

Computer Nixed; Council Asks For More Information

BY MARY EGGERT

City Councilman Walton Aubertine stood alone Monday night in support of a proposal to buy an in-house computer for city hall.

His proposal was defeated 4-1, but the door was left open to future consideration of the matter, as the other four councilmen called for more information from City Comptroller Neil Hess. The proposal could come up again at budget time.

Aubertine had proposed a resolution establishing a time schedule for acquisition and installation of an in-house minicomputer system. His was the single vote in favor of the proposal.

It was apparent from the start that the resolution was headed for trouble. Aubertine read the proposal, explaining that it would only set up target dates for acquisition and installation of an in-house computer system. Dec. 15 was set as the date for obtaining proposals, Jan. 15 for forwarding proposals to the City Council, and Feb. 15 for ordering the system. According to the resolution, the system would be in operation by July 1, 1978.

Aubertine added that the city has been looking into the matter for the past 16 months. The system, he claimed, would greatly benefit the system.

But a request for a second on discussion of the system met with silence. Mayor Joseph P. Denny eventually gave the second, somewhat perfunctorily.

"I think that most of the cities that have gone the computer route are going with the county or getting an in-house system on their own," Aubertine contended. He then repeated that the resolution would only set up target dates and that bids would come back to the council for future approval.

Councilman Curtis Kennedy argued that the council did not possess enough information on the system to vote on the resolution. "I'm not prepared to vote on this," Kennedy said, since it would, he

felt, force the city to purchase an in-house system by July 1.

Kennedy further contended that it is not known which records or finances the computer would process. "Are you thinking of budgetary or tax receipts?" he asked.

Despite Aubertine's contention that the proposal would simply allow the city to seek bids on Burroughs, IBM, and NCR systems, the general feeling among councilmen was that a "yes" vote would signal a commitment to the purchase of an in-house system.

"Tonight is not the time to decide whether we want an in-house computer system," Councilman Louis Biseau added. He too claimed that he could not vote on the proposal until more was known about the system.

"We've had reams of information," Aubertine countered.

Kennedy refuted the statement that the resolution simply would allow the city to look into various computer systems, saying that a resolution was not needed to do so since City Comptroller Hess has been examining various systems for some time.

Councilman Ernest Jeneault suggested that the City Council wait until the 1978 budget comes before the council before making a decision on the system. The budget is to include the cost both of an in-house system and bookkeeping as it is presently performed. "Once we hear more information, we'll go from there," said Jeneault.

Denny concluded the discussion by saying that a delay of a month or so, when the budget is expected to come before the council, "is not going to hurt us." He too said that he remained to be convinced that the in-house system could provide the data processing work the city requires.

The resolution then came up for vote, with Aubertine casting the lone positive vote.



REDEDICATED — The bronze tablet originally located on the north wall of the Seymour House in 1939, was rededicated Monday at the St. Lawrence National Bank's downtown branch. From left are Fred Erwin, deputy city historian;

Mayor Joseph Denny; Mary H. Smallman, county historian; Elizabeth Baxter, city historian; and Jim Wears, assistant vice president and manager of the bank. (Cloonan Photo)

Could Run 3-4 Weeks

Barlow Trial Off To Slow Start

CANTON — The Medicaid fraud trial of nursing home owner Alton E. Barlow got off to a slow start Monday afternoon before Judge James N. White.

Barlow has been accused, in two separate indictments, of fraudulently obtaining over \$260,000 in Medicaid funds through the nursing homes he owns in Ogdensburg and Canton. It is on the first indictment, which alleged four counts of grand larceny, second degree and three counts of offering a false instrument for filing, first degree, that Barlow is being tried before White.

That indictment was handed down in March by the November 1976 county grand jury, which was held over by the state special prosecutor's office.

Barlow is accused of filing with Medicaid for payments of nursing home related expenses that were, in fact, personal bills.

White, a county court judge from Amsterdam, is sitting in Canton as an acting supreme court judge. Although it had been reported that White was sitting for Judge Michael Duskas because Duskas has an upcoming supreme court term in Suffolk County, Duskas said from the bench Monday afternoon that White had been assigned prior to Duskas's assignment in Suffolk County. Duskas, in fact, has at least one and possibly more criminal trials to preside over in county court here, while the Barlow trial gets underway.

