



Tioga County Worksession Minutes **September 23, 2021 – 10:00 a.m.**

Legislators Present:

Legislator Balliet
Legislator Hollenbeck
Legislator Monell
Legislator Mullen
Legislator Roberts
Chair/Legislator Sauerbrey
Legislator Standinger (*Arrived at 10:02 a.m.*)
Legislator Sullivan
Legislator Weston

Legislators Absent:

None

Guests:

None

Staff Present:

Peter DeWind, County Attorney
Cathy Haskell, Clerk of Legislature
Amy Eiklor, Deputy Clerk of Legislature
Jackson Bailey, Budget Officer
Stephanie Jerzak, Chief Accountant
Mike Simmons, Director of Emergency Services
Lisa McCafferty, Public Health Director (*Departed at 11:27 a.m.*)
Gary Hammond, Commissioner of Public Works

Call Meeting to Order: Chair Sauerbrey opened the meeting at 10:01 a.m.

2022 Budget Discussion – Budget Officer: Budget Officer, Jackson Bailey, distributed a Budget Update packet to the Legislators. Mr. Bailey reported the following:

Budget Status:

- Budget is currently set to level 2 (Budget Officer)
- Capital Budget has merged into the Operating Budget
- Budget will roll to Level 3 (Legislative) following the meeting

Outside Agency Fund Requests:

- Mr. Bailey reported all outside agency funding requests have been received and most requests reverted back to 2020 figures, before the 10% reduction from 2021
- Total requested outside funding is \$996,729
- Total Tioga County Library funding requests is \$74,896
- Total Historical Society funding requests is \$6,005

Mr. Bailey reported the Newark Valley Historical Society requested \$1,500, which is \$300 higher than prior year. Legislator Mullen stated if the request is granted, that opens the door for other organizations to request additional funding. Legislator Sullivan inquired about the Waverly Historical Society and if they will receive funding. Legislator Mullen reported the Waverly Historical Society was told by the Legislature that they would not receive any funding. Chair Sauerbrey stated the Legislature previously decided not to fund any additional outside agencies. The Legislature agreed to deny the Newark Valley Historical Society's request for an additional \$300 in funding for 2022.

- Local Development Corporation will have no funding from Tioga County in 2022 as the 3-year contract has expired
- Tioga County Agriculture Society requested \$6,350, which is \$706 less than previous year request and budget
- Cornell Cooperative Extension requested \$288,027, an increase of \$20,000. The Legislature agreed to a one-time funding request in the amount of \$20,000 for 2022 for an Agricultural Specialist Position.

2022 Projected Salary:

- Recommendation for full-time employees is a 4.5% increase in salaries for 2022
- Total projected salaries for Non-Union employees, CSEA employees, Corrections, Law Enforcement, and Elected officials is \$18,605,681
- A \$500 lump sum payment is recommended for all Full-Time, Non-Union employees. The estimated number of eligible employees to receive the lump sum payment is 102, for a total of \$51,000
- If the 4.5% increase is approved, projected salary total for Part-Time employees in 2022 is \$888,250
- Salary increase projected total for all employees is \$890,451

Legislator Mullen stated the 4.5% increase is making up for prior year, when there was no increase in salaries.

Legislative Salaries:

- Current salary for 8 Legislators is \$11,341, with the Chair of the Legislature salary at \$36,675
- With the proposed 4.5% increase for 2022, salary for Legislators would increase to \$11,851, with the Chair of the Legislature salary at \$38,325

Legislator Mullen stated he is fine with Legislators receiving a 4.5% increase, but he feels the Chair of the Legislature position has taken on a heavier workload in the past few years. He believes the position of Chair is underpaid as they have far more duties than the rest of the Legislators. Legislator Mullen stated the current Chair of the Legislature is in the office Monday

through Friday and is always "on call". He suggested the Chair's salary be increased to \$50,000.

