



## **Tioga County Worksession Minutes** **March 23, 2023 – 10:00 a.m.**

### **Legislators Present:**

Legislator Brown  
Legislator Ciotoli  
Legislator Monell  
Legislator Mullen  
Legislator Roberts  
Chair/Legislator Sauerbrey  
Legislator Standinger  
Legislator Weston

### **Legislators Absent:**

Legislator Flesher

### **Guests:**

None

### **Staff Present:**

Peter DeWind, County Attorney  
Cathy Haskell, Legislative Clerk  
Amy Eiklor, Deputy Legislative Clerk  
Linda Parke, Personnel Officer  
LeeAnn Tinney, Director of ED&P (*Departed at 10:15 a.m.*)

**Call Meeting to Order:** Chair Sauerbrey opened the meeting at 10:00 a.m.

**Planning For the Future:** Chair Sauerbrey reported she and Legislator Brown met with Ian Coyle, Livingston County's Administrator, at the NYSAC Conference. Mr. Coyle spoke about his job duties, role within the County, and day-to-day operations as the County Administrator. The role should be non-political, and the County Administrator does not attend political events. Chair Sauerbrey explained that the role of County Administrator is running the day-to-day business, not policymaking. She emphasized the County Administrator would not take on any Legislative decision-making authority. Legislative Clerk Haskell reached out to other Counties regarding the position and what their job description and salaries are. She distributed a spreadsheet showing various County Administrator comparisons.

Chair Sauerbrey explained that the process of creating a County Administrator position requires a Local Law. Funding the position needs to take place in time for the 2024 budget.

Chair Sauerbrey will form a Committee to research and discuss the position of County Administrator. Chair Sauerbrey, Legislators Brown, Standing, and Roberts will be appointed to the County Administrator Committee at the April 11 meeting.

**ARPA Funding:** Director of ED&P, LeeAnn Tinney, explained the Racker Center intends to build a Neighborhood Depot that will house various non-profit organizations and act as an emergency response center in times of crisis. The Neighborhood Depot's location will be on Central Avenue in Owego, above the flood zone. Ms. Tinney estimated the total cost of the project will be about \$8 million. Racker was awarded \$3 million in CDBG funds from a grant. Ms. Tinney explained that there are two parts of the Neighborhood Depot project. The first part is demolition of existing buildings, and the second part is the construction of a new building. A bid went out for both parts of the project. The demolition bid came in roughly at the anticipated amount originally budgeted. The construction bid came in significantly higher than expected, about \$950,000 more than anticipated.

Ms. Tinney reported CDBG funding has a specific timeframe in which the project needs to be complete, which is by June 2024. Construction would have to commence this year in order to finish the project by the deadline. CDBG will not allow the project to move forward until Racker can show where the \$950,000 funding gap will come from. Ms. Tinney has been working with Racker to come up with possible funding sources. These include private businesses, various organizations, foundations, and additional grants. Legislator Standing asked if the Village of Owego supports the project. Ms. Tinney answered that the Village of Owego is aware of the project and there have been no roadblocks yet.

Ms. Tinney reported the Tioga County Legislature previously approved \$750,000 in ARPA funding for a broadband expansion project. So far, roughly \$400,000 has been spent on that project. Ms. Tinney suggested reallocating the broadband ARPA funds to the Neighborhood Depot project. She stated Tioga County may not even have to use the funds for this project, but the funding can be available as a backup. She proposed writing a Letter of Intent to CDBG showing ARPA funds can be used, should the other funding sources fall through. Chair Sauerbrey inquired with the Budget Officer, who stated ARPA fund reallocation is permissible via resolution. On a straw poll vote, all Legislators in attendance were in favor of moving forward with a resolution reallocating ARPA funds and executing a Letter of Intent to CDBG. Ms. Tinney will work with the Budget Officer and present a resolution for Legislature consideration at the April 11 meeting.

**Equitable Retention Mortgage Assistance (ERMA) Program:** Chair Sauerbrey reported she has been contacted several times from a legal assistance center regarding a program for senior citizens. The Equitable Retention Mortgage Assistance (ERMA) Program provides deferred, zero-interest mortgages for homeowners aged 62 and over who are facing foreclosure. The program provides eligible senior homeowners a loan to pay for property related charges including mortgage arrears, property tax arrears, water/sewer charges, utility bills, homeowner's insurance, and other related expenses. The program is run out of Tompkins County as Tioga County does not have a Legal Aid located within Tioga County. In order for Tioga County residents to participate in the program, the Legislature would have to opt-in via resolution. County Attorney DeWind stated there is no cost associated with opting into the program.

