

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
OSWEGO COUNTY LEGISLATURE HELD ON
DECEMBER 15, 2005**

Chairman Russ Johnson called the meeting to order at 2:04 p.m. Roll call was taken with all legislators present, except Leg. Anson and Leg. Waters. Invocation was given by Ted Jerrett, Clerk of the Legislature, followed by the salute to the flag. Hearing no objections to the November 10, 2005 minutes, they were approved.

PUBLIC SPEAKERS:

Margaret Weigel, President of the Library Council reminded legislators of the importance of supporting the County's libraries and asked that the 2006 budget reflect increased support.

Lyn Lawson spoke in favor of resolution increasing the salaries of the County Clerk, the County Treasurer, and Sheriff; and also spoke in support of Oswego Industries, requesting the legislators put money for it back in the budget.

Bill Buck, President of the Board of Oswego Industries, spoke on behalf of Oswego Industries and had several people connected with it stand and be recognized.

Marie Schadt had questions regarding the budget increases, legislators' salaries, application of increased sales tax revenues to property taxes, and the status of the pilot programs. She also indicated that she would like the Legislature meetings to be held in the evening.

Fred Cavalier, President of the Board of ARC, a sister organization of Oswego Industries, spoke in support of Oswego Industries.

Selma Roland spoke on behalf of the Library Council and asked that the Legislature provide additional funding.

PRESENTATIONS OF PETITIONS, COMMUNICATIONS, AND NOTICES:

Ted Jerrett noted the passing of former legislators Howard Robbins and Ed Frawley, and also former Director of Emergency Management George Brower.

Ted Jerrett read a letter from State Senator James Wright supporting Resolution 151 in opposition to closing the Oswego County FSA Office. Sen. Wright's letter noted that he had sent a letter to the appropriate State officials expressing his opposition to the proposed closing. As an update, Senator Wright noted that the issue has since been put on hold.

PROCLAMATIONS AND COMMENDATIONS:

Chairman Johnson invited Leg. Leemann, Don Morey and members of the Infrastructure Committee forward to recognize Randall Shaw for 25 years of service to the County. Don Morey offered a few remarks.

Chairman Johnson invited Sheriff, Reuel Todd and members of the Sheriff's Department forward to recognize Deputy Jeremy Plyler for bravery in attempting to rescue a lady trapped in a car submerged in the icy waters of the Oneida River on November 24th. Leg. Bullard read a

commendation. Sheriff Todd presented Deputy Plyler with the Sheriff's Medal of Honor and offered a few remarks.

REPORTS OF TOWN AND COUNTY OFFICIALS: None

REPORTS FROM STANDING COMMITTEES: None

REPORTS FROM SPECIAL COMMITTEES: None

RESOLUTIONS:

Leg. Santore offered Resolution No. 171, entitled RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION AND DELIVERY OF DEEDS FOR PROPERTY SOLD BY THE OSWEGO COUNTY LEGISLATURE, TITLES TO WHICH WERE ACQUIRED BY THE TAX SALE OF 1986.

Resolution passed, by a voice vote
YES: 23 NO: 0 ABSENT: 2

Leg. Ospelt offered a resolution entitled, RESOLUTION ADOPTING LOCAL LAW NUMBER 3 OF 2005, A LOCAL LAW TO AMEND LOCAL LAW NO. 3 OF 1994, CONCERNING BOUNDARIES FOR THE OSWEGO EMPIRE ZONE.

Leg. Ospelt offered a resolution entitled, RESOLUTION ADOPTING LOCAL LAW NO. 4 OF 2005 ENTITLED "A LOCAL LAW ESTABLISHING A SALARY SCHE3DULE FOR ELECTED COUNTY POSITIONS OF COUNTY CLERK, SHERIFF AND COUNTY TREASURER."

Leg. Ospelt moved to table both these resolutions until December 22, 2005, at which time there will be a public hearing on both of the resolutions.

