

ANNUAL REPORT 2021



CARL E. HEASTIE, SPEAKER
FRED W. THIELE, JR., CHAIR

NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY
COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS



THE ASSEMBLY
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

COMMITTEES
Ways and Means
Environmental Conservation
Oversight, Analysis and Investigation
Transportation

FRED W. THIELE, JR.
Assemblyman 1st District

CHAIR
Committee on
Local Governments

December 15, 2021

Honorable Carl Heastie
Legislative Office Building, Room 932
Albany, NY 12248

Dear Speaker Heastie:

I am pleased to submit to you the 2021 Annual Report of the Assembly Standing Committee on Local Governments.

Throughout the year, the Committee addressed many significant issues, including extending support during the COVID-19 pandemic, and increasing benefits for volunteer firefighters and volunteer ambulance workers. The Committee also worked on legislation including parkland alienations, Industrial Development Agency (IDA) reforms, and municipal transparency. In this report you will find descriptions of legislation and important issues considered by the Committee. Additionally, this report highlights goals of the Committee, which emphasize the ongoing need to support the municipalities of this State.

I share with you an appreciation for the important role local governments play in providing essential services to their residents and commend you for the support and leadership you have provided the Local Governments Committee in its pursuit to address issues facing New York's municipalities. With your assistance, the Committee will continue to focus on the needs of local governments.

Sincerely,

Fred W. Thiele, Jr., Chairman
Assembly Standing Committee on
Local Governments

2021 ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY
STANDING COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Fred W. Thiele, Jr., Chairman

Committee Members

Phil Ramos
Steven Otis
Carrie Woerner
Monica P. Wallace
Jonathan G. Jacobson
Taylor Darling
Sarah Clark
William Conrad
Jonathan Rivera
Gina Sillitti
Anna Kelles
Jennifer Lunsford

Colin J. Schmitt
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I. INTRODUCTION

The Assembly Standing Committee on Local Governments considers the legislative needs of New York State's local governments, including counties, cities, towns, villages, school districts, fire districts, and various other special districts and local agencies. The Committee monitors the needs of local governments and strives to develop legislative remedies to meet those needs. The Committee also explores new proposals and ideas that will enable local governments to better serve the citizens of New York State. The Committee endeavors to enact laws that will further improve local governments' abilities to address their unique problems. The Committee is also interested in assisting local governments by considering legislation that will provide flexibility in municipal finances and consider other legislative solutions to help local governments remain financially solvent.

The Committee considers legislation that proposes to amend the General Municipal, Municipal Home Rule, Local Finance, County, Town, Village, Volunteer Firefighters' Benefit, and Volunteer Ambulance Workers' Benefit Laws. Since the structure, powers and scope of local governments is broad, the Committee's concerns cover a wide range of issues. Home Rule legislation is also addressed. These bills deal with issues specific to a certain local government's jurisdiction and are intended to remedy a specific local concern. Through the use of home rule legislation to solve individual local needs, the Committee has helped resolve many unique situations and has enabled local governments all over the State to serve their citizens better.

II. MAJOR ISSUES AND LEGISLATION OF 2021

A. LOCAL GOVERNMENT AID – ENACTED BUDGET

The State Budget for the State Fiscal Year of 2021-2022 continues funding for local governments in the form of unrestricted aid and grants to help local governments achieve efficiencies and share municipal services.

Aid and Incentives to Municipalities

Aid and Incentives to Municipalities (AIM) funding is direct general-purpose aid provided to towns, villages and cities. AIM funding for the State Fiscal Year 2021-2022 included \$693 million with \$37 million available for towns and villages. This represents a \$28 million increase over prior year funding. The 2021-2022 Budget also maintained authorization for the State to intercept an amount equal to the prior AIM amount from county sales tax revenues for remittance to the towns and villages within the county that no longer receive State-funded AIM award.

Citizen Empowerment Tax Credits (CETC) and Citizens Reorganization Empowerment Grants

The Citizen Empowerment Tax Credits provide a financial incentive for municipalities to consolidate, or dissolve, and to cover costs associated with studies, plans, and implementation efforts. The Citizen Empowerment Tax Credits was funded at \$33.25 million representing a decrease of 5% from prior year funding.

Local Government Performance and Efficiency Program

The Local Government Performance and Efficiency Program received \$3.8 million for the costs associated with local government efficiency projects, municipal consolidation, and/or shared services, representing a decrease of \$200,000 from prior year funding.

Small Government Assistance

The Executive Budget provided \$206,435 for the counties of Essex, Franklin and Hamilton to help offset the Adirondack Park property tax exemptions, representing a 5% decrease from prior year funding.

