



The Assembly  
State of New York  
Albany



THE HONORABLE CARL E. HEASTIE, SPEAKER  
PRESIDING

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS



**MARCH 31, 2015**

**BILL NO. 3001-A**

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: Mr. Morelle.

MR. MORELLE: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have a Legislative and Judiciary appropriation to take up on page 4 of the main Calendar, Rules Report No. 12.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: The Clerk will read.

THE CLERK: Bill No. 3001-A, Rules Report No. 12, Budget Bill. An act making appropriations for the support of Government (Legislature and Judiciary Budget).

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: On a motion by Mr. Farrell, the Senate bill is before the House. The Senate bill is advanced.

Mr. Tedisco.

MR. TEDISCO: Would Mr. Farrell yield?

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: Mr. Farrell, will you yield?

MR. FARRELL: Yes, I will.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: Mr. Farrell yields, Mr. Tedisco.

MR. TEDISCO: Mr. Farrell, we're going to try to develop some transparency here in relationship to an issue and ask you some questions if I could.

About five months ago, the people of New York State made a decision when they came out to vote and I think what they feel now is that this Legislature has failed to launch on their behalf. And what I mean by that is they came out for what was called Proposition 2; 77 percent of the public and the voters and our bosses across the State voted for us to move into the 21st Century and take this pile that's on my desk here off all our desks and put tablets on our desks so we cannot only be more efficient and more effective, save millions of dollars in paper and ink but, thirdly, and just as importantly, not be throwing this ink-filled paper, reams of it and tons of it into landfills. It was a win-win-win. I guess the question I want to ask you about, it's been five months and if we could talk about transparency, where have the dollars been placed or where will the dollars come from to put us going digital and saving all that money, making us more efficient and keeping this paper out of landfills, where are those dollars located?

MR. FARRELL: Well, I will yield to Mr. Morelle and he will explain it to you.

MR. TEDISCO: Great.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: Mr. Morelle.

MR. MORELLE: I'm sorry, yes. I'm sorry, Mr. Tedisco. I heard most of the run-up, but I didn't actually hear the question.

MR. TEDISCO: Okay.

MR. MORELLE: Just the question, though. I heard the run-up.

MR. TEDISCO: Okay. I guess the question is this: All of our desks have been retrofitted, haven't they? They're ready for the tablets. I don't know, is that yes?

MR. MORELLE: I'm sorry. Was that the question?

MR. TEDISCO: Yes.

MR. MORELLE: Yes, we are -- let me -- if I may --

MR. TEDISCO: I'd just like to ask you the question, so that one is a yes. Now, we purchased the tablets, I believe, and they're in a closet somewhere?

MR. MORELLE: I'm not sure if they're in a closet. They're somewhere in the building.

MR. TEDISCO: But we have purchased them.

MR. MORELLE: That's correct, sir.

MR. TEDISCO: Okay. Now I have no idea, and maybe my colleagues in here found out somehow, but I've been trying

to investigate. Did we put this out to bid to start this process or did we just pick a vendor?

MR. MORELLE: Well, Mr. Tedisco, we worked off the existing State contract.

MR. TEDISCO: Okay. So we didn't put it out to bid?

MR. MORELLE: Well, the State Comptroller puts items out to bid and there's a State contract and then State entities and local subdivisions are allowed to purchase off the State contract and we make use that way of our purchasing power and can buy at a much lower rate because we buy large numbers. So, we purchased it off the State contract.

MR. TEDISCO: So who did we pick to do the work?

MR. MORELLE: Well, we have a vendor. If I might Mr. Speaker -- well, maybe I can do it on my own time to describe. Rather than just answer questions out of context, if I could give some context to the work we've been doing, but if you choose not to do it on your time I'm happy to do it on my own.

MR. TEDISCO: Yes, you can do it on your own if that's okay.

MR. MORELLE: Okay.

MR. TEDISCO: But you don't want to answer any more questions?