Motion to table passed, by a voice vote
YES: 23 NO: 0 ABSENT: 2

Leg. Osetek offered Resolution No. 172, entitled RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PEF BARGAINING UNIT. Leg. Gearsbeck stated that he could not support this. Leg. Leemann noted that the PEF unit did not take a raise the last time, and he felt that the people deserve a raise. Leg. Kunzwiler agreed with Leg. Leemann. He took exception to the fact that people were said to be receiving bonuses, which they are not. Leg. Hoefer stated that he feels merit raises are better than straight percentage raises. Leg. Brown spoke in support of the resolution. Leg. Gearsbeck requested a roll call vote.

Resolution passed, by a roll call vote
YES: 21 NO: 2 ABSENT: 2

YES: THOMAS, LEEMANN, BRYANT, PROUD, BROWN, BEARDSLEY, SEAGER, RUSAW, OSPELT, GARDNER, BULLARD, OSETEK, SANTORE, PONZI, KUNZWILER, MALONE, BECKWITH, VASHO, FRENCH, BREWER JOHNSON.

NO: GEARSBECK, HOEFER

ABSENT: ANSON, WATERS

Leg. Osetek offered Resolution No. 173, entitled RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE MANAGEMENT COMPENSATION PLAN 2005-2008.

Resolution passed, by a roll call vote
YES: 22 NO: 1 ABSENT: 2

YES: THOMAS, LEEMANN, BRYANT, PROUD, BROWN, BEARDSLEY, SEAGER, RUSAW, OSPILT, GARDNER, BULLARD, OSETEK, SANTORE, PONZI, KUNZWILER, HOEFER, MALONE, BECKWITH, VASHO, FRENCH, BREWER, JOHNSON.

NO: GEARSBECK

ABSENT: ANSON, WATERS.

Leg. Osetek offered Resolution No. 174, entitled, RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING SALARIES FOR ELECTIONS COMMISSIONERS.

Resolution passed, by a roll call vote
YES: 20 NO: 3 ABSENT: 2

YES: THOMAS, LEEMANN, BRYANT, PROUD, BROWN, BEARDSLEY, SEAGER, OSPILT, GARDNER, BULLARD, OSETEK, SANTORE, PONZI, KUNZWILER, MALONE, BECKWITH VASHO, FRENCH, BREWER, JOHNSON.

NO: GEARSBECK, RUSAW, HOEFER

ABSENT: ANSON, WATERS

Leg. Bryant offered Resolution No. 175, entitled, RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CHAIRMAN OF THE OSWEGO COUNTY LEGISLATURE TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH NEW YORK STATE FOR THE 2006 STOP-DWI PROGRAM.

Resolution passed, by a voice vote
YES: 23 NO: 0 ABSENT: 2

Leg. Osetek offered Resolution No. 176, entitled, RESOLUTION PROFESSIONAL SERVICES CONTRACT COUNTY TREASURER'S OFFICE. This resolution authorizes the contract for In Rem title Searches and Notifications pertaining to unpaid City and County taxes to be awarded to Independent Title Agency, LLC.

Resolution passed, by a voice vote
YES: 23 NO: 0 ABSENT: 2

Leg. Ospelt, offered Resolution No. 177 entitled, RESOLUTION PURSUANT TO SECTION 122 OF THE AGRICULTURE AND MARKETS LAW AUTHORIZING THE CHAIRMAN TO IMPOSE A DOG QUARANTINE IN THE COUNTY OF OSWEGO. Leg. Brown, reminded the residents of Palermo that there is an additional fine when dogs are running loose, even when there

is a leash law in effect. Leg. Hoefer noted that the term of the quarantine was a long time and Leg. Ospelt spoke regarding the length of winter.

Resolution passed, by a voice vote
YES: 23 NO: 0 ABSENT: 2

Leg. Bullard offered Resolution No. 178, entitled, RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING BUDGETARY MODIFICATION E-911. This resolution transfers \$30,000 from line 3642.4330.4 into the Capital Project (102) to provide needed money to complete the project to upgrade E-911 equipment to accept location information from wireless callers.