Financial Restructuring Board

The Financial Restructuring Board provides a comprehensive review of eligible municipalities' finances and operations. The Board received \$2.5 million to make recommendations on improving eligible municipalities' fiscal stability and provides financial assistance for undertaking certain fiscal recommendations.

County-Wide Shared Services

The County-Wide Shared Services Program received \$214 million for the State to match local governments' savings from approved property tax savings plans, representing a 5% decrease from prior year funding.

Video Lottery Terminal (VLT) Aid

Video Lottery Terminal (VLT) Aid included \$19.6 million for eligible municipalities that that host video lottery gaming facilities.

B. COVID-19 RESPONSE

In March of 2020 the COVID-19 pandemic struck the State of New York. As a result, businesses and schools statewide were forced to close, and local governments were left to adjust to the rapidly changing environment. New York's first responders were required to work even harder on the front lines to save lives. The Assembly has continued to pass legislation to protect and support the State's first responders and to help local governments better respond to the rapidly changing needs of their communities.

State Disaster Emergency Loan Program Extender **(A.7566 Stirpe; Chapter 206 of the Laws of 2021)**

In order for small businesses to reopen safely during the COVID-19 pandemic, small businesses had to comply with new requirements to ensure the safety of employees and customers. To protect New York businesses and the communities they serve, the Legislature passed legislation in 2020 creating the State Disaster Emergency Loan Program which authorized Industrial Development Agencies (IDAs) to provide loans of up to \$25,000 and provide grants to small businesses and not-for-profit corporations for personal protective equipment (PPE) and other safety devices. This law extends the authorization until December 31, 2022.

Use of Municipal Space for Outdoor Dining **(A.7733 Fahy; Chapter 238 of the Laws of 2021)**

During the COVID-19 pandemic restaurants suffered economic loss that lead many to close permanently. Restaurants that were able to reopen often relied heavily on their ability to operate outdoors on sidewalks and streets. In June 2020, Emergency Executive Order 202.38 was issued to allow restaurants permitted to sell alcoholic beverages to sell such beverages in their outdoor facilities, even if located on municipal property like streets and sidewalks. This law extends the use of municipal space for one year to help restaurants recover from the economic losses of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This bill originated in the Economic Development Committee.

Open Meetings for Political Subdivisions

(A.6481 McMahon; Passed both houses)

In order to ensure public bodies could safely meet and conduct business during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Legislature passed legislation permitting political subdivisions to hold meetings remotely for the duration of the State disaster emergency. However, the Executive's disaster declaration expired on September 7, 2021, making this legislation inoperable. In addition, Chapter 417 enacted an extension of the Open Meetings authorization until January 15, 2022.

C. MUNICIPAL OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES

Compensation for Fire District Election Employees
(A.6296 Griffin; Chapter 347 of the Laws of 2021)

This law authorizes an increase in the maximum compensation of chairperson, election inspectors and ballot clerks who work at fire districts elections. This law increases the maximum compensation from \$35 to \$70 and \$50 to \$100, based on the amount of work. Such compensation has not been updated since 1992. The increase will provide parity with general election workers.

Town Justice for Certain Towns in Chautauqua County
(A.7629-A Goodell; Chapter 225 of the Laws of 2021)

It can be difficult for some municipalities to find people interested in holding public office who are also residents of the municipality, as required by law. Additionally, it can be easier for smaller municipalities to share services with a nearby municipality. This law provides flexibility to the Towns of Sherman, Mina, French Creek and Clymer in Chautauqua County by authorizing a single town justice to preside in the town courts.

D. MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS

Municipal Reapportionment
(A.229-C Paulin; Chapter 516 of the Laws of 2021)

This law sets uniform statewide reapportionment criteria for charter counties and other municipalities. Several of the standards included in this law were part of the 2014 amendment to the New York State Constitution, which applied redistricting standards to the drawing of congressional and State legislative districts. The standards set forth in this law apply to the drawing of legislative districts and extend standards for representation to all the people of New York.

Planning for Renewable Energy Sources
(A.443 Paulin; Chapter 459 of the Laws of 2021)

This law authorizes towns and villages to consider certain renewable alternative energy sources such as solar thermal; photovoltaics; wind; hydroelectric; geothermal electric; geothermal ground source heat; tidal energy; wave energy; ocean thermal; farm waste electric generating equipment; and fuel cells, when designing zoning and planning regulations. Considering alternative sources of energy when making zoning and planning decisions helps to promote the use of cleaner energy sources.

