

LOCAL LAW NO. FOR 2024

A LOCAL LAW OF THE COUNTY OF ALBANY, NEW YORK, AMENDING THE ALBANY COUNTY CHARTER AND LOCAL LAW NO. 8 FOR 1993 AS AMENDED TO PROVIDE FOR AN OFFICE OF MEDICAL EXAMINER

Introduced: 9/9/24

By Cunningham, Willingham:

PURSUANT TO SECTIONS 10 AND 33 OF THE MUNICIPAL HOME RULE LAW, COUNTY LAW SECTION 400 AND SECTION 2702 OF THE ALBANY COUNTY CHARTER:

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the County of Albany as follows:

SECTION I. Legislative Intent:

In 2012, a Charter Review Commission was formed by this Honorable Body to determine what, if any, changes could be made to the then decade's old charter. The Commission met routinely over the course of a year and published recommended changes to the Charter, many of which sought to streamline processes or modernize the County's operations. To date, many of the proposed changes have been adopted, but a various substantive changes have evaded adoption. One major proposal by the Charter Review Commission was to replace the County's four, part-time Coroners with a single full-time Medical Examiner. This change would modernize death investigations in the County, a change that many other counties have adopted over the years.

[A second major proposal from the Charter Review Commission is to expand the governance of the Board of Contract Administration. The Board's authority was established in 1993, and provided oversight of contracts less than \$100,000. The Charter Review Commission suggested increasing that amount based on inflation, which would have been \$155,000 at the time of the Charter Review Commission's proposal. Today, that amount, adjusted for inflation, is approximately \$215,000. The recommendation of the Charter Review Commission should be adopted to reflect the fact that the Board of Contract Administration is operating in 2024, and not 1993.

Finally, part of the recommendations of the Charter Review Commission was to incorporate various departments into the Charter, departments that were absent (or not yet in existence) in the original document. These proposed changes do just that, with the Division of Information Services and the newly retitled Department of Parks and Recreation.]

SECTION II. [Article 5 of the Albany County Charter is hereby amended to create the following sections:

Section 504: Information Services.

There shall be within the Department of Management and Budget an independent Division of Information Services headed by a Chief Information Officer. The Chief Information Officer shall be appointed by the County Executive, subject to confirmation by the County Legislature as provided in Section 302(c) of this Charter, and serve at the pleasure of the County Executive. The Chief Information Officer and staff shall be charged with providing information, technology and computer systems services in support of the county's departments and administrative units. The Chief Information Officer shall perform such other and related duties as shall be required or delegated to her by the County Executive or the County Legislature.

SECTION III. Article 13 of the Albany County Charter is hereby amended as follows:

Section 1301: Board of Contract Administration; powers and duties.

For the purpose of simplifying, clarifying and centralizing the approval process for contracts, there is hereby established a Board of Contract Administration. The Board shall be composed of the County Executive, the Chairperson of the County Legislature and the County Clerk. The Board of Contract Administration is empowered to approve contracts for execution by the County Executive in amounts of not less than twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000), and, not more than [one] two hundred fifteen thousand dollars (\$[100]215,000), or such higher amount as may be established by local law. The Board shall report [periodically] quarterly to the County Legislature, detailing the contracts approved by it.

Section 1302: Other contract approvals.

The County Executive shall be empowered to approve and execute contracts in an amount less than twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000). The County Legislature shall be empowered to approve contracts for execution by the County Executive in amounts over [one] two hundred fifteen thousand dollars (\$[100]215,000), in addition to those mentioned in Section 204(m) of this Charter. The County Executive shall not, through change orders, amendments, renewals, or any other method or device, exceed such twenty thousand dollar (\$20,000) limit with respect to any vendor or subject matter, without approval of the County Legislature.

Section 1303: Annual Adjusted Amount

The dollar amounts set forth above in sections 1301 and 1302 of this Article shall be adjusted annually on the first day of January each year by the Consumer Price Index ("CPI") to keep pace with inflation. The County's Department of Management and Budget shall use the annual CPI data for adjustment. The annual adjusted dollar amount shall be provided to the Clerk of the Legislature by the Commissioner of Management and Budget upon it being determined.

SECTION IV.] Article 19 of the Albany County Charter is hereby repealed entirely.

Article 9: Department of Health is hereby amended by adding the following subsections:

Section 905: Office of Medical Examiner; Appointment; Qualifications

- (a) There shall be an Office of Medical Examiner, a division of the Albany County Department of Health. The Office shall be headed by a Chief Medical Examiner who shall be appointed by the County Executive for a six-year term, subject to confirmation by the County Legislature. At the time of their appointment, and throughout their appointment, the Medical Examiner shall be and remain duly licensed and entitled to practice medicine in the State of New York and shall have an expertise in forensic pathology and such other qualifications for the responsibilities of the Office as determined by the Commissioner of Health. Notwithstanding the provisions of Public Officer's Law Section 38 and County Law Section 400, if the Office of Chief Medical Examiner becomes vacant other than by expiration of term, the vacancy shall be filled by appointment by the County Executive for a five-year term, subject to confirmation by the County Legislature.
- (b) The Chief Medical Examiner, within the appropriations made therefor, shall appoint a Chief Deputy Medical Examiner, who shall also be a physician licensed to practice medicine in the State of New York. In addition to such other duties as may be assigned by the Chief Medical Examiner, the Chief Deputy Medical Examiner shall possess the powers and perform the duties of the Medical Examiner during his absence or inability to act.
- (c) The Chief Medical Examiner, within the appropriations made therefor, may, in conformity with the rules and regulations applicable to the civil service, appoint such forensic investigators and deputy medical examiners as may be authorized by the County Legislature. Forensic investigators and deputy medical examiners shall assist the Chief Medical Examiner in the conduct of investigations and the discharge of his other duties and responsibilities; shall conduct tests and examinations and furnish forensic, medical, investigative and technical services; and shall possess such qualifications and perform such other duties as may be determined by the Chief Medical Examiner.

[SECTION VI. Article 20 of the Albany County Charter is hereby repealed entirely and replaced as follows:

Article 20: Parks and Recreation.

There shall be a Parks and Recreation Department which shall be responsible for providing recreation programs and opportunities for the Albany County community that develops fundamental social, emotional, physical, and cognitive skills that promote a higher quality of life. The department head shall be the Commissioner of Parks and Recreation. The Commissioner of Parks and Recreation shall be appointed by the County Executive, subject to confirmation by the County Legislature as provided in Section 302(c) of this Charter, and serve at the pleasure of the County

Executive. The Commissioner of Parks and Recreation shall perform such other and related duties as shall be required or delegated to her by the County Executive or the County Legislature.]

SECTION [V]III. SEQRA Compliance

This County Legislature determines that this local law constitutes a “Type II action” pursuant to the provisions of the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), and that no further action under SEQRA is required

SECTION IV[III]. Effective Date.

This Local Law shall take effect immediately upon filing in the office of the Secretary of State if it is approved by a affirmative vote of the qualified electors of the County of Albany voting upon a proposition for its approval at the next general election in conformity with the provisions of Section 34 of the New York Municipal Home Rule Law and Section 2702 of the Albany County Charter.