One thing is already clear. The jurors that are eventually selected will be spending quite a bit of time in the supreme court chambers here over the next few weeks. White told the panel of

prospective jurors Monday afternoon that the trial can realistically be expected to go on for the next three to four weeks, given the complexity of the case and the amount of evidence.

He also told the panel that the jurors chosen would probably end up weighing the case at some length, and can be expected to be sequestered (isolated) during their deliberations.

With those two warnings, he then called for everyone who did not think they can stay the duration to step forward and give him their excuses. After a procession of housewives, workers and others were excused, he was left with a panel of 38.

It is likely that several more people will have to be excused, once jury

selection begins at 1:30 p.m. today. Not only has the Barlow case been widely written about in the media, both the prosecution and the defense have the right to dismiss 10 jurors each without having to state a reason.

Barlow appeared briefly at Monday's proceeding, accompanied by his attorney, John J. Dee of Syracuse. Barlow, a distinguished looking man with white hair and thick-rimmed glasses, left immediately after the last recess of the day was called.

The prosecution is being handled by a team of three lawyers, headed up by Robert Wildridge. He is accompanied by Ruth Rosenberg and Angelo F. Tona, all from the state special prosecutor's office in Syracuse.

Special Grand Jury Returns 'No Bill'

CANTON — The county grand jury empaneled this past June to investigate Medicaid fraud in nursing homes this morning handed up one "no true bill" to acting state supreme court justice James N. White.

In effect, the grand jury's action means it failed to indict anyone.

Jury foreman Mark Gazin, of Gouverneur, in announcing the report, said that civil action will be taken. It was not immediately clear what the nature of that civil action is or against whom it will be taken.

State Special Prosecutor Assistant Ruth Rosenberg was in court with Gazin and grand jury secretary Patricia Castleman, of Ogdensburg, when the report was taken.

Judge White, who is presiding over the Medicaid fraud trial of Alton E. Barlow, thanked Gazin and dismissed the grand jury. The jury was empaneled on June 27, after an earlier county grand jury had returned two indictments against Barlow.

The past several months, the grand jury has been receiving evidence from the state special prosecutor's office.

Lisbon Tightens Spending Due To State Aid Picture

LISBON — New restraints on spending at Lisbon Central School are the result of an overestimation of state aid this year and are not the result of any theft of funds, Lisbon District Principal Ronald Service commented today.

The latest rumors to come to the attention of school officials and the press were to the effect that some \$100,000 is missing or otherwise not accounted for at the school. Service put the rumors to rest this morning, explaining that Lisbon had estimated state aid this year at about \$379,000. "All current input now indicates that the figure will be considerably less than that," he said.

Schools annually attempt to estimate how much money New York State will provide for the impending year, using a complicated formula which is made more difficult by the fact that the state "only pays about one-quarter of the total revenue through April. Service said. The rest comes in a three- or four-month period beginning in April but schools encounter most of their budget expenditures prior to that time.

Service also confirmed that the school has requested the district attorney's office to order an audit of the school's books. The audit is in no way connected to any recent thefts of money at Lisbon, school officials said. The audit was requested in the wake of charges against the former clerk of the board, in connection with the alleged theft of approximately \$1,700 in school funds. The clerk, Edward Skrinak, has since

been indicted by the grand jury on a charge of grand larceny, second degree. The audit will determine the exact amount in question.

Inside The Journal

Concorde Controversy Renews

The controversial Concorde will land at Kennedy Airport Wednesday morning. Gov. Carey says he will abide by the law but massive protests are planned. Page 2.

Weems Sets Northern Record

Kevin Weems, Colton-Pierrepont's star soccer player, has set a Northern Conference record for single season scoring. Page 15.

Commandos Going Home

The West German commandos who attacked a hijacked airliner and killed three or four hijackers without injuring any passengers or crew, are returning home in triumph. Page 3.