IDA Fees
(A.795 Wallace; Veto Memo 68)

Industrial development agencies (IDAs) are public benefit corporations to facilitate economic development between localities and private entities. IDAs are authorized to buy, sell or lease property and provide tax exempt financing for approved projects in order to attract, retain and expand businesses within their jurisdictions. The lack of standardization in fees can sometimes give project applicants an incentive to "shop around" between IDAs, seeking the IDA with the lowest fees, and putting other areas in the county at a disadvantage. This law would standardize the fees charged by IDAs within a county to help put economic development within each county on a level playing field.

Municipal Shared Purchasing
(A.2580 Thiele; Chapter 95 of the Laws of 2021)

Cooperative purchasing, commonly referred to as "piggy-backing," is a procurement method whereby if a government agency has already awarded a contract to one or more vendors for a good or service through a competitive process it can be used by others. This law extends the authorization until July 31, 2023, for shared purchasing to reduce the administrative burdens and the costs.

Peconic Bay Region Community Housing Act
(A.2633 Thiele; Chapter 445 of the Laws of 2021)

The unique demographics and economics in the Peconic Bay region that have historically contributed to the housing shortage have only been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. This law authorizes the towns of East Hampton, Riverhead, Shelter Island, Southampton, and Southold in the Peconic Bay region to establish dedicated community housing funds for affordable housing to be financed by a supplemental real estate transfer tax. This law gives the Peconic Bay region authority and resources needed to establish a dedicated fund to provide affordable housing opportunities.

Westchester Veterans' Organizations
(A.2658 Sayegh; Chapter 601 of the Laws of 2021)

This law authorizes the Westchester County Legislature to waive building permit review fees and fees associated with capital improvements to any post or hall owned by a not-for-profit congressionally chartered veterans' organization located in such county.

Elected Officials and IDAs
(A.3201-B McDonald; Chapter 559 of the Laws of 2021)

This law corrects a gap in the General Municipal Law relating to IDAs that currently allows for a potential conflict of interest when an elected official who is the appointing authority for members of the IDA can then be chosen by his or her appointees to serve as a paid employee of the IDA. This law prohibits an elected official from serving as a compensated officer, agent or employee.

Prohibits Symbols of Hate
(A.5402-A Solages; Chapter 554 of 2021)

This law prohibits the selling and displaying of symbols of hate by municipalities, fire districts, volunteer fire companies, police departments and school districts. This law mirrors legislation passed in 2020 that banned the sale and display of hate symbols, including the Confederate flag and symbols of neo-Nazi ideology and white supremacy, on State property.

Electronic Sign Boards
(A.6229 Thiele; Chapter 508 of the Laws of 2021)

This law requires towns with an electronic sign board to routinely update such boards. Most town residents get their information about town government and town actions or events from the internet. This law enables residents to have quick and easy access to town notices, allowing them to be better-informed.

Aid and Incentives to Municipalities Redesign Taskforce
(A.6601-A JD Rivera; Veto Memo. 56)

The Aid and Incentives to Municipalities (AIM) Program provides State Aid to cities (except New York City) and 141 towns and villages. This law would create the AIM Redesign Taskforce, consisting of seven appointed members, to provide recommendations and alternatives to the current AIM program. The AIM Task Force would examine, review, and recommend changes to the current AIM allocation system.

Local Government Borrowing Practices
(A.7168 Pichardo; Chapter 121 of the Laws of 2021)

Currently municipalities have authority to: pay the first installment on an issue of serial bonds two years after the date of issuance or two years after the date of the first bond anticipation note, whichever is sooner; redeem bonds prior to maturity in such amount and manner as may be determined by the finance board; issue variable rate bonds and notes; and suspend the five percent down payment requirement in certain circumstances. In addition, municipalities may lease-finance certain public works, issue variable rate obligations, and issue discount bonds. However, these authorizations were set to expire on July 15, 2021. This law extends, until July 15, 2024, these provisions related to local government borrowing practices.

Urban Development Action Areas
(A.7174 Walker; Chapter 161 of the Laws of 2021)

Urban Development Areas are municipally designated areas “to encourage and stimulate businesses experienced in the development of one to four family low-rise residential structures or minority or women-owned business enterprises in proposed projects.” This law extends, until June 30, 2024, expedited land use review for Urban Development Action Area Projects for low-income residential rental developments for seniors and people with disabilities that are funded by the federal government.

Investment Options for Counties
(A.7209 Thiele; Chapter 255 of the Laws of 2021)

Currently, New York City is the only government in New York that has temporary authorization to invest in additional types of investment products including general obligation bonds and notes of any state other than New York; obligations of any corporation organized under the laws of any state, provided that no more than \$250 million is invested in any one corporation; bankers' acceptances maturing within 270 days which are eligible for purchase in the open market by federal reserve banks; obligations of, or instruments issued by, any agency or instrument of the USA; and no load money market mutual funds. This law provides counties in New York State with the same additional investment options available to New York City until July 1, 2023.