Legislator Mullen made a motion to increase the salary of the Chair of the Legislature to \$50,000. Legislator Sullivan stated she would support an increase in salary for the Chair if the job description was clearly defined. Chair Sauerbrey mentioned, in the future, Tioga County will need a County Manager or Administrator to conduct the day-to-day business of the County. Chair Sauerbrey suggested factoring that position in when making a decision to increase the salary of the Chair. She estimates the salary of a County Manager to be about \$100,000.

Legislator Weston stated he would like the Legislature to take into account the amount of time each Legislator spends going to meetings before making a decision on salaries. He doesn't believe a Legislator that works 15 hours per month should make the same as a Legislator that works 30 hours per month.

Legislator Monell asked Mr. Bailey if the Legislature could increase salaries after today's meeting. Mr. Bailey replied no, salary increases cannot be made after today.

Legislator Roberts asked how the Legislature could move forward with the increase without a clear job description. Legislator Sullivan proposed approving the increase now due to the strict deadline and constructing the job description later. Legislator Monell stated funds can be taken out of the budget later, but they cannot be added in after today. He suggested adding a stipulation that a clear job description must be presented or there will be no increase. Legislator Mullen agreed with the suggestion.

Legislator Mullen motioned to amend his previous motion to now state that the Chair of the Legislature's salary should be increased to \$50,000 if a clear job description is provided.

Legislator Monell is the Chair of the Finance, Legal & Safety Committee and he will work with Legislator Sullivan on the expectations and job description for the Chair of the Legislature position. The description and expectations will be presented to the Legislature at a later date. Legislator Roberts asked that a supermajority vote be conducted at that time. Chair Sauerbrey will not vote. The Legislature agreed to conduct a supermajority vote on the matter at a future Legislative Worksession.

Legislator Monell asked for a vote on increasing the salary of the Chair to \$50,000, provided a job description is submitted. On straw poll vote, Legislators Balliet, Hollenbeck, Monell, Mullen, Roberts, Sauerbrey, Standinger, and Sullivan were in favor while Legislator Weston was not.

Mr. Bailey stated he will move forward with the 4.5% increase for the eight other Legislators if there are no objections. There were none.

Fringe Benefit Estimate:

- Personnel does not anticipate an increase in health insurance
- Personnel has found potential savings on disability insurance
- Total estimated fringe for 2022 is \$15,159,581.77, which is \$313,498.25 higher than 2021

At the October 7, 2021 Legislative Worksession, Mr. Bailey will present the following:

- Update on salary, fringe, and sales tax
- How the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds may impact the 2022 Budget
- Tentative Budget totals for all funds
- Legislative Revisions

American Rescue Plan Act Funding Discussion: Chair Sauerbrey distributed a folder to each Legislator containing reference documents related to the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). Chair Sauerbrey distributed a Tentative List of Projects that she and Mr. Bailey constructed with Department Head input and agency requests. Tioga County will receive just over \$9.3 million in total and has received \$4.7 million so far. Chair Sauerbrey presented the following tentative projects and estimated cost:

- Upgrade Servers for Card Swiping System \$ 300,000
- EMO/Ambulance Study \$ 80,000
- Cybersecurity/Phone Upgrade \$ 10,000
- Communications Towers for Radio Project \$4,000,000

Chair Sauerbrey reported Tioga County is in need of communications towers and intends on constructing four of them. The cost of the towers is estimated to be \$1 million each. The total cost of the project is around \$12 million and Tioga County is hoping for a grant to cover a majority of the remaining cost.

- Truck Wash \$ 800,000

Chair Sauerbrey stated the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) could potentially fine Tioga County if a truck wash is not built.

- HVAC Upgrade – Court Annex \$ 150,000
- Fund Land Bank for Affordable Housing \$ 500,000
- Public Safety Building Chiller Replacement \$ 350,000

Commissioner of Public Works, Gary Hammond, reported the issues with the chiller are becoming larger and more expensive.

- Countywide Code Enforcement Department \$ 300,000

Chair Sauerbrey reported the idea is to hire four employees to create a Code Enforcement Department within Tioga County to serve towns and villages. Chair Sauerbrey stated she does not support this and a few towns have indicated they would not support this either. She asked

her fellow Legislators if they supported the idea. There was no support and the Legislators agreed to take Countywide Code Enforcement off the project list.