Inside Today

Inside today are editorials, Page 4; state news, Page 2; world news, Page 3; national news, Pages 5; local news, Pages 11, 16; sports, Pages 14, 15; comics, Page 17 and classifieds, Page 19.

Weather

Highs in the 50s to about 60 today but increasing cloudiness tonight with a chance of showers and lows in the upper 30s. Considerable cloudiness Wednesday with a chance of showers and highs in the 50s. Chance of rain 40 percent tonight and 50 percent tomorrow. Winds, westerly 5 to 15 mph.

Out Of The Woodwork

WANTED: Blower for oil-burning furnace. We had eight inquiries the first day. The calls are coming out of woodwork.

Legislators Okay Funds For Fight

CANTON — The St. Lawrence County legislature, by a vote of 14 to 4 has informally approved the expenditure of another \$2,000 of county funds in the fight to have the 765 kV line rerouted in the Edwards-Pitcairn area.

A telephone survey conducted by the office of administrative assistant June O'Neill was completed Monday afternoon. On the basis of that survey, legislature chairman Allen Rische has authorized county planner Richard Grover to spend the money.

However, Rische said he will make it clear to Grover that the informal survey of the board is in no way binding on the legislators, and that the legislature could, when it is presented with Grover's bill at its November meeting, still elect not to pay.

Likely To Hold Up

It is thought unlikely that will occur however, given the solid majority Grover was able to obtain in the telephone survey.

Only four board members, Donald Livingston, Charles Cooke, Nick Viskovitch and Jack Harrington voted against the appropriation. Edward Johnson and Ralph Greco abstained and Carl LaSalle and Dr. Donald Bixby could not be contacted and were marked as "absent."

Virtually all of the "no" votes, as well as a couple of the legislators who voted "yes" — John Ruitberg and Fay Peters — said that they wanted more information before making a decision.

Grover needs the \$2,000 for state Public Service Commission hearings that open in Canton Wednesday. He had earlier obtained \$2,000 from the legislature for PSC hearings in Watertown, but found it necessary to return for more money because of the second set of hearings in Canton being scheduled, as well as higher than expected costs at the Watertown hearing.

The majority of the money will go to pay the legal fees of planning board attorney Robert Sassone.

Massive Tax Cuts Asked By Duryea

NEW YORK (AP) — Perry B. Duryea, Republican leader of the state Assembly, today proposed a \$2.1 billion-a-year tax cut that would prevent New York from becoming a "permanently depressed economic wasteland."

Duryea's proposal, unveiled at a news conference here, would provide across-the-board cuts in the personal state income tax; cuts in property taxes; reductions in the state business tax — including elimination of the tax on small, unincorporated business; and exemption of home-heating costs from the state sales tax.

The plan is based on Duryea's prediction of growth in other state revenues by 1983 totaling \$4.7 billion, elimination of \$1 billion worth of fraud and abuse in the welfare system and a \$500 million increase in federal funds to the state.

Duryea said successful implementation of the plan could spur economic growth in the state and stimulate creation of "thousands of new jobs for New Yorkers."

He said surveys of industrialists and businessmen showed a "strong consensus" that the state's personal income tax rates are a major factor in decisions to leave New York. The plan would "enable industry and business to plan ahead with certainty and to expand or locate in New York in an economic climate conducive to growth, expansion and thousands of jobs for New Yorkers," Duryea said.

Under the Duryea plan, which would be implemented during the next five years, families in the \$10,000-a-year income bracket would realize a \$500-a-year in tax cuts. Families at the \$15,500-a-year earning level would receive about \$600-a-year in tax relief and families earning \$25,000 a year would save more than \$600-a-year, Duryea said.

Carey Pleas For Bond Approval; Names Panel

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) — Gov. Hugh Carey is stepping up his campaign for his proposed \$750 million "economic development" bond issue — but he admits that some of the projects listed for it may never be built.

Carey called a news conference Monday to make another forceful plea for voter approval of the borrowing plan, which is on the Nov. 8 ballot.

And he announced the appointment of a special committee to oversee the spending of the bond funds, to reassure the public that the money is not going to go for mere political park barrels.