Resolution passed, by a voice vote
YES: 23 NO: 0 ABSENT: 2

Leg. Bullard offered Resolution No. 179, entitled, RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING PROFESSIONAL SERVICES CONTRACT E-911. This resolution approves the professional contract with Positron to upgrade E-911 equipment.

Resolution passed, by a voice vote
YES: 23 NO: 0 ABSENT: 2

Leg. Bullard offered Resolution No. 180, entitled, RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING PROFESSIONAL SERVICES CONTRACT E-911. This resolution approves the professional services contract with Positron to upgrade and install new CAD and mapping system.

Resolution passed, by a voice vote
YES: 23 NO: 0 ABSENT: 2

Leg. Osetek offered resolution No. 181, entitled RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROVISIONS OF SECTION 556 OF THE REAL PROPERTY TAX LAW, SUBDIVISIONS 8 & 9 RELATIVE TO THE REFUNDS OF FUNDS DUE TO TAX CORRECTIONS. This resolution authorizes the County Treasurer to make corrections to real property taxes not to exceed \$2500 for the upcoming year.

Resolution passed, by a voice vote
YES: 23 NO: 0 ABSENT: 2

Leg. Bullard offered Resolution No. 182, entitled, RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION TO THE NEW YORK STATE DIVISION OF PROBATION AND CORRECTIONAL ALTERNATIVES FOR ALTERNATIVES TO INCARCERATION CLASSIFICATION FUNDING. This resolution allows the County to receive 2006 alternative to Incarceration Services funds up to a maximum of \$40,000.

Resolution passed, by a voice vote
YES: 23 NO: 0 ABSENT: 2

Leg. Leemann offered Resolution No. 183, entitled, RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING EXTENSION OF SNOW AND ICE CONTRACT - PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT. Leg. Gearsbeck stated that he could not support this and requested a roll call vote.

Resolution passed, by a roll call vote
YES: 22 NO: 1 ABSENT: 2

YES: THOMAS, LEEMANN, BRYANT, PROUD, BROWN, BEARDSLEY, SEAGER, RUSAW, OSPELT, GARDNER, BULLARD, OSETEK, SANTORE, PONZI, KUNZWILER, HOEFER, MALONE, BECKWITH, VASHO, FRENCH, BREWER, JOHNSON.

NO: GEARSBECK

ABSENT: ANSON, WATERS.

Leg. Bullard offered Resolution No. 184, entitled, RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING EXPENDITURE FROM CAPITAL RESERVE NO. 146 - HIGHWAY & AUTOMOTIVE EQUIPMENT. This authorizes the Sheriff to purchase patrol cars up to \$286,000. Leg. Ospelt suggested that the "highway" in the heading might be confusing. A roll call vote was requested.

Resolution passed, by a roll call vote
YES: 19 NO: 3 ABSENT: 2 ABSTAIN: 1

YES: THOMAS, LEEMANN, BRYANT, PROUD, BROWN, BEARDSLEY, SEAGER, RUSAW, OSPELT, GARDNER, BULLARD, OSETEK, SANTORE, PONZI, KUNZWILER, VASHO, FRENCH, BREWER, JOHNSON.

NO: GEARSBECK, HOEFER, MALONE

ABSENT: ANSON, WATERS

ABSTAIN: BECKWITH

Leg. Osetek offered Resolution No. 185, entitled, RESOLUTION INCREASING EXISTING APPROPRIATIONS FOR VARIOUS FUNDS IN SEVERAL OFFICES AND DEPARTMENTS. This resolution authorizes the County Treasurer to make various departmental budget adjustments as of the close of business 2005. Leg. Malone asked if this was a cleansing resolution for the end of the year.

Resolution passed, by a voice vote
Leg. Malone opposing
YES: 22 NO: 1 ABSENT: 2

Leg. Osetek offered Resolution No. 186, entitled, RESOLUTION APPROPRIATING FUNDS IN THE 2006 BUDGET IN REGARD TO FULL FUNDED GRANT PROJECTS.