- Racker Center – Emergency Response Center \$ 400,000

Chair Sauerbrey reported non-profit organizations Racker Center, Catholic Charities, Tioga County Rural Ministry, & Tioga United Way are constructing a shared space known as the Neighborhood Depot. The site is to be constructed at the current Rural Ministry site near North Avenue, above the flood plain. Chair Sauerbrey stated there is already some anticipated funding for this project available through the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI). She reported the property is currently off the tax rolls. She explained that the organizations would be housed together in a central location for easier access to services. Chair Sauerbrey stated the center is for the benefit of County residents, particularly those in crisis or in need of help.

- Upgrades to HHS & 56 Main Street Security \$ 300,000
- Mapping & Imaging \$ 200,000

Chair Sauerbrey stated every couple of years, imaging is necessary to map and survey the geography of Tioga County.

Discussion on the Tentative Project List:

Mr. Bailey reported the funds cannot be used to purchase certain equipment. The tentative project list has been reviewed by Mr. Bailey and Bonadio Group to verify the projects fit into an eligible use category. Projects, such as HVAC upgrades, is considered infrastructure improvements, an eligible use.

Legislator Roberts asked for more information on the request from Racker Center. He expressed concern about funding an outside agency project. Chair Sauerbrey responded that the project fits into an eligible use category. Legislator Roberts stated he would prefer to use the money on Tioga County projects. Legislator Sullivan agreed with Legislator Roberts that the focus should be on Tioga County directly. She would like more information on the mapping & imagining request and will discuss it further with the IT Department.

Legislator Monell reported the list was constructed because a report has to be submitted by October 31, 2021 to the Treasury. He stated changes can be made after October 31. The only money specifically earmarked is the consulting fee for Bonadio. Mr. Bailey reported after the October report is submitted, Tioga County needs to construct a more concrete plan by July 2022.

Legislator Balliet inquired if anything can be added to the list at this point. Chair Sauerbrey responded yes, things may be added. Legislator Balliet reported Board of Elections is in need of more space. Also, the records storage space is less than ideal. He suggested using ARPA funds to conduct a study to determine what the best options are for space. Legislator Balliet stated there may be room beyond the A-Frame, but records need to be in an area that is climate controlled. He recommended contacting the State to see who can complete a study on behalf of Tioga County.

Legislator Mullen said Board of Elections has issues with space, particularly equipment storage. He is in favor of looking into a study on document storage. Legislator Roberts stated there is now an extra \$300,000 to be used after Countywide Code Enforcement was removed from the project list. He would like to think about potential infrastructure projects and will consult with Commissioner of Public Works, Gary Hammond, on ideas.

Eligible Federal Funds:

Chair Sauerbrey reported the next set of tentative projects is directly related to the negative impacts of COVID-19:

- Tourism, Travel & Hospitality \$ 100,000
- Broadband Project – Nichols \$ 750,000

Chair Sauerbrey emphasized the need and importance of broadband access throughout Tioga County. She reported there are areas of the County that have no broadband access.

- Transitional Housing – Apalachin Project \$ 250,000

Chair Sauerbrey stated there is a transitional housing project in Apalachin for women and children already in the works through Catholic Charities. The ARPA funds would be a one-time payment to get the housing up and running.

- Men's Transitional Housing/Veterans \$ 250,000

Chair Sauerbrey reported Tioga County does not have a shelter for men, only the Open Door Mission, which has strict rules. Legislator Balliet stated he would like to see transitional housing for Veterans. Legislator Mullen agreed wholeheartedly with Legislator Balliet. He explained Veterans transitioning from military to civilian life often find it difficult to seek help and support.