Electronic Open Auction
(A.7384 Thiele; Chapter 298 of the Laws of 2021)

Prior to 2019, municipalities could only sell municipal bonds in a closed bidding format, where bidders were not aware of other bid amounts. Chapter 634 of the Laws of 2019 authorized municipalities that met certain population and debt issuance thresholds to conduct electronic open auction bond sales, where bids can be modified in response to competing bids. This law extends the pilot program for two years, to allow an assessment to be made on the efficiency of electronic bidding.

Peconic Bay Region Community Preservation Fund
(A.7647 Thiele; Chapter 478 of the Laws of 2021)

This law extends the provisions for community housing and historic preservation in the Peconic Bay Community Preservation Fund. This law includes demonstrated “experience in historic preservation activities” in addition to conservation and land preservation activities or water quality improvement activities as one of the qualifications for the advisory committee to allow towns to sell development rights to provide community housing.

Land Installment Purchase Obligations
(A.7687 Burke; Chapter 146 of the Laws of 2021)

This law extends the ability of local governments to purchase interests or rights to land through the use of land installment purchase obligations. This law extends land installment rights to July 31, 2031. This law will help increase local governments' involvement with developing and implementing strategies designed to protect important agricultural, open space, scenic and cultural resources.

County-Wide Shared Services
(A.7694-A Lunsford; Chapter 294 of the Laws of 2021)

This law extends the current incentive program for local governments to share services by helping to ensure that costs to local taxpayers are minimized via State grants. This authorizes counties to continue to have access to matching grant options until December 31st, 2024.

PILOT Projects
(A.3224 Hunter; Passed Assembly)

This legislation would amend the current IDA tax exemption policy to authorize on-site child daycare facilities to be a consideration when providing tax exemptions for IDA projects.

E. EMERGENCY SERVICES

The Assembly has worked consistently to ensure the State’s policies regarding volunteer firefighters and volunteer ambulance workers are sufficiently protective. We appreciate the diligence, dedication to service and efforts put forward by the thousands of New Yorkers who generously dedicate their time as volunteer firefighters and volunteer ambulance workers. This session, the Committee passed a variety of volunteer firefighter and volunteer ambulance workers legislation.

County Airport/Aviation Departments Fire Benefits
(A.972 Bronson; Chapter 27 of the Laws of 2021)

There are several county airport and aviation departments with paid employees who provide fire response or rescue services as part of their job duties. In 2020 the Legislature enacted a law to ensure paid employees of a county airport or aviation department who perform fire response duties are eligible for the same benefits as other paid firefighters including medical treatment and hospital care when they are injured in the performance of duties. This law, a chapter amendment requested by the Governor, clarifies that such employees must be firefighters.

Disability Benefits for Volunteer Firefighters
(A.1324-A Magnarelli; Chapter 523 of the Laws of 2021)

The weekly benefit under Volunteer Firefighters' Benefit Law and Volunteer Ambulance Workers' Benefit Law for temporary total disability benefits has not been updated in over ten years. This law increases the weekly disability benefits for volunteer firefighters and volunteer ambulance workers injured after July 1, 2021, to \$650, during the time of their temporary disability. This increase would become effective July 1, 2022.

Length of Service Award Points
(A.2239-A Stern; Chapter 400 of the Laws of 2021)

This law increases the number of years of service for volunteer firefighters to receive a contribution to a Length of Service Award Program (LOSAP). The purpose of this law is to incentivize continued service by volunteer firefighters who are still actively participating after forty years of service.

Public Hearings for Fire Districts
(A.4979 Griffin; Chapter 278 of the Laws of 2021)

Current law requires each fire district to hold a public hearing to discuss the contents of their proposed budget on the third Tuesday in October. The strict date requirement to hold such hearing may sometimes be problematic for the public's participation in such hearing when such hearings fall on a religious holiday. This law provides fire districts with schedule flexibility for budget hearings by changing the date of the public budget from the third Tuesday in October to the third week of October.

Length of Service Award Programs (LOSAP)
(A.6401 Thiele; Chapter 462 of the Laws of 2021)

This legislation revises the Volunteer Firefighter Length of Service Award point system to calculate and reflect percentages based on the total number of calls a volunteer firefighter was dispatched to rather than the percentage of the total number of calls. Emergency precautions have been adopted during the COVID-19 pandemic to protect vulnerable volunteer firefighters from being exposed to the virus. Specifically, fire departments have had to reduce how many firefighters respond to calls. This law will help ensure that volunteer firefighters are not unduly restricted from earning LOSAP points.