MR. MORELLE: I'm happy to yield. I just advised the gentleman it might be more instructive to members if you gave me

an opportunity to give the context for I think the questions, but I'm happy to do it whichever way the gentleman would prefer.

MR. TEDISCO: Yes. I just want to know who the vendor is because I didn't -- is that a secret? I mean...

MR. MORELLE: No. It's not a secret. We purchased Hewlett-Packard tablets off the State contract.

MR. TEDISCO: Okay. And how much were they?

MR. MORELLE: I beg your pardon?

MR. TEDISCO: How much was the cost?

MR. MORELLE: I don't know. I do know this, that the cost will not increase our budget and we're able to essentially pay for the hardware and all the work and the savings that we will accrue from not having to print as much paper.

MR. TEDISCO: From last year's budget?

MR. MORELLE: From the 2014-2015 Budget, that's correct.

MR. TEDISCO: Last year's budget. And what was that savings or what will it be because right now, we're not saving anything because we're doing the 10 most papered bills that we'll do -- or 12, rather, most papered bills that we'll do during the course of this six-month Session. These are the largest bills. I mean, you can see them on my desk. This is one copy each of the five bills. There's about 30 of these piles around here now. We haven't saved a penny so far. We haven't become more efficient and these are all going into landfills. Now, don't get me wrong. I know it takes time to contact

the vendor for them to do the work. What concerns me is that all the information you're giving now, raise your hand if anybody in this room knew about that, I'm just interested one, two, three, four, five, six -- well, nobody on this side of the aisle -- seven, eight, so a large portion of us didn't know what the process was. The media I don't think understood what the process was and, most importantly, the public hasn't known what the process is and I'm wondering why that wasn't made privy to all of us?

MR. MORELLE: Well, I'm not sure which part wasn't made privy to all of us but, again, when I have a moment when I have the floor I'm happy to describe for the members what the process has been, what the process will be going forward. And I would say that this will save hundreds of thousands of dollars over the two-year cycle in the savings from the need not to print as many copies and I'm happy to describe that in greater detail.

MR. TEDISCO: Well, that's great. That's what the purpose was and that's what our bosses told us to do and I think they probably wish that we had got it in place a long time ago or, you know, it's five months and I don't know why it would take longer than five months and I don't know why they're someplace -- I don't know why the tablets aren't out here. Why is that? Why aren't they put in place?

MR. MORELLE: Well, as you can imagine although the amendment was passed in November - and I guess it's five months - that to install systems that have to be, first of all, consistent,

most importantly, with the Constitutional mandates that we have to make sure that we have all the wiring done, that we purchased tablets, that you develop the software, that we made sure that there are redundancies because these are going to be in -- we'll have a much broader discussion when we come back from the break when we will begin training for the various members so they can be familiar with the environment, but the purpose of this is to make sure that instead of as you rightly point out paper being on the desk needed to age, that we can do it electrically; however, that does not mean that we can take tablets that people can walk around with. They have to be hardwired. It is an Intranet, not an Internet service. It is wired. It is not a wireless. We cannot use Cloud technology because of the restrictions of the Constitution. That's what most important here, obviously.

The other thing is we want to make sure in keeping with the Constitutional mandate that we don't have a system that fails, so we have to build redundancy into it and we will work in parallel, as is often the case when you move to new technologies, we will work in parallel and have a paper system for some time to ensure the smooth transition to an electronic environment. So we will do this. We will save hundreds of thousands of dollars in the process but we are not going to do it in any way to jeopardize the legislative process here or in any way hold up the Legislature or the public's right to see in paper.

I would also note and like to thank Mr. Aubry, Mrs. Peoples-Stokes, Ms. Corwin and Mrs. Duprey who have spent many, many hours working with us on the software on the interface,



recognizing there will be a need to change the rules to make sure that they are consistent with an electronic environment. But having spent a little time in the software business, one of the things you need to make sure you do is meet the requirements of the system and we are doing that in a methodical way. We're certainly not dragging our heels. We're trying to move forward and we will do so and we will be able to share more with members when we come back from the break.

