy of scale because their pool includes both active employees and retirees, and the expenses of the younger and/or healthier members offset the higher costs of older and/or sicker members; and

WHEREAS, it is impossible to see how a health plan for retirees only could possibly provide the same level of benefits, yet reduce costs and generate tax savings – as one retiree stated, “medicine is a business now;” and

WHEREAS, while sharing services and saving taxpayers money is a wonderful goal that should be pursued, the Rockland County Legislature cannot give its approval to phantom savings by recommending such a project, nor even give its tacit approval by simply failing to take a position on the Plan at all; and

WHEREAS, if the project proposing to create a County-wide health insurance pool for retirees were removed from the Plan, the Legislature would wholeheartedly recommend and support the Plan; and

WHEREAS, at 4:20pm today, only minutes after this resolution was sent to all the Legislators, the County Executive issued a press release stating that it is his intention to vote to remove the health insurance project from the Plan; and

WHEREAS, The Committee of the Whole of the Legislature has met, considered and approved the resolution; however, it was approved within 120 hours of the Full Legislative meeting and was deemed an immediate need by the Chair, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Rockland County Legislature has reviewed the draft 2018 Rockland County Shared Services Plan and makes the following recommendations:

- 1) Remove the project entitled “Health Insurance – Pool for Retired Municipal Employees” from the final Plan, as the projected savings are completely unsubstantiated and unlikely to be realized; and
- 2) Upon the removal of the shared Health insurance proposal, the Legislature supports adoption of the proposed Shared Services Plan.

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