

## Don't try to politicize bipartisan endeavors

At the July monthly meeting of the Rensselaer County Legislature, legislators were asked to approve renewal of a 5-year, \$3 million lease for the Raddock Building in Troy to house the County's Department of Social Services.

Our job as legislators is to review such proposals and decide if they are in the best interest of taxpayers. In the case of this proposal, there had been no competitive bidding process and actual lease costs were not even specified in the resolution submitted for approval. Further investigation by the Democratic minority indicated that the Raddock Building was not well maintained and that the price currently paid by taxpayers to lease this building was higher than seemed appropriate, given the condition of the facility.

Based on the above, it was decided by a vote of the legislature to table consideration of the proposed lease pending further consideration. The vote to table was the product of a bipartisan consensus, with Republican legislators Stammel and Herrington, among others, joining the minority in requesting further review of this matter. The time between now and the August meeting of the Legislature should be used by the Department of Social Services to address the concerns raised so as to ensure that taxpayer dollars are spent wisely. This can be done by negotiating a more acceptable leasing cost for the Raddock Building and insisting on upgrades that would improve the working conditions for employees and residents visiting this facility.

Unfortunately, statements by Majority Leader Mirch (who did not attend the July meeting) have attempted to politicize this effort and distract the public from the job at hand. He would have us rubberstamp such no-bid contracts without appropriate due diligence. Taxpayers do not want to see tax dollars wasted by overpaying for substandard office space. They want their legislators to work together in a bi-partisan fashion to make sure that government spends their hard earned money as effectively as possible. Instead of business as usual, the time has come for elected officials to focus less on politics and more on results.

Brian Zweig  
Rensselaer County Legislator  
(East Greenbush, North Greenbush, Poestenkill)