**ACTION: County Attorney DeWind will conduct more research on the ERMA program and report back to the Legislature at the next Worksession.**

**Approval of Worksession Minutes:** On motion of Legislator Brown, seconded by Legislator Monell, the March 9, 2023 minutes were unanimously approved.

**Action Items:** Currently we have none.

**Other:**

- **50 Year Firemen Recognition:** Chair Sauerbrey reported the Apalachin Fire Department will be having an event on Saturday, March 25 to recognize two members that have served for 50 years. Chair Sauerbrey is unable to attend the event and asked the Legislators if anyone would be available to present the Proclamations. Legislator Brown offered to attend and present the Proclamations.
- **Truck Wash Facility Tour:** Chair Sauerbrey invited her fellow Legislators to tour Tioga County's new truck wash facility on Delphine Street at the conclusion of the meeting.
- **Remote Work Update:** Chair Sauerbrey reported 38 employees have applied, and been approved, for remote work under the new Remote Work Pilot Program.
- **Securitas Security Guards:** Chair Sauerbrey reported 56 Main Street is expected to have Securitas security guards in place on April 10. Employees and the public will be required to go through security before entering the building.
- **CDL Drug Testing Site:** County Attorney DeWind reported DPW conducts random drug testing quarterly. Tioga County needs to find a suitable drug testing site to conduct the tests. Previously, testing was conducted at the DPW highway barn or the basement of 56 Main Street. Those locations are no longer suitable. Safety Officer, Doreen Holbrook, toured the new Town of Owego facility and identified that building as a suitable location for drug testing. Legislator Roberts agreed and stated the facility is a great community space and resource for Tioga County residents. County Attorney DeWind reported Owego's Town Board gave their approval for the use of space. On a straw poll vote, all Legislators were in favor of moving forward with a resolution and Memorandum of Understanding with the Town of Owego to use their facility for CDL drug testing. County Attorney DeWind will prepare a resolution to present at the April 11 meeting and draft a Memorandum of Understanding with the Town of Owego.
- **Overnight Parking in County Lot:** Chair Sauerbrey thanked County Attorney DeWind for sending a letter and speaking with an individual that was parking vehicles overnight in the County's parking lot at 56 Main Street. Numerous vehicles were parked for months in the parking lot, some with the wrong plates. Chair Sauerbrey emphasized that no unauthorized vehicles are to be left overnight in the County's parking lot.
- **Food and Beverage Policy:** Legislator Roberts inquired what Tioga County's policy is regarding the purchase of food and beverages. She mentioned that a department was holding an evening training for their Board and intended on purchasing food and

beverages but was told the purchase was not allowable. Chair Sauerbrey reported there is a policy regarding the purchase of such items and only specific bodies are permitted to do so. Based on the current policy, this particular department function did not fall under one of the permissible events. Ms. Haskell reported the policy also prohibits, in most circumstances, the purchase of paper products, small electronics, hand sanitizer, and water, among others. However, there are certain instances in which these purchases are permitted, but the policy's language is vague. Legislative Clerk Haskell stated the policy is outdated, should be reviewed, and updated. The policy will be looked at by the Executive Team at their April meeting.

- **Auditors On-Site:** Ms. Haskell explained that the Office of the State Comptroller is on-site to conduct an audit. They will remain on-site for a couple of months and all departments are expected to be interviewed for the audit. Ms. Haskell already interviewed with them as County Auditor and expects a follow-up interview. The auditors have read-only access to Munis and may come back with more specific questions.
- **Recognition of Local High School Sports Teams:** Legislator Ciotoli inquired if the Tioga County Legislature recognizes, via Proclamation, local sports teams that have achieved great success. Ms. Haskell replied yes, the Legislature has recognized high school sports teams that won State Championships in the past. She has recently been in contact with Tioga Center's football coach as the Legislature would like to present a Proclamation to the players that won a State Championship. The team is waiting for rings to come in before accepting the Proclamation. The Proclamation is already written and ready. Ms. Haskell noted that it is difficult for schools to transport students to the Hubbard Auditorium for such a short amount of time to accept the Proclamation. In the past, Proclamations have been dropped off at the school for their own events or a Legislator travels to the school for the presentation. Ms. Haskell reiterated that any Legislator can bring forth a Proclamation for local high school sports teams that win State Championships.

**Executive Session:** With no confidential matters to discuss, an Executive Session was not necessary.

Meeting adjourned at 10:58 a.m.

Next Worksession scheduled for Thursday, April 6, 2023, at 1:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Amy Eiklor*

Deputy Legislative Clerk