Benefits for Volunteer Firefighters with Vascular Rupture
(A.6767-A Woerner; Chapter 630 of the Laws of 2021)

This legislation amends the Volunteer Firefighter’s Benefit Law (VFBL) to include “vascular rupture,” as a heart-related disease eligible for death or disability benefits for volunteer firefighters. While these types of injuries are generally covered under the VFBL eventually, certain insurers may still fight these claims in an attempt to argue that they are not duty-related, unnecessarily increasing litigation costs, and delaying the payment of qualifying benefits to volunteer firefighters injured in the line of duty.

III. PARKLAND ALIENATION LEGISLATION

The issue of parkland alienation, or the conversion of parkland for non-park purposes, has been a great concern for the Committee. As a matter of public trust, it is required that any use of public parkland for non-parkland purposes must be authorized by the New York State Legislature.

As part of the Committee's ongoing effort to protect the public trust, as it relates to parkland, and in keeping with the Assembly's policy of preserving open space, the Committee strives to ensure that each proposed parkland alienation complies with alienation guidelines prior to being reported out of Committee.

Committee guidelines for authorizing parkland alienation include specifying the number of acres proposed for alienation and requiring that the fair market value of such lands be dedicated for the purchase of replacement parkland of equal to or greater than fair market value, or for capital improvements to existing parkland. The legislation must also include a legal description of the parkland proposed to be alienated, as well as language detailing any land proposed to be dedicated (if replacement land is proposed for the parkland). Finally, a home rule message from the municipality requesting alienation is required prior to the Committee acting on any parkland legislation.

Town of Webster

(A.6213-A Lunsford; Chapter 135 of the Laws of 2021)

This law authorizes the Town of Webster to alienate certain parklands for certain flood improvement projects including the development of the REDI Project MO.56 Lake Road Retirement Project.

Town of Brookhaven

(A.6237-A Giglio JA; Chapter 469 of the Laws of 2021)

This law authorizes the Town of Brookhaven to alienate parklands for the purpose of leasing such lands for the placement and operation of a wireless communication tower for a term not to exceed 30 years.

Town of Southampton

(A.6668-B Thiele; Chapter 470 of the Laws of 2021)

This law authorizes the Town of Southampton to alienate certain parklands for the purpose of extending the Good Ground Road to create an intersection.

Town of Orangetown

(A.6745-A Lawler; Chapter 576 of the Laws of 2021)

This law authorizes the town of Orangetown to dedicate parklands to Rockland County for the completion of roadway safety improvements.

Town of New Castle

(A.7033-A Burdick; Chapter 219 of the Laws of 2021)

This law authorizes the Town of New Castle to alienate certain parklands for the future development of a multi-use trail system.

Nassau County

(A.7292 Darling; Chapter 463 of the Laws of 2021)

This law authorizes Nassau County to convey Cow Meadow Park to the Village of Freeport for recreational purposes.

Town of Yorktown

(A.7590-A Byrne; Chapter 372 of the Laws of 2021)

This law authorizes the Town of Yorktown to alienate parklands for the construction of a solar facility and electric vehicle charging stations for a period of up to 25 years.

Town of Binghamton

(A.7633 Angelino; Chapter 374 of the Laws of 2021)

This law authorizes the Town of Binghamton to alienate parklands to the Town of Binghamton Volunteer Fire Department for a training facility and equipment storage.

Village of New Paltz

(A.7842-B Cahill; Chapter 404 of the Laws of 2021)

This law authorizes the Village of New Paltz, Ulster County to alienate certain parkland for the purpose of installing two drinking water wells.

Suffolk County

(A.8011 Thiele; Chapter 416 of the Laws of 2021)

This law authorizes the Suffolk County to alienate certain parkland for use by the County Department of Public Works.

IV. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. THE ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS SITING

On October 13th the Committee, in conjunction with the Assembly Standing Committees on Cities, Housing, and Judiciary held a hearing related to the role of local governments in Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) siting. ADUs, commonly known as basement apartments, secondary suites, or mother-in-law apartments, are structures that are located, often attached, on the property of a primary residence and provide complete independent living facilities. Local governments have the authority to enact zoning laws governing siting and establish the permit parameters for ADUs. Advocacy groups such as AARP and the Regional Plan Association suggest that ADUs will help provide affordable housing options and argue the current local siting and permit process can be overly burdensome, time-consuming and expensive. Local governments have expressed concern about the need to ensure the safety of ADUs and preserve municipal zoning powers.