Resolution passed, by a voice vote
YES: 23 NO: 0 ABSENT: 2

Leg. Proud offered Resolution No. 187, entitled, RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING BUDGETARY MODIFICATION HEALTH DEPARTMENT - ENVIRONMENTAL ON-CALL PREMIUMS. This resolution increases the 2005 budget appropriation for Environmental on-call premiums by \$6,200. Leg. Malone asked if the County was mandated by state law to have an

environmental division in this county. Steve Lyman replied that the legislature opted to do so years ago, and by doing so, imposed certain obligations.

Resolution passed, by a voice vote
Leg. Malone opposing
YES: 22 NO: 1 ABSENT: 2

Leg. Proud offered Resolution No. 188, entitled, RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING BUDGETARY MODIFICATION HEALTH DEPARTMENT - PREVENTIVE SERVICES SALARIES.

Resolution passed, by a voice vote
YES: 23 NO: 0 ABSENT: 2

Leg. Proud offered Resolution No. 189, entitled, RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING BUDGETARY MODIFICATION HEALTH DEPARTMENT - EMS TRAINING. Leg. Brown stated that Palermo benefited from this and supports this resolution.

Resolution passed, by a voice vote
YES: 23 NO: 0 ABSENT: 2

Leg. Proud offered Resolution No. 190 entitled, RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING BUDGETARY MODIFICATION HEALTH DEPARTMENT - HOSPICE REVENUES / EXPENSES. Leg. Bullard and Leg. Brown clarified that the increased costs would be covered 100% by Medicare revenues.

Resolution passed, by a voice vote
YES: 23 NO: 0 ABSENT: 2

Leg. Proud, offered Resolution No. 191, entitled, RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING BUDGETARY MODIFICATION DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES, ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICES. This resolution allows the County to accept additional state aid.

Resolution passed, by a voice vote
YES: 23 NO: 0 ABSENT: 2

Leg. Proud offered a resolution, entitled RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING BUDGETARY MODIFICATION HEALTH DEPARTMENT - WHEEL ALIGNMENT EQUIPMENT and moved to postpone indefinitely. Motion seconded by Leg. Leemann and passed.

Leg. Osetek offered Resolution No. 192, entitled, RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING PROFESSIONAL SERVICE CONTRACT TREASURER'S OFFICE - ANNUALLY REQUIRED FEDERAL SINGLE AUDIT. Leg. Osetek pointed out that there was a copy of the amended resolution. Leg. Kunzwiler seconded the amendment, which was carried with a voice vote.

Resolution passed, as amended, by a voice vote
YES: 23 NO: 0 ABSENT: 2

Leg. Osetek, offered Resolution No. 193, entitled RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING BUDGETARY MODIFICATION CLOSING CAPITAL RESERVE NO. 21 - MICHAUD NURSING HOME.

Resolution passed, by a voice vote
YES: 23 NO: 0 ABSENT: 2

Leg. Bullard offered Resolution No. 194, entitled RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING BUDGETARY MODIFICATION EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT - SALARY CORRECTION.

Resolution passed, by a voice vote
YES: 23 NO: 0 ABSENT: 2

Leg. Bullard offered Resolution No. 195, entitled RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING BUDGETARY MODIFICATION SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT - STATE CRIMINAL ALIEN ASSISTANCE PROGRAM. This resolution accepts \$11,045 in federal funding.

Resolution passed, by a voice vote
YES: 23 NO: 0 ABSENT: 2

Leg. Bullard offered a resolution entitled RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING BUDGETARY MODIFICATION SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT - WHEEL ALIGNMENT EQUIPMENT and moved to postpone indefinitely. Seconded by Leg. Santore and passed.

Leg. Ospelt offered Resolution No. 196, entitled, RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE APPLICATION FOR THE NEW YORK STATE RESIDENTIAL EMERGENCY SERVICES TO OFFER (HOME) REPAIRS TO THE ELDERLY (RESTORE) PROGRAM. Leg. Beardsley supported this program.

Resolution passed, by a voice vote
YES: 23 NO: 0 ABSENT: 2

Leg. Bryant offered Resolution No. 197, entitled RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING BUDGETARY MODIFICATION DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - MEDICAL EXAMS/CORONER EXPENSES.

