

Public Hearing
Local Law Introductory No. D of 2023
August 24, 2023

The Public Hearing on Local Law Introductory No. D of 2023 A Local Law of the Tioga County Legislature of the County of Tioga, establishing the position of County Administrator for the County of Tioga was called to order by Chair Sauerbrey at 10:05 A.M. Legislators Brown, Flesher, Roberts, Sauerbrey, and Standinger were present with Legislators Ciotoli, Monell, Mullen, and Weston being absent.

There were 11 people in attendance.

The Clerk read the legal notice as published in the official newspapers.

Chair Sauerbrey spoke. “We have been working on the County Administrator discussion for several years. We met and consulted with New York State Association of Counties (NYSAC). Legislator Brown and I met with Ian Coyle, Livingston County Administrator, at a NYSAC Conference and, in turn, months later, Mr. Coyle and NYSAC Executive Director Acquario came and addressed the Legislature, explained in detail what a County Administrator could do, and answered a lot of questions for this Legislature.

“We created a committee consisting of myself, Legislator Brown, Legislator Roberts, and Legislator Standinger. We began the process of creating goals and objectives.

“Some people say, ‘why do you need a County Administrator’? Well, government has changed a lot in the last 10 years specifically. It is more involved, and it is more complex than ever before. Mandates come from the State, such as Shared Services, Police Reform, COVID mandates. Finances are more complex, directives from the State are instantaneous and complicated, and we need someone who is trained in administration and finance to do the administrative work and do the research and understand the process for those mandates.

“We need someone full-time to do the day-to-day business of the County, be on premise every day. We need to have a Budget Officer in-house to address financial issues as they arise, determine the status of ARPA funds, and to get financial information instantly.

“Additionally, having a County Administrator, this person can improve communication with the community. We know we are lacking there, so that

person would create press releases and do interviews, as approved by the Legislature, and really do an improved version of communicating to the public.

“In the future, we see a County Administrator addressing the purchasing policy and doing an evaluation to look at the process, determine whether we want to change the process, and to upgrade and improve the purchasing process. This will take a long time to do, but you do good things in small bites.

“It is our anticipation that this position will have good working relationships between the Legislature and the Department Heads. This position will be an ally to Department Heads and be a communicator between the Legislature and Department Heads and to be a buffer, so to speak. This position would very much be a team member. This person is not going to be an adversary. This person is not going to be another boss. This person is going to be a team member.

“Basically, this is the information that we have currently. We have created a budget shell. Today’s public hearing is one of the steps in the process of creating the local law. We are in the process of creating an application with the State for this position.”

Jim Tornatore, Village of Newark Valley Mayor spoke. “My name is Jim Tornatore from Newark Valley. I do have a lot of interest in the County for the future. I think at this point, we have a fine set of Legislators and that may or may not be how it goes in the future or in the past, for that matter. However, I am a strong believer, coming out of senior management in many organizations, that your team has to be good because some of us elected officials come and go. Some stay for a long time, but some do not.

“I am glad to hear that this is not an elected position, as this type of position is not set for an election. Some of the counties in New York State are different where some are elected, and some are appointed. I am not a believer in deep state, however, hopefully this is at a level where that person’s comments mean something. You do have to get along and there are going to be times, such as budget times, when it has created a lot of tension.

“I am a firm believer in creating this position and I would encourage anyone to take a big look at it and approve it down the road.

“At the September Council of Government meeting, one of the topics will be on this position for the Supervisors and Mayors to know about this position. Thank you.”

Chair Sauerbrey spoke. “The next step in the process is to adopt the local law at the September 12, 2023 Legislature meeting. In January 2024, the hiring

process will begin. We are in the process of deciding whether we are going to secure someone to help us in the hiring process to ensure that we find the right person. There is also a possibility that we will secure services for a mentoring program to help that person get on board, but that is still to be decided by the committee and the full Legislature. This will not be a rushed process. We will begin the process in January, but we want to make sure that we get the right person for the first time."

There being no public comments, the hearing was adjourned at 10:13 A.M.