The Committees examined the role and amount of discretion local governments should have in determining the siting of accessory dwelling units. Testimony was presented by a variety of advocacy groups including not-for-profits and community groups.

B. IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE OPEN MEETINGS LAW

On October 25th the Committee, in conjunction with Assembly Standing Committees on Governmental Operations and Cities, held a hearing related to the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on the Open Meetings Law. On March 12, 2020, Executive Order 202.1 suspended the portion of New York State law requiring meetings to take place in person, permitting meetings to be held by remote means. In order to ensure public bodies could safely meet and conduct business during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Legislature passed A.6481 (McMahon) permitting political subdivisions to hold meetings remotely for the duration of the State disaster emergency. However, the Executive's disaster declaration expired on September 7, 2021, making this legislation inoperable. The Legislature held a special session resulting in Chapter 417 of 2021, which extended the open meetings authorization until January 15, 2022.

New York's local governments have been hit hard during the COVID-19 pandemic and have carried out the essential work of the people while balancing the need to maintain transparency and public participation and protect public health. This hearing explored how local governments can continue to maintain this balance and continue to move forward. The Committees collected testimony from a variety of advocacy groups, community members, and local government representatives.

C. WORKING GROUPS

The Speaker established working groups to examine COVID-19 related issues. The Chair of the Committee participated in the following:

COVID-19 Economic Recovery Working Group

The Working Group examined the important role that local governments play in the COVID-19 economic recovery. By their very nature, local governments stimulate the economy by increasing funding for local infrastructure projects and facilitating small business operations by removing administrative hurdles. The Working Group was chaired by Assembly Economic Development, Job Creation, Commerce and Industry Committee Chair Harry B. Bronson and Small Business Committee Chair Al Stirpe and members included Cities Committee Chair Edward C. Braunstein; Labor Committee Chair Latoya Joyner; Agriculture Committee Chair Donna Lupardo; Committee on Oversight, Analysis and Investigation Chair John T. McDonald III; Committee on Science & Technology Chair Steven Otis; Committee on Banks Chair Victor Pichardo; and Committee on Local Governments Chair Fred W. Thiele Jr. The Working Group collaborated on ways to reopen the economy to help small businesses while keeping people safe.

Post COVID-19 Mass Transit Working Group

The COVID-19 pandemic increased the financial burdens on local governments that provide mass transportation. The Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) was particularly hit hard, relying on the cities to help provide mass transit services. The Working Group was chaired by Assembly Transportation Chair William B. Magnarelli and comprised of Cities Committee Chair Edward C. Braunstein; Corporations, Authorities and Commissions Chair Amy R. Paulin; and Local Governments Committee Chair Fred W. Thiele, Jr. The Working Group examined ways local governments can provide safe and efficient local mass transit considering decreased ridership and increased financial pressures.

V. OUTLOOK FOR 2022

The Committee recognizes the difficult economic outlook that municipalities and citizens of New York State have faced and will continue to face in the year to come. The Committee will build on the progress made during the 2021 legislative session, continuing to find solutions to reduce costs to local governments and keep New Yorkers safe during this uncertain time. New York's local governments have been slow to recover in 2021 and maintaining essential services will be a necessity in this post COVID-19 pandemic world. The Committee will continue to advocate for local aid to municipalities and work to promote solutions to the issues faced this year.

The Committee will continue to consider legislation that proposes solutions for municipal workers and increase assistance for volunteer firefighters and ambulance workers. The Committee will continue to examine legislation relating to Home Rule to empower and uphold the powers of local governments. In addition, the Committee will explore options for affordable housing and ways to achieve a safer New York. The Committee looks forward to continuing to work with the Governor, the Senate, the State Comptroller, the Attorney General, and all local governments to improve the outlook for municipalities going forward.

APPENDIX A

**2021 SUMMARY OF ACTION ON ALL BILLS REFERRED TO
THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS**

<u>Final Disposition</u>	<u>Assembly Bills</u>	<u>Senate Bills</u>	<u>Total</u>
Bills Reported:			
To Codes	8	0	8
To Judiciary	0	0	0
To Ways and Means	39	0	39
To Rules	20	0	20
To Floor	7	0	7
TOTAL	74	0	74
Bills Having Enacting Clauses Stricken	4	0	4
Bills Having Committee Referenced Change	6	0	6
Bills Held in Committee	0	0	0
Total in Committee	240	71	311
TOTAL NUMBER OF MEETNGS HELD		8	