MR. TEDISCO: Very good. Now this pile of paper right here, Assemblyman, this one here I got out of Rules Committee. Now are we going to be able to pick up our laptop, go into the Committee meetings and not have to have this paper like this being utilized in our Committee meetings or is that not part of it? I know that's not on our desks, it's not an aging process, but is there any means to move around with that so -- because this is a lot of paper in and of itself just getting these 10 bills in Committee.

MR. MORELLE: Well, there is a broader modernization of the Chamber and of our operations that the Speaker is considering, but to answer your question briefly, the Constitutional amendment which we passed has nothing to do with Committee meetings. It only has to do with the electronic versions of bills on the desks that will meet the mandatory requirements under the Constitution.

MR. TEDISCO: But it doesn't preclude us from using them for it.

MR. MORELLE: No, it doesn't preclude us, but it's a



whole different system and would require the purchase of, if I'm understanding you right, either a great deal more hardware and technology or if people choose to use their own devices, we would have to work that in, but that's going to be a second phase so-to-speak. The first is to make sure that the Constitutional requirements are met and still save us hundreds of thousands of dollars and I think people will be very happy with this when we are able to give you more information when we return in late April.

MR. TEDISCO: Okay. Now, I see in my colleagues' desks and, you know, I've done it, too. I've had coffee here. I've had drinks here. Probably going to spill a little bit, it's going to fall into the tablet. We're going to need a maintenance system. That maintenance system has to be funded. There's going to be somebody that has to come in if my laptop isn't working -- three or four of our laptops -- the box isn't working for some reason. Is there funding in this year's budget for maintaining this entire digital system? Believe me, I know it's -- I don't care what the cost of maintenance is. We're going to save millions of dollars by not using this paper and we're going to be protecting our environment. I'm just wondering if there's a budget item in this present budget or the same concept is that we're saving money so it's going to be in there to maintain it and is there a maintenance program?

MR. MORELLE: Yes, but we'll use existing staff who have helped us build it, they'll maintain it. We won't see an increase in funding for personnel for maintenance. We'll be able to do

it with existing personnel.

MR. TEDISCO: Okay. Now there's 150 Assembly members.

MR. MORELLE: One hundred and forty nine today, but, yes.

MR. TEDISCO: But I mean 150 elected.

MR. MORELLE: Right.

MR. TEDISCO: And there's 63 Senators. Did our leadership walk down the other side to the Senate and say, *Look, if we do this purchase with 213 elected officials*, when you buy in larger bulk you're going to save money or are we doing this just individually in the Assembly and did they turn us down in the Senate because the logic defies me that we wouldn't do this collectively because 77 percent of the people who said we should go digital and save them money and clear this paper off our desks and protect our environment didn't say just the Assembly should do it, but that the Senate and the Assembly and their legislative Body should move into the 21st Century.

MR. MORELLE: No, but -- well, we've certainly had extensive conversations with our colleagues in the Senate. We're responsible for the Assembly. We're responsible for the introduction of bills here. We're responsible for the printing of bills here and as I said, we worked off the State contract which would give you the best price so whether you bought 150 or bought 213 plus the backups, you would still presumably pay the same price and we did already the

negotiated State contract which is the best price we believe you can get.

MR. TEDISCO: So there'd be no savings if collectively you did it together with the Senate and the Assembly?

MR. MORELLE: Correct, because you're already getting the value of the Comptroller having negotiated for all the State Operations, as well as all the local subdivisions.

MR. TEDISCO: And what is the projected time table now for the -- I know we're not going to just be -- we're going to go two tandem things. When do you think those tablets would come out here and we would start the double tandem of the printing and the utilization and training of this whole thing going digital?

MR. MORELLE: Well, the wiring is done. You don't see it, but the desks have all been wired during our previous -- some weekends when we were not here. I expect when we come back the tablets will be on all the desks and we will begin training the members. I haven't set up with the Minority and with the Speaker yet the training schedule, but you should anticipate when we come back in late April, early May we will begin training members on the hardware and the corresponding software and the interface.

