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Otsego Board Is Granted Assignment Wishes

—PRESS PHOTO.

EXPERIMENTING IN THE ROUND—Seated around a massive circular table, members of the Otsego County Board of Representative participate in an informal session last night in conference room of the County Office Building in Cooperstown. From left, Orlo M. Couse, Unadilla; Jack L. Breese, Oneonta, chairman, James H. Higgins, Burlington Flats, vice-chairman and Andrew A. Tisenchek, Oneonta.

By PETE DOBINSKY

COOPERSTOWN — Ranking Republican members of the Otsego County Board of Representatives have learned the truth of the Biblical passage and sometimes cliche, "ask and ye shall receive . . ."

Like Orlo M. Couse of Unadilla!

HE WAS ANXIOUS to become chairman of the Highway Committee for the coming year.

He asked for the assignment.

He is the chairman.

Couse was appointed last night by Jack L. Breese, 47, of Oneonta, who is chairman of the Board of Representatives for 1973.

Serving with Couse in the coveted assignment will be Walter F. Gilday of Cherry Valley, who headed the Highway Committee last year, and Richard G. Schlee of the Town of Oneonta.

Committee assignments by Breese highlighted an informal night session of the board at the County Office Building in Cooperstown.

"As far as I'm concerned, these night meetings are experimental," said Breese, who plans to schedule more during the year.

SOON AFTER HIS compromise election Jan. 3 as chairman of the board, he asked his 12 colleagues to submit their preferences in committee assignments for 1973.

Nine of the members specified their preferences, three talked with him personally regarding at least one assignment, and one member did not respond to the request.

"In regard to my committee assignments, my prime objective was to place each representative on his first choice (committee) and, if possible, on his second committee in second or third preference," Breese declared.

"My secondary purpose was to try and please as many men as possible, placing them according to their interests and talents while retaining continuity," he continued.

THE MAJORITY of assignments reflect continuity and although no members of the minority (Democrat) party have been named to chair any committee — nor have some members of my (GOP) party, incidentally — there is no sentiment "my have I tried to hurt, bury or box in any member of this board," Breese said.

"Perhaps time will reveal lack of judgment as to some particular placements but honestly, gentlemen, this was a sincere effort to achieve good working committees (on the board).

"I have great confidence that we will accomplish intelligent, reasonable decisions for those we represent," he asserted.

Breese reiterated that he has "sincere respect" for the talents of Democrats Joseph J. Kenyon of Worcester, Stuart P. Taugher of Cooperstown and Deane G. Winner of Milford, who will not head any of the committees.

GOP MEMBERS who were not assigned to chair any committees, but who will serve as members of one or more, are Richard G. Schlee of the Town of Oneonta and Warren C. Kinney of Morris.

Kinney, who was seated Jan. 3 as an interim member, replacing retired Guy E. Rathbun of Morris, was appointed to the Conservation & Agriculture Committee.

Schlee, who no longer is the freshman member of the board, was assigned to the Highway and Governmental Affairs committees.

Breese appointed James H. Higgins of Burlington Flats, Kenyon and Gilday to a special Data Processing Committee.

Higgins, vice-chairman of the Board of Representatives, will head the Data Processing Committee.

HE ALSO WAS reappointed to a second year as chairman of the Finance Committee, serving with holdover Taugher and Andrew A. Tisenchek of Oneonta.

David W. Brenner of Oneonta was renamed chairman of the Health & Welfare Committee. He also is a member of the Rules & Legislation Committee.

Andrew A. Tisenchek of Oneonta is chairman of the Governmental Affairs Committee, and a member of the Finance Committee.

Donald C. Trinkins of Oneonta heads the Rules & Legislation Committee, and is one of three members of the Buildings Committee.

★ ★ ★

"As far as I am concerned, these night meetings are experimental"—Bresee.

★ ★ ★

Committee assignments for 1973:

FINANCE, James H. Higgins of Burlington Flats, chairman; Stuart P. Taugher of Cooperstown and Andrew A. Tisenchek of Oneonta.

RULES & LEGISLATION, David C. Brenner of Oneonta, chairman; Hilton Hoffman, Bowman of Otsego; Donald C. Trinkins of Oneonta.

BUILDINGS, Walter F. Gilday of Cherry Valley, chairman; Tisenchek and Taugher.

HEALTH & WELFARE, Brenner, chairman; Orlo M. Couse of Unadilla, Jackson J. Kenyon of Worcester, and Deane G. Winner of Milford.

WEIGHTS, Couse, chairman; Gilday and Richard G. Schlee of the Town of Oneonta.

CONSERVATION & AGRICULTURE, Kenyon, chairman; Hoffman, Bowman; Harry R. Arms of Richfield Springs, and Warren C. Kinney of Morris.

WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION, Arms, chairman; Schlee and Kinney.

GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS, Winner, chairman; Kenyon, Taugher and Schlee.

DATA PROCESSING, Higgins, chairman; Kenyon and Gilday.

Trinkins, who is representative-at-large from the City of Oneonta, was named liaison between the Board of Representatives and the Common Council in Oneonta.

Breese said other special appointments will be announced during a meeting planned for 10 a.m. Jan. 19, in Cooperstown.

Chief Says Police Trained To Limit Allowed by Budget

By LEO GRIFFIN

ONEONTA — At the time of last May's antiwar demonstrations here city police had received all the riot control equipment and crowd control training the department's budget would allow, according to Chief Joseph F. DeSalvatore.

The 44-year-old chief defended himself last night at the Board of Public Safety hearing of claims that he neglected his duties.

Sgt. Leland D. Higgins, 35, has charged that police were not adequately trained or equipped to handle antiwar demonstrations in Dietz Street last May.