Resolution passed, by a voice vote
YES: 23 NO: 0 ABSENT: 2

Leg. Ospelt offered Resolution No. 198, entitled RESOLUTION ALLOCATING HOTEL OR MOTEL OCCUPANCY TAX REVENUES AND PROVIDING DISTRIBUTION OF OCCUPANCY TAX REVENUES FOR 2006.

Resolution passed, by a voice vote
Leg. Gearsbeck opposing
YES: 22 NO: 1 ABSENT: 2

Leg. Bryant offered Resolution No. 199, entitled, RESOLUTION FIXING THE TIME AND PLACE FOR THE 2006 ORGANIZATION MEETING. Leg. Seager moved to amend the

resolution to change the time from 2:00 pm to 1:00 pm. Leg. Santore seconded the motion, carried by a voice vote.

Resolution passed, as amended, by a voice vote

YES: 23 NO: 0 ABSENT: 2

Leg. Kunzwiler moved to waive the rules to recognize the Fulton Soccer Team, Leg. French seconded the motion. The motion passed with a voice vote.

Chairman Johnson invited the Fulton High School “Red Raider” Soccer Team to come forward. A Recognition was read noting the Team’s winning record and its climb to #1 in NYS competition. The Legislature gave the team and coaches a standing ovation.

Leg. Leemann moved for a 5 minute recess, seconded by Leg. French, carried.

Chairman Johnson called the meeting back to order at 3:30 pm. Leg. Kunzwiler moved to call the meeting out of recess, seconded by Leg. Brown and approved.

Leg. Bryant offered Resolution No. 200, entitled, RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING CHAIRMAN AND CLERK TO HANDLE ALL UNFINISHED BUSINESS THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2005.

Resolution passed, by a voice vote

with Leg. Malone opposing

YES: 22 NO: 1 ABSENT: 2

Leg. Osetek offered Resolution No. 201, entitled, RESOLUTION ADOPTING COUNTY BUDGET FOR THE FISCAL YEAR COMMENCING JANUARY 1, 2006. Leg. Osetek moved to amend it to add to 6991-5465, Oswego Industries, the amount of \$50,000 and seconded by Leg. Malone. Leg. Brown supported this.

Amendment passed by a voice vote

with Leg. Hoefler opposing

YES: 22 NO: 1 ABSENT: 2

Leg. Leemann moved to amend the resolution by adding the amount of \$50,000 to the Library fund, seconded by Santore. After a brief discussion Leg. Beckwith moved to call the question, seconded by Leg. Ospelt. The motion to call the question passed, with Leg. Osetek, Brown and Gearsbeck opposing. Roll call vote on the amendment was requested by Leg. Seager with the following results:

Amendment passed by a roll call vote

YES: 17 NO: 6 ABSENT: 2

YES: LEEMANN, PROUD, BROWN, BEARDSLEY, SEAGER, RUSAW, OSPELT, OSETEK, SANTORE, PONZI, KUNZWILER, MALONE, BECKWITH, VASHO, FRENCH, BREWER, JOHNSON.

NO: THOMAS, BRYANT, GEARSBECK, GARDNER, BULLARD, HOEFER

ABSENT: ANSON, WATERS.

Discussion on the amended budget continued. Leg. Gearsbeck moved to amend by removing the 5% raise for legislators, seconded Leg. Hoefer. Leg. Beckwith moved to amend the amendment by a 3% raise instead of a 5% raise. There was no second. Discussion returned to Leg. Gearsbeck's amendment. A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

Amendment of the amendment failed by a roll call vote
YES: 5 NO: 17 ABSENT: 2 ABSTAIN: 1

YES: GEARSBECK, GARDNER, HOEFER, MALONE, BECKWITH

NO: THOMAS, LEEMANN, BRYANT, PROUD, BROWN, BEARDSLEY, SEAGER, OSPELT, BULLARD, OSETEK, SANTORE, PONZI, KUNZWILER, VASHO, FRENCH, BREWER, JOHNSON.