APPENDIX B

Bills that Passed Both Houses

<u>Bill #</u>	<u>Sponsor</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Status</u>
A.229-C	Paulin	Establishes uniform statewide reapportionment criteria for counties.	Chapter 516
A.443	Paulin	Authorizes towns and villages to consider certain renewable alternative energy sources when designing zoning and planning regulations.	Chapter 459
A.795	Wallace	Requires sub-county IDAs to charge the same amount in fees as the county IDA does.	Veto Memo 68
A.957	Galef	Relates to technical amendments made to Chapter 263 of the Laws of 2020.	Chapter 25
A.972	Bronson	Relates to technical amendments made to Chapter 325 of the Laws of 2020.	Chapter 27
A.1324-A	Magnarelli	Increases disability benefits for temporarily disabled volunteer firefighters and ambulance workers.	Chapter 523
A.1566	Jean-Pierre	Authorizes the Town of Babylon to adopt an administrative adjudication hearing procedure for code and ordinance violations.	Chapter 340
A.2239-A	Stern	Authorizes local governments to increase the number of years of service for volunteer firefighters to receive a contribution of a Length of Service Award Program (LOSAP).	Chapter 400
A.2580	Thiele	Extends the authorization for local governments to "piggyback" on competitively bid contracts from the federal and/or any state or local government until 2023.	Chapter 95
A.2633	Thiele	Authorizes certain towns in the Peconic Bay region to establish community housing funds for affordable housing to be funded by a supplemental real estate transfer tax.	Chapter 445
A.2658	Sayegh	Authorizes the Westchester County Legislature to waive fees for certain veterans' organizations.	Chapter 601

A.3201-B	McDonald	Prohibits an elected official from serving as a paid officer, agent or employee of an IDA.	Chapter 559
A.4044	Friend	Authorizes Tioga County to impose a \$1 per month telecommunication line surcharge.	Chapter 561
A.4216	Thiele	Allows the Village of Sagaponack to enforce open space interests.	Chapter 247
A.4979	Griffin	Provides fire districts with additional schedule flexibility for budget hearings.	Chapter 278
A.5324	Brabenec	Extends the Town of Warwick Community Preservation Funds and Real Estate Transfer Tax until December 31, 2050.	Chapter 341
A.5400-A	Miller M	Updates the use of the Volunteer and Exempt Firemen's Benevolent Association of Woodmere, Nassau County, NY, Inc. foreign fire insurance premiums.	Chapter 373
A.5402-A	Solages	Prohibits the selling and displaying of symbols of hate by municipalities, fire districts, volunteer fire companies, police departments and school districts.	Chapter 554
A.5464	Peoples-Stokes	Provides Erie County with additional flexibility in its bond sales.	Chapter 171
A.5471	Otis	Authorizes the Town of Rye to elect two additional justices, and to appoint two interim justices until such elections take place.	Chapter 72
A.5761	Schmitt	Authorizes the Town of Blooming Grove, Orange County, to create a community preservation fund.	Veto Memo 65
A.6138	Thiele	Authorizes the Town of East Hampton to adopt an administrative adjudication hearing procedure for code and ordinance violations.	Chapter 405
A.6213-A	Lunsford	Authorizes the Town of Webster, County of Monroe, to alienate certain municipal parkland.	Chapter 135
A.6229	Thiele	Requires towns with an electronic sign-board to routinely update such sign-board.	Chapter 508

A.6237-A	Giglio JA	Authorizes the Town of Brookhaven to alienate certain municipal parkland for the operation of a wireless communication tower for 30 years.	Chapter 469
A.6296	Griffin	Increases compensation for fire district election workers.	Chapter 347
A.6376-A	Magnarelli	Authorizes the Village of Baldwinsville to transfer existing sewer rents to a capital reserve fund upon the dissolution of the village sewer system.	Chapter 198
A.6401	Thiele	Revises the Volunteer Firefighter Length of Service Award Program (LOSAP) point system.	Chapter 462
A.6481	McMahon	Authorizes political subdivisions to hold public meetings remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic state disaster emergency.	Passed Both Houses
A.6601-A	Rivera JD	Establishes the Aid and Incentives to Municipalities (AIM) task force.	Veto Memo 56
A.6668-B	Thiele	Authorizes the Town of Southampton to alienate certain municipal parklands.	Chapter 470
A.6734-A	Darling	Authorizes the Village of Freeport to appoint a second associate village justice.	Chapter 358
A.6746-A	Wallace	Updates the Cleveland Hill Fire Department No. 6 Firefighter's Benevolent Association name and powers.	Chapter 326
A.6767-A	Woerner	Amends the Volunteer Firefighter's Benefit Law to include vascular rupture as a heart-related disease eligible for death or disability benefits for volunteer firefighters.	Chapter 680
A.7030	Thiele	Increases the terms for the Trustees of the Freeholders and Commonalty of the Town of East Hampton.	Chapter 366
A.7033-A	Burdick	Authorizes the Town of New Castle to alienate certain municipal parklands.	Chapter 219
A.7038-A	Galef	Waives residency requirements for building inspectors, fire inspectors and code enforcement officers in the Village of Buchanan.	Chapter 252
A.7086	Rules	Relates to technical corrections to the Troy Industrial	Chapter 579

