



## **Tioga County Worksession Minutes**

**November 21, 2017\* – 10:00 a.m.**

**\*Date change due to Thanksgiving Holiday**

### **Legislators present:**

Legislator Hollenbeck  
Legislator Huttleston  
Legislator Roberts  
Chair/Legislator Sauerbrey  
Legislator Standinger  
Legislator Sullivan  
Legislator Weston

### **Absent:**

Legislator Monell  
Legislator Mullen

### **Guests:**

Matt Freeze, Reporter, Morning Times

### **Staff present:**

County Attorney Peter DeWind  
Legislative Clerk Maureen Dougherty  
Deputy Legislative Clerk Cathy Haskell  
Chief Accountant/Budget Officer Rita Hollenbeck (*arrived @ 10:05 a.m.*)  
Personnel Officer Bethany O'Rourke  
Materials Recovery Manager Ellen Pratt (*departed @ 10:27 a.m.*)  
Probation Director Joy Bennett (*departed @ 10:27 a.m.*)

Chair Sauerbrey called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.

### **County Government 101 Presentation – Succession Planning Committee**

Chair Sauerbrey reported the Succession Planning Committee is ready to kick-off Tioga County's Succession Planning Program in January 2018. Chair Sauerbrey reported the program will consist of five classes and today's presentation is an overview of the first class; County Government 101. Chair Sauerbrey introduced Probation Director Bennett and Materials Recovery Manager Pratt, as members of the Committee and today's presenters.

Ms. Bennett reported the County has been working on succession planning this year and Department Heads have identified staff in their respective offices who have the potential to move up into important roles within their Departments. Ms. Bennett reported the Committee has been looking at staff who have the potential to retire in the next five years, therefore, losing

significant knowledge, skills, and abilities. Ms. Bennett reported the purpose of this training program is to encourage and train our own workforce so they are ready to step into management positions. Ms. Bennett reported the County struggles at times with meeting the pay offers from adjoining counties, therefore, this may encourage people to stay with Tioga County and possibly provide movement within the County while acquiring the necessary skills. Ms. Bennett reported there is article written by Planning Director Jardine in the Fall edition of NYSAC News regarding Tioga County's Succession Planning Program.

Ms. Bennett reported County Government 101 is the first of five sessions that will be offered starting in January 2018. Ms. Bennett reported the Committee has requested Department Heads to identify staff to attend these sessions.

Ms. Bennett provided the following overview of the first session; County Government 101:

- Different branches of government; Legislative, Executive and Judicial and how they interact and impact County government.
- Formation of NYS Counties
- Changing and adoption of NYS Constitution
- Municipal Home Rule Law
- Process on how local laws are adopted and amended, as well as how they determine County operations
- County Law
- 62 Counties in NYS and specifically how Tioga County was originally created and broken down to 9 towns and 6 villages
- Discussion on how the Tioga County Courthouse was designed and its original function
- Village of Owego and how the Susquehanna River impacts the County both positively and negatively
- General Tioga County data overview and specifically how each County manages and governs itself (i.e., Legislative body, County Executives, Managers, or Administrators).

In addition, Ms. Pratt highlighted the following topics for discussion:

- Tioga County Legislature has three Legislative meetings per month; one regular meeting and two worksessions with special sessions called as needed
- Review of the Standing Committees of the Legislature
- Overview of Open Meeting Law and Freedom of Information Law
- Overview of Tioga County Government organizational chart identifying how this chart has been linked to the County website which has a host of additional valuable information.
- Overview of Legislative Districts
- Overview of Elected and Appointed Department Heads
- Review of 130 Ways Tioga County Works for You. Each participant will receive a copy.
- Overview of Mandated Services. Mandated programs account for 90% of the County's budget.
- Discussion on resolutions and the process from writing a resolution to becoming an adopted certified resolution.
- Bid and Contract Management
- Legislature Operational Procedures – participants will need to attend a Legislative Committee meeting

Ms. Pratt reported the first session is scheduled for 3 hours.