But in doing so he set up new conditions for the projects which, he acknowledged, might not be met by an unknown number of the hundreds of projects he has previously listed as "eligible" for bond funds.

Nonetheless, he said, the bond issue would "put a solid house together" to help the state repair its declining economy.

"This referendum is an up-or-down, yes-or-no vote on do we want more jobs in this state, or do we want to go along with the decline of jobs in the private sector," Carey declared.

His new committee, composed mostly of prominent businessmen, would review every project proposed for spending the bond funds to insure that the project is economically viable.

The creation of the panel was part of an intensified campaign by Carey, state

officials, some businessmen and construction labor unions to win public approval of the bond issue. Just last week a "citizens' committee," Economic Action Inc., was formed in Albany to plug for passage, and Carey said the privately funded group would be opening up offices around the state.

But the new standards Carey set in defining the committee's task could undermine another major focus of the campaign for the bond issue — the list of some 700 "eligible" projects which the governor's office began distributing two weeks ago. The list was intended, among other things, to convince voters that the bond issue would bring specific benefits to their areas if approved.

Carey said that by a two-thirds vote, his new committee would have to certify that any project getting money from the bond issue would generate new economic activity and increase state revenues enough to pay off the cost of the bonds spent on it. And he said that each project would have to produce new, long-term jobs — not just the temporary, "make-work" jobs involved in building it.

The projects listed as possible recipients of the bond money cover a vast range of classifications, from construction of industrial parks and industrial access roads to the construction of bike paths and improvements in local parks.

Lawmakers List Office Expenses

Bug Spray Charged To Taxpayers

WASHINGTON (AP) — Like many New Yorkers, Rep. Mario Biaggi has a cockroach problem.

Unlike his constituents, the Bronx Democrat can use taxpayer money to try to get rid of them — at least at the congressional office in his home district.

A \$12-a-month extermination fee is one of the more unusual items that was disclosed this week in a public accounting of a \$2,000-a-year office expense account that each member of the House receives.

Some others include a \$17.50 tuxedo rental fee for Rep. Richard Ottinger, D-N.Y., for a St. Patrick's Day outing; shipment charges for a painting Rep. Edward Koch, D-N.Y., returned to the Whitney Museum in New York; and \$320 that Rep. John Wyder paid to put "two-toned gold leaf lettering" on the front window of his Congressional office in Mineola, N.Y.

More commonly, the House members reported expenses for such office supplies as toilet paper, styrofoam cups and, in the case of Rep. Theodore Weiss, \$1.61 for Band-Aids.

It seems that no item is too small to be claimed on the office expense accounts.

For example, Rep. Elizabeth Holtzman, a Brooklyn Democrat, reported a 40 cent charge for a parking meter. She also disclosed paying \$1,291 to a caterer and another \$106.14 for liquor for a reception she held for constituents last January when the current session of Congress began.

Peter Ilchuk, Biaggi's administrative assistant, said the roaches Biaggi is trying to get rid of keep coming

back. In fact, he said, "the bugs are getting bigger. It's a hell of a problem."

One of the reasons may be the location of the office. It's a three-room walk-up one flight above a pizza parlor.

"It's not lavish by any means," Ilchuk said with some flair for understatement. "But it's just what the rest of his constituents put up with."

The painting that Koch shipped back to the Whitney Museum at a cost of \$46.75 was "Forest Room" by John Hultberg. It had been hanging in his office for several years, one of many valuable works that the Manhattan Democrat has on loan from museums.

Among the most common items on the expense account lists are gasoline bills for traveling around the district, office electric bills, photographs and tape recordings that the House members use to promote themselves with constituents and literally scores of local newspapers to keep up with events at home.

The office reading list of Rep. Stephen Solarz, a Brooklyn Democrat, has a worldlier look to it.

His publications include the Economist, Progressive, the New Leader, Atlantic, the New York Review of Books, the New Yorker, Washington Monthly and Washingtonian.

And, by contrast, while Washington is known to many as the town of the \$50 lunch, Rep. Donald J. Mitchell, an upstate Republican, submitted a \$3.10 bill for lunch at Burger King. The entry didn't say whether he dined alone.