ABSENT: ANSON, WATERS

ABSTAIN: RUSAW

Leg. Gearsbeck moved to have the budget reduced by \$3 million. Chairman Johnson ruled that it was not an appropriate motion, as there were no specifics. Leg. Kunzwiler said to arbitrarily take that much money is not a productive way to conduct business. Leg. Malone moved to eliminate any and all vacant positions, seconded by Leg. Kunzwiler. Leg. Seager stated that just because a position is currently vacant, does not mean that it is not needed, and therefore should be left in the budget. Leg. Brown says there are critical positions that need to be filled. Leg. Ospelt stated that the positions need to be left there. Leg. Gearsbeck suggested the supervisor for solid waste be eliminated. After a lengthy discussion, Leg. Brewer called the question on the amendment, seconded by Leg. Beckwith. This was passed with a voice vote. Discussion went back to the amendment to eliminate all vacant positions from the budget.

Amendment failed by a roll call vote
YES: 3 NO: 20 ABSENT: 2

YES: GEARSBECK, HOEFER, MALONE

NO: THOMAS, LEEMANN, BRYANT, PROUD, BROWN, BEARDSLEY, SEAGER, RUSAW, OSPELT, GARDNER, BULLARD, OSETEK, SANTORE, PONZI, KUNZWILER, BECKWITH, VASHO, FRENCH, BREWER, JOHNSON

ABSENT: ANSON, WATERS

Discussion returned to the budget as amended. Leg. Proud moved the question, Leg. Bullard seconded. Motion to move the question be passed by voice vote with Legs. Malone, Thomas, Hoefer, Ospelt, Kunzwiler, Gearsbeck and Bryant in opposition.

The Resolution to approve the 2006 budget as amended passed, with a roll call vote
YES: 20 NO: 3 ABSENT: 2

YES: THOMAS, LEEMANN, BRYANT, PROUD, BROWN, BEARDSLEY, SEAGER, RUSAW, OSPELT, GARDNER, BULLARD, OSETEK, SANTORE, PONZI, KUNZWILER, BECKWITH, VASHO, FRENCH, BREWER JOHNSON.

NO: GEARSBECK, HOEFER, MALONE

ABSENT: ANSON, WATERS.

Leg. Osetek offered Resolution No.202, entitled, RESOLUTION MAKING APPROPRIATION FOR THE CONDUCT OF COUNTY GOVERNMENT FOR THE FISCAL YEAR COMMENCING JANUARY 1, 2006.

Resolution passed, by a voice vote
with Leg. Malone opposing
YES: 22 NO: 1 ABSENT: 2

Chairman Johnson asked for a vote to waive the rules to consider additional resolutions. All in favor except Leg. Malone.

Leg. Leemann moved to waive the rules, seconded by Leg. Kunzwiler, which was carried.

Leg. Ospelt offered Resolution No. 203, entitled RESOLUTION FIXING TIME AND PLACE FOR PUBLIC HEARING RELATIVE TO PROPOSED LOCAL LAW NO. 3 OF 2005, ENTITLED, "A LOCAL LAW TO AMEND LOCAL LAW NUMBER 3 OF 1994", CONCERNING BOUNDARIES FOR THE OSWEGO EMPIRE ZONE.

Resolution passed, by a voice vote
YES: 23 NO: 0 ABSENT: 2

Leg. Osetek offered Resolution No. 204, entitled, RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING TIME AND PLACE OF THE PUBLIC HEARING IN REGARD TO PROPOSED LOCAL LAW NO. 4 OF 2005 ENTITLED, "A LOCAL LAW ESTABLISHING A SALARY SCHEDULE FOR ELECTED COUNTY POSITIONS OF COUNTY CLERK, SHERIFF AND COUNTY TREASURER".

Resolution passes, by a voice vote
YES: 23 NO: 0 ABSENT: 2

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

NEW BUSINESS/MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS:

Leg. Seager moved to recess the meeting until December 22, 2005, at 2:00 p.m., Leg. Bullard seconded the motion. All in favor.

OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE LEGISLATURE:

There were no other speakers.