



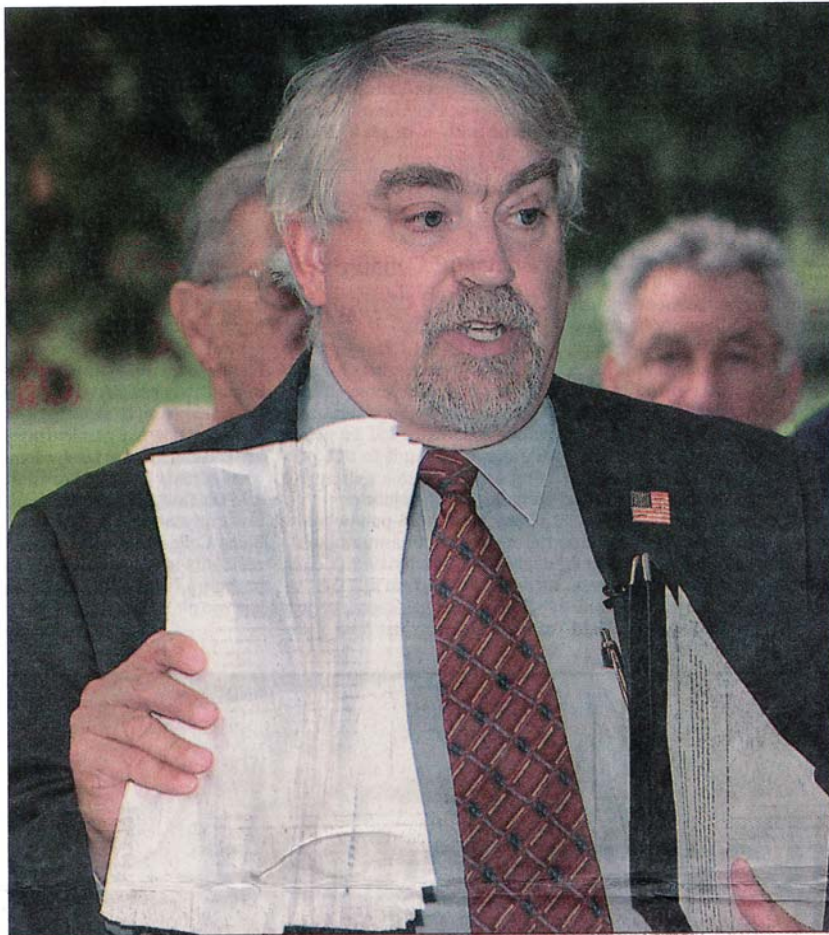
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Ivins: Restore VLT funds



ED BURKE/The Saratogian

Saratoga Springs Commissioner of Finance Ken Ivins holds petitions collected in support of the state turning VLT revenue over to the city.

By ANDREW J. BERNSTEIN
The Saratogian

SARATOGA SPRINGS — With 600 signatures in hand, Commissioner of Finance Kenneth Ivins Jr. announced Wednesday afternoon that he was launching a petition effort to urge state lawmakers to reverse a decision to take VLT funding away from the city.

"When the county Board of Supervisors approved the racino, it was with the understanding that we would be compensated to offset the cost," said Ivins, who pointed out that Saratoga Springs police and firefighters serve the facility, while the city cares for roads that have seen increased use since VLTs were located there.

Ivins was joined at the conference by elected officials and area Republicans.

For the past several years, the city had derived as much as \$3.8 million in state aid from the facility as compensation for hosting video lottery terminals at Saratoga Gaming and Raceway.

This year, the city was expecting to receive about half that amount, but the state decided to change the formula entirely, redistributing the money away from Saratoga Springs, while every other host community continues to receive the aid.

"The new formula discrimi-

IVINS: Starts petition effort

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nates against one community alone," Ivins said. He pointed out that the city had previously lobbied for the money, and that state representatives had voted against the budget, but it had passed anyway.

"We want to make this stop and fight for our share of the VLT money," Ivins said. "We have to do something."

In order to close a \$1.5 million shortfall in revenue which had been expected from the racino, Ivins will bring mid-year budget

amendments to the next City Council meeting on July 7.

"I have no illusions that this will affect the mid-year budget either way," Ivins said. "I'm shooting for next year, because cuts we're making now will be minimal compared to what needs to happen next year."

Ivins said he had already enlisted the help of the Saratoga County Republican Committee to help carry petitions, but said the goal was not a political agenda.

"I would ask any candidate, even my opponent, to carry this petition while they're petitioning

for office," Ivins said.

He will deliver the petition to state leaders in the hopes of influencing their budget process for the next fiscal year.

Peter Tulin, a member of the city Democratic Committee, attended the conference because he'd heard that Ivins had a solution to the VLT revenue problem, and did not mince words.

"I came to listen to someone turn an abject failure into a failed attempt to change something for the better," he said.

Petition forms are available at www.ivinsforfinance.com.

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