Legislator Sullivan inquired as to who would be attending this program in January and what was the selection criteria. Ms. Pratt reported the attendees are nominated by their Department Heads based on who they believe would be good candidates. Chair Sauerbrey reported, to date, there are five attendees nominated, however, the larger departments have not submitted their nominations as of yet, but will by the December 1<sup>st</sup> deadline. Legislator Roberts inquired as to how a Department Head chooses a candidate when there may be more than one person who has the same amount of experience. Ms. Pratt reported there is a program available to assist Department Heads in determining who would be good candidates and this is partly based on their evaluations, as well as their abilities. Ms. Bennett reported use of the assessment tool will assist in eliminating the need for arbitrary or personality decisions. Ms. Bennett reported this could also be a matter of appropriate timing where the upcoming year may not be the ideal time for a particular employee to attend the program. Legislator Roberts raised the concern that this could cause issues and look like we are stacking the deck for one individual over another and could ultimately lead to disappointment. County Attorney DeWind understands the concern, but stated this program is being treated more as a training opportunity. Mr. DeWind reported it is important to make the disclaimer that attendance of this program is not a promise or guarantee for a future promotion. Legislator Roberts reported the program is a great idea and is in support of the concept, but believes this could be misconstrued. Ms. Bennett reported the Committee does not see this as a one-time program and hopes this is a successful program for continuation on an annual basis. Legislator Weston inquired as to whether there is any data on the number of people so far that have been promoted from within the County, as opposed to bringing in new hires from outside of the County. Legislator Weston reported the trend over the past years has been hiring from outside the County to fill vacancies. Ms. Bennett reported she does not have the data requested, however, this is an effort to at least expose our County employees to pre-management tools in hopes of promotion within the County. Legislator Weston inquired as to whether the Committee has taken into consideration the combining of jobs as part of the succession planning. Ms. Bennett reported it has not been one of the goals of the Committee to combine jobs. Legislator Sullivan inquired as to who would address the issue if an employee was very interested in attending the training, but not nominated. Ms. Bennett reported this would be addressed with their respective Department Head. Legislator Sullivan inquired as to what five classes are included in this program. Ms. Bennett reported classes include:

- Budget and Fiscal Skills (general budget and Munis education)
- Real Colors (this is an assessment tool to determine personality style and how people interact with others, as well as understanding other people's personality styles and finding better ways to work with them)
- Employee Management Skills (evaluations, accountability, goal setting)
- Conflict Management
- Team Building

Chair Sauerbrey thanked Ms. Bennett and Ms. Pratt for their work on this presentation.

Legislator Weston inquired as to the candidate selection process for filling vacancies. Ms. O'Rourke reported the selection process for filling a vacancy will remain unchanged and is a separate issue from this program. Ms. O'Rourke reported this program is strictly a training

opportunity for employees to be better prepared in the event a vacancy occurs. Ms. O'Rourke reported the process the Legislature is accustomed to for filling a Department Head vacancy is not changing. In the past, the Legislature formed a sub-committee to interview candidates and then made their candidate recommendation to the full Legislature for consideration. Ms. O'Rourke reported attending this program does not guarantee any employee a promotion. This is simply providing additional education and tools that they could use in the event they are selected for a promotion at some point in the future. Ms. Bennett reported this also gives a sense that the County is invested in our workforce and wants employees to stay and move up. Legislator Sullivan inquired as to whether this program is specifically for the succession of Department Heads. Ms. Bennett reported this program is designed to be much broader. Ms. O'Rourke reported all Department Heads were asked to identify key positions in their Departments and this included a broad range from secretarial staff to management staff. In addition, Department Heads were tasked with talking to their employees to obtain a general sense of their future plans in regards to how long they anticipate continuing to work for the County. Based on this information, the Department Heads would be better equipped to identify potential internal candidates to fill potential vacancies. Chair Sauerbrey reported this was clearly explained to the Department Heads at numerous Leader's Meetings over the last year and will continue to be a topic of discussion. Ms. O'Rourke reported the next Leader's Meeting is scheduled for next week and the topic of an employee's request versus a Department Head nomination could be addressed and determined whether this should be factored into the process. Legislator Sullivan reported it would be worthwhile for the Committee to consider the above-referenced scenario of employee request vs. Department Head nomination and the steps that should or should not be taken.