- A New Hope Center Shelter \$ 100,000
- Veterans Suicide Prevention \$ 50,000

Chair Sauerbrey emphasized the need for increased Veteran services in Tioga County. Veterans Service Director, Mike Middaugh, has been trying to raise funds for suicide prevention awareness. With the increasing rate of Veteran suicide, Chair Sauerbrey asked for a minimum of \$50,000. Legislator Mullen commended Mr. Middaugh's work and support through the Veterans Service Agency. He is in full support of funding a suicide awareness prevention program. Legislator Roberts stated he doesn't think \$50,000 is enough for Veterans Services as military personnel have put their lives on the line. Legislator Roberts would like more funding for Veterans and less funding for charitable organizations. Legislator Sullivan and Legislator Mullen stated they were in agreement with Legislator Roberts.

- Tioga County Suicide Prevention Coalition \$ 50,000
- Tioga ASAP – CASA Trinity \$ 50,000

- Fiscal Fund Administrator \$ 17,119
- Bonadio Consultant \$ 9,500

Legislator Roberts asked what happens when these organizations receive, and spend, the funds. Chair Sauerbrey responded that it will be made clear that the payment is a one-time only gift. Legislator Roberts expressed concern that the organizations will perceive the gift and expect future funding. Chair Sauerbrey reported once the organization receives the funds, Tioga County is out of the equation and it is up to the organization to submit reports to the Federal Government.

Legislator Sullivan voiced concern about funding organizations now and the possibility they may come back in five years asking for more funds. Chair Sauerbrey replied that it will be very clear no additional funds will come in the future.

Discussion on Use of Funds:

Chair Sauerbrey reported another eligible use for ARPA funds is premium pay for essential employees that worked throughout the pandemic. However, the issue becomes who gets the premium pay. Public Health, Mental Hygiene, Sheriff's Department, and other departments all worked throughout the pandemic.

Legislator Mullen stated employees value their pay and their time. He suggested giving employees a day off instead. Chair Sauerbrey responded Public Health is back to working seven days per week so it would be almost impossible for them to be able to take time off. She asked her fellow Legislators to think about ideas on how to recognize essential employees.

Legislator Monell stated if there are additional ideas for the use of funds, send the ideas to him. Chair Sauerbrey reported the ARPA funds will be discussed at the October 7, 2021 Legislative Worksession so the Legislators have time to review the tentative list. She will send the Legislators the request letters and documents. By the October 21, 2021 Legislative Worksession, Chair Sauerbrey hopes to have a more concrete plan to submit to the Treasury by the October 31, 2021 deadline. She thanked the Legislators for their patience during this long, complicated process.

Approval of Worksession Minutes: On motion of Legislator Roberts, seconded by Legislator Mullen and unanimously carried, the September 9, 2021 Legislative Worksession minutes were approved.

Action Items: Currently, there are no action items.

Other:

- **Board of Elections Driver Discussion:** Legislator Balliet reported Board of Elections typically uses Tioga County Public Works employees to move their election equipment. Public Works no longer wishes to do so as it takes away from the job duties of DPW employees. Possible solutions include hiring someone part-time or finding an outside company. Board of Elections will need a solution soon as they will have to add the expense to their 2022 budget.

Legislator Monell asked how much time DPW employees spend assisting Board of Elections. Commissioner of Public Works, Gary Hammond, responded before and after an election, the equipment must be loaded and moved. Mr. Hammond stated the process usually takes two or three days before and two or three days after an election. He estimated it takes roughly 48 hours before and 48 hours after an election to move the equipment.

Legislator Sullivan suggested Board of Elections work with Personnel to hire a temporary, part-time employee during election season. Legislator Balliet emphasized the need to get the matter taken care of as soon as possible because the 2022 budget will be finalized in the coming months. Mr. Bailey suggested contracting with a small moving company and asking other counties what they do. He reported Board of Elections has until October 21, 2021 to finalize their 2022 budget.

Legislator Balliet will inform Board of Elections that Public Works will no longer assist them in helping move election equipment and they must budget for this expense going forward.

Executive Session: With no confidential topics of discussion, an Executive Session was not necessary.

Meeting adjourned at 11:36 a.m.

Next Worksession scheduled for Thursday, October 7, 2021, at 1:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Eiklor

Deputy Legislative Clerk