MR. TEDISCO: Can you tell me what we can do with the hardware and the software, what we're limited to doing?

MR. MORELLE: Well, you'll be able to, first of all, have bills on the desks in electronic form, a PDF, and you'll be able to review all the bills on the Calendar.

MR. TEDISCO: Legislative Digest access?

MR. MORELLE: Well, we're going to start with what our requirements are and those requirements are that the bills be on the desks, that they be available for printing for members. We have a system set up for that. There will be additional information, you'll see the Calendar, you will see the so-called "green books", so you'll see this all in electronic format.

MR. TEDISCO: Now I think it's on a weekly basis we get a Legislative Digest.

MR. MORELLE: You may. I'm sorry, I'm not necessarily certain that I know which document you're talking about.

MR. TEDISCO: Well, I requested that they send that to me digitally, but they will send it out printed and they'll add bills to that every week as it goes along and the pile gets bigger and bigger.

MR. MORELLE: Well, you'll -- yes. All the bills that have been introduced will be electronically available on the tablet.

MR. TEDISCO: So we won't be sending that in paper form to our offices anymore?

MR. MORELLE: I'm sorry. A lot of paper across my desk, I apologize. I'm not familiar with exactly what you're talking about, but I will tell you this, that things that will appear in your office may still appear in your office. As it relates to what the Constitutional amendment says, we will have now bills available for aging, for viewing, for printing in electronic format on a PDF on a tablet which will be tethered to each desk in the Chamber.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: Your time is up, Mr. Tedisco.

MR. TEDISCO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Morelle.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: Mr. McLaughlin.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Will Mr. Morelle yield for just one quick question?

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: Quick question, Mr. Morelle.

MR. MORELLE: Yes.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: You said that the tablets are wired. Are we going to be able -- are they going to be permanently -- I haven't seen a wired tablet I guess is what my question is. Are they tablets or are they laptops?

MR. MORELLE: They're actually tablets and the reason they have to be wired and tethered to the desks is because the Constitution requires in order for the bills to age they have to be on the desks.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Well, does the Constitution require a copy on each one of the member's desks or just a printed copy in the Chamber?

MR. MORELLE: No, a printed copy on each desk.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: On each desk.

MR. MORELLE: Which is why each of the desks -- as you can see the stacks of paper and when Pages hand out,

they hand them on every single desk, not just on some of the desks or not made available at the front.

MR. MCCLAUGHLIN: Okay. And they're three days right, on the desks?

MR. MORELLE: Correct, sir.

MR. MCCLAUGHLIN: Except for messages of necessity.

MR. MORELLE: That would be correct, sir. The Constitution allows that, as well.

MR. MCCLAUGHLIN: Right. It's abused, but it allows it. So, these tablets, which really seem like almost laptops -- I mean, why don't we just go with laptops, then? What's the upside to a tablet if we don't have the ability to take it and move about the Chamber with it?

MR. MORELLE: Well, laptops, first of all, are less expensive and obviously we wanted to make sure we did the least expensive and, frankly, there's no inputting. You can't change these documents. They're PDFs because they need to meet the Constitutional requirements. So, you won't be able to change the document in any way with these devices.

MR. MCCLAUGHLIN: Okay. So you're saying the tablets are less expensive than a laptop which makes sense. So with these devices, are we simply going to be able to read bills or are we going to be able to hit the Internet?

MR. MORELLE: No, no access to the Internet. It



has to be a closed-loop system for security reasons --

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Right.

MR. MORELLE: -- to make certain that in the case of any power down-age or a server somewhere that we have an internal system and we have backup, we have backup power to make sure that the aging of those bills goes uninterrupted.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Okay, interesting. Thank you, Mr. Morelle. I appreciate it.

MR. MORELLE: Thank you, sir.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: Read the last section.

THE CLERK: This act shall take effect immediately.

ACTING SPEAKER AUBRY: The Clerk will record the vote.

(The Clerk recorded the vote.)

Are there any other votes? The Clerk will announce the results.

(The Clerk announced the results.)

The bill is passed.