The force had "all the training I thought we could afford," the chief said.

"Very little of what I requested was granted," he added.

THE CHIEF, however, is accused of not ordering all the crowd control equipment authorized in the 1972 budget.

DeSalvatore said this was not true. "I ordered all of it. All of it that was authorized."

Board chairman Dr. Crawford S. Douglass asked if the equipment had been ordered before the May demonstrations. "Yes," the chief said.

The chief submitted his budget requests for 1970, 1971, and 1972 by support his claims. Board member Charles C. Burnsworth, however, asked that documents showing what was granted and purchased also be given as evidence.

DeSalvatore, who has been chief for three years and a member of the department for 16 years, testified for an hour last night. His testimony will resume at 7:30 p.m. Monday.

WHEN HE BEGAN testifying the chief said, "I'd like to clear the air." A few minutes later he asked, "I'm not going to throw any spears at anybody. I intend to defend myself."

Although the chief's speech was hurried, his voice was firm. While he listened to officers testifying during the six hearings he had remained impassive.

Usually he listened while scribbling on a legal pad and rubbing his forehead with the other hand, or just staring blankly.

Since 1969 he has had a training plan for crowd control, the chief testified.

He described it as "a basic plan of action . . . so we would know how to use the equipment." The chief's attorney, Elias H. Jacobs of Stamford, gave copies of the plan dated November 1969 to reporters.

DeSalvatore told the board, "A member of this department believes this is backdated. That is not true."

THE FIVE-PAGE plan, titled a "Non-Lethal Weapons Training Schedule," describes the use of riot equipment, squad functions, and details of crowd confrontation tactics.

The plan served a dual purpose, the chief said. Not only was it for training but it was to be used for justification of nonlethal weapon budget requests.

In September 1969 the chief asked for $8,000 worth of riot-control equipment but was only budgeted $4,000, he said.

The request including a bullet-proof suit which was not granted, he said. Some thought it was a "pretty good joke," he added.

Concerning the training the chief said, "Yes, there has been training. No, there has not been sufficient training. As far as I'm concerned there is never sufficient training.

"We have not had extensive training and it has been piecemeal at best," he added.

Some persons may think the plan was back-dated, according to the chief, because the training was nirvegant. Nobody has specified the exact number of crowd-control training sessions the force has had.

THE CHIEF added that some persons may think the plan was back dated because they were never told about it.

"There is no reason for every member of the department to be completely conversant with a plan such as this. The main reason is security," he said.

"In this department we've had a security leak," he said. Department sergeants, including Higgins, were told about the plan's details, he said.

Along with the plan not being available to most of the men, the riot-control equipment also was not available to them.

Higgins charged that the chief and Lt. Gerald C. Platt, 35, had the only key to the room in which the pepper fogger and other riot-control equipment was kept.

DeSalvatore testified, "Very few people should have access to this equipment.

"If you happen to have a hot head . . . this equipment is not to be used when it shouldn't be."

Burnsworth felt there was a contradiction in allowing the force to carry pistols but not giving them free access to non-lethal crowd-control weapons.

THE CHIEF'S attorney interrupted, saying he was speaking "off the record." Improper use of non-lethal weapons has "brought on needless loss of life," in some instances,he said.

Delsalvatore added, "A person armed with a non-lethal weapon could be inclined to use it more quickly than a lethal weapon."

Riot-control equipment the department has acknowledged having includes a pepper fogger tear gas machine, pistol and shotgun grenade launchers, riot sticks, helmets and gas masks.

In December Pfl. Allen W. Case testified that he was in charge of training men in using the pepper fogger.

Last night, however, Platt testified that Case was not "competent" in the use of the machine.

Platt, a supporter of the chief and also accused of neglect of duty, said of Case, "I don't feel he was competent (regarding the pepper fogger). His only interest was the dollars he would hand off the city.

"He thinks I'm a dope," Platt added.

PLATT SAID that he told Case to clean the pepper fogger but Case came back and said he needed more time and tools to do the job.

According to Platt, he then did the job himself in 20 minutes.

Asked by board attorney Robert A. Harlem whether Case is still the training officer in use of the pepper fogger, Platt said, "Yes."

In response to other questions, Platt said the chief had a crowd-control plan and had scheduled crowd-control training sessions.

The force did not have more training because the city would not pay the men overtime for it, he said.

J. F. DeSALVATORE

GERALD C. PLATT

Cole Is Free in $1,000 Bail

ONEONTA — Ronnie Cole, 24, of 6 Depew Street, accused of attempting to assault a policeman, is free in bail of $1,000 while awaiting an examination of witnesses in City Court of Oneonta.

Court attaches said yesterday bail was posted by Roger G. Smith, after Cole appeared before Judge Frank W. Getman.

The examination of witnesses on a charge of attempting to commit a crime, a Class D felony, was scheduled for Feb. 1.

Cole is represented by attorney James E. Konstanty of Oneonta, assigned by the court.

Cole appeared after being returned from Veterans Hospital in Albany, where he had been a patient since last Dec. 27.

He is alleged to have brandished a knife and lunged at Sgt. Leland D. Higgins, 35, last Dec. 22, while the sergeant and Patrolman Joseph Campbell were investigating a complaint at the Depew Street address.

Higgins said that as Cole lunged from behind a curtain, he struck him on the head with his nightstick.

Cole underwent treatment at Fox Memorial Hospital here before being transferred to the Veterans Hospital in Albany.

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New Candy Striper Class to Begin

DELHI — A new candy stripper class will begin at 9 a.m. Saturday, at the O'Connor Hospital in Delhi.

Candidates for the program must be at least 15 years of age. Classes will be conducted each Saturday for five consecutive weeks, with sessions from 9 a.m. until noon.

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