A.7168	(McDonald) Pichardo	Development Authority. Extends certain provisions of the Local Finance Law relating to local government borrowing practices.	Chapter 121
A.7174	Walker	Authorizes the continued development of affordable senior and disabled housing projects in urban development action areas.	Chapter 161
A.7209	Thiele	Provides local governments in New York State with the same expanded investment options available to New York City.	Chapter 255
A.7292	Darling	Authorizes Nassau County to convey Cow Meadow Park and Preserve to the Village of Freeport for recreational purposes.	Chapter 463
A.7377	Conrad	Authorizes the creation of the Kenilworth Volunteer Fire Co. #1 Benevolent Association.	Chapter 331
A.7380-A	Miller B	Updates the use of the Wallkill Hook Ladder and Hose Company Firemen's Benevolent Association foreign fire insurance premium taxes.	Chapter 382
A.7384	Thiele	Extends the electronic open auction bond sale pilot program for two additional years.	Chapter 298
A.7463	Steck	Authorizes Albany County to refinance certain bonds.	Chapter 383
A.7566	Stirpe	Extends for one year the State disaster emergency loan program for small businesses and small not-for-profit corporations to be administered by IDAs.	Chapter 206
A.7590-A	Byrne	Authorizes the Town of Yorktown to alienate municipal parklands for the construction of a solar facility and electric vehicle charging stations.	Chapter 372
A.7629-A	Goodell	Authorize the Towns of Sherman, Mina, French Creek and Clymer, in Chautauqua County to elect one town justice to preside over such Towns.	Chapter 225
A.7630	McMahon	Waives the residency requirement for volunteer firefighters for the East Amherst Fire Department, Inc.	Chapter 379
A.7633	Angelino	Authorizes the Town of Binghamton to alienate certain municipal parkland and transfer such land to the Town of Binghamton Volunteer Fire Department.	Chapter 374

A.7645	McMahon	Authorizes the creation of the East Amherst Fire Department Benevolent Association.	Chapter 378
A.7647	Thiele	Expands the authorized uses of the Peconic Bay Community Preservation Fund.	Chapter 478
A.7687	Burke	Extends the ability of local governments to purchase interests or rights to land through the use of land installment purchase obligations to July 31, 2031.	Chapter 146
A.7694-A	Lunsford	Extends the County-Wide Shared Services Initiative, which allows local governments to submit cost-saving plans for matching State grants until December 31, 2024.	Chapter 294
A.7708	Thiele	Authorizes the Town of East Hampton to use remaining wastewater funds for capital projects upon the dissolution of the Town-wide wastewater disposal district.	Chapter 457
A.7752	Galef	Waives the residency requirement for volunteer firefighters in the Village of Briarcliff Manor Fire Department.	Chapter 385
A.7842-B	Rules (Cahill)	Authorizes the Village of New Paltz, County of Ulster to alienate certain municipal parkland for the installation of two drinking water wells.	Chapter 404
A.7843	Rules (McDonald)	Authorizes New York State Municipal Bond Bank Agency to provide specific municipal relief to the City of Albany.	Chapter 335
A.7870-A	Santabarbara	Authorizes the Town of Rotterdam to appoint a third town justice.	Chapter 269
A.7904	Gandolfo	Authorizes the Cherry Grove Fire Department to move its annual meeting for nomination of chief and assistant chief to the third Saturday in September.	Chapter 295
A.7951	Thiele	Extends certain authorizations for the Trustees of the Freeholders and Commonalty of the Towns of Southampton, East Hampton and Southold.	Chapter 187
A.8011	Rules (Thiele)	Authorizes Suffolk County to alienate certain municipal parkland for use by the County Department of Public	Chapter 416

Works.

APPENDIX C

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BILLS THAT PASSED THE ASSEMBLY ONLY

<u>Bill #</u>	<u>Sponsor</u>	Description
A.3224	Hunter	Authorizes the on-site child daycare facilities to be a consideration in the existing tax exemption policy when providing tax exemptions for IDA projects.
A.5373-A	Lawler	Authorizes the Town of Orangetown, Rockland County, to create a community preservation fund.
A.7673	Burdick	Authorizes towns and cities within the Hudson Valley counties of Putnam, Ulster or Westchester to directly purchase land with community preservation funds.