### **Approval of Worksession Minutes – November 9, 2017**

Legislator Weston moved to approve the November 9, 2017 Legislative Worksession minutes as written, seconded by Legislator Hollenbeck with Legislators Hollenbeck, Huttleston, Roberts, Sauerbrey, Standinger, Sullivan, and Weston voting yes with Legislators Monell and Mullen being absent. Motion carried.

### **Action Items:**

#### **ACTION ITEMS FROM JULY 6, 2017:**

##### **ACTION ITEM #1 – 7/6/17 – Paying Costs for Demolished Properties –**

The Chair of the Legislature will set up a committee in January 2018 to start investigating options to determine how to proceed with the villages in regards to special assessments and property demolitions. Legislators Weston, Hollenbeck, and Mullen expressed interest in serving on this committee. **This action item will be carried forward from the November 21, 2017 Legislative Worksession.**

### **Other –**

- ***Budget Discussion*** – Budget Officer Hollenbeck reported a dollar amount was determined for an outside agency based on typical past allocations plus the additional amount of \$120,000 approved by the Legislature for the 2018 budget. Ms. Hollenbeck reported this outside agency indicated in a meeting yesterday that they have an additional employee interested in obtaining the family health insurance, therefore, this would increase the additional allocation by \$13,000 for a total additional allocation of \$133,000 for the 2018 budget. Ms. Hollenbeck reported now that the tentative budget has been published the

tax levy cannot be changed, but the County could tweak the numbers to appropriate additional fund balance. Ms. Hollenbeck reported the question at hand is whether the Legislature is in favor of changing the tentative budget number by appropriating an additional \$13,000 from fund balance to accommodate this request. Ms. Hollenbeck reported this is not a matter of additional headcount, but a matter of an existing employee is now interested in opting for the family health insurance coverage. Ms. Hollenbeck reported the normal outside agency allocation was \$187,000, but the Legislature previously agreed to increase this allocation by an additional \$120,000 to encompass their health insurance costs. However, in order to accommodate this new request, the additional allocation would increase from \$120,000 to \$133,000. In general, Ms. Hollenbeck reported she will be tweaking the numbers in regards to salaries as they are validated and these numbers may very well change from the tentative to the final budget in regards to the wage and salary schedule. Ms. Hollenbeck reported the director of this outside agency has a full understanding that this is a year-to-year allocation and is subject to change. Legislator Sullivan inquired as to whether there are additional employees that are currently not taking the health insurance that could possibly come forward and make this same request. Ms. Hollenbeck reported there are additional employees that have different levels of health insurance. Ms. Hollenbeck reported this has been presented to the director that this additional funding is just part of her outside agency allocation and that this allocation is no longer designated specifically for health insurance. This allocation is strictly at the director's discretion as to how this funding allocation is used. Legislator Sullivan reported she is in favor of adding \$13,000 to accommodate the request, but going forward suggested establishing a set amount like we do for the other outside agencies.

On a straw poll vote, all Legislators, with the exception of Legislator Roberts, were in favor of allocating an additional \$13,000 in the 2018 budget for this outside agency with the understanding that this is a year-to-year allocation that is subject to change with Legislators Monell and Mullen being absent.

### **Executive Session -**

Motion by Legislator Hollenbeck seconded by Legislator Standinger to move into Executive Session to discuss contract negotiations. Motion carried to go into Executive Session at 10:44 a.m. Executive Session adjourned at 10:55 a.m. County Attorney DeWind and Personnel Officer O'Rourke remained in attendance.

Meeting adjourned at 10:55 a.m.

Next worksession is scheduled for Thursday, December 7, 2017.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Cathy Haskell  
Deputy Legislative Clerk