



Tioga County Worksession Minutes **March 18, 2021 – 10:00 a.m.**

Legislators Present:

Legislator Balliet
Legislator Hollenbeck
Legislator Monell
Legislator Mullen
Legislator Roberts
Chair/Legislator Sauerbrey
Legislator Standinger
Legislator Sullivan
Legislator Weston

Legislators Absent:

None

Guests:

None

Staff Present:

Peter DeWind, County Attorney
Jackson Bailey, Budget Officer
Cathy Haskell, Legislative Clerk
Amy Eiklor, Deputy Legislative Clerk

Call Meeting to Order: Chair Sauerbrey opened the meeting at 10:03 a.m.

Employee ID Badges: Chair Sauerbrey reported an Employee Badge Day has been scheduled for Tuesday, March 23, 2021, in the Hubbard Auditorium. Chair Sauerbrey stated badges will provide an extra layer of security, especially for the Ronald E. Dougherty County Office Building. There will be no cost for employees to obtain a badge. Chair Sauerbrey encouraged Legislators to acquire a badge if they don't already have one. Chair Sauerbrey reported a date will be scheduled for Public Works employees, which will also be used as a make-up date for employees that cannot make it on March 23, 2021. Also, employees can make arrangements to go to the Health and Human Services Building to obtain a badge at a more convenient time.

Chair Sauerbrey reported Commissioner of Public Works, Gary Hammond, was concerned that his workers would get their badge stuck in equipment or machinery. Chair Sauerbrey explained that in special circumstances, such as Public Works, an employee should have a badge on them, not necessarily attached out in the open.

Legislator Sullivan inquired if lanyards will be provided. Chair Sauerbrey responded lanyards will be distributed. Executive Secretary to the Deputy Commissioner of Social Services, Gail Perdue, will take pictures and make badges with lanyards. The Legislative Office will distribute the badges to departments.

Legislator Sullivan asked how the badge discussion came about. Chair Sauerbrey replied she started the discussion. Chair Sauerbrey reported people wander through the building and without badges, it is difficult to tell if they are an employee of the County. Chair Sauerbrey described an instance in which she and Gary Hammond were in the Health and Human Services building and were stopped by an employee. The employee did not know who they were and asked why they were in the building. Chair Sauerbrey explained that she did not have a badge at the time.

Chair Sauerbrey reported COVID-19 vaccine eligibility has expanded to include public-facing government employees. A vaccine clinic is scheduled for Thursday, March 18, 2021 from 4:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. at the Tioga County Public Health Department. Tioga County employees are now eligible, but many don't have ID badges to show at their vaccine appointment.

Legislator Roberts asked if Tioga County has a policy on employee ID badges. Chair Sauerbrey reported she is in the process of creating a policy. Legislator Roberts inquired if the Legislature will adopt the policy. Chair Sauerbrey responded, yes, she intends to bring the policy to the Legislature for adoption. Legislator Roberts asked if the Legislature should adopt the policy before badges are issued. Chair Sauerbrey responded no, because government employees are now eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine.

Legislative Clerk Haskell reported the badge policy currently being worked on, states it will be required for Tioga County employees to wear their badge at all times when in a County building.

Legislator Weston stated he thought there was already a badge policy. He explained badges were required for traveling between County buildings as a way of identification. Legislative Clerk Haskell stated to her knowledge, there was no policy in the Employee Handbook. It was concluded that a verbal policy is what Legislator Weston was referring to.

Legislator Roberts explained he would like the policy to contain a procedure on turning badges in upon termination or retirement. Ms. Haskell stated the draft policy does include a procedure for turning in badges upon separation of employment. Legislative Clerk Haskell will send the draft policy to the Legislators for their input.

Approval of Worksession Minutes: On motion of Legislator Roberts, seconded by Legislator Mullen, the March 4, 2021 minutes were unanimously approved.

Action Items: Currently, there are no action items.

Other:

- **2020 Year-End Budget:** Budget Officer Jackson Bailey reported the Treasurer's Office is finalizing adjustments and accruals for 2020. Due to COVID-19, Tioga County was expecting significant shortfalls. Mr. Bailey presented a rough projection for 2020 year-end. He reported the following:

Anticipated 2020 Revenue, Revised Budget	\$92 million
Actual 2020 Revenue	\$83 million
Anticipated 2020 Expenditures, Revised Budget	\$98 million
Actual 2020 Expenditures	\$88 million
Net Gain	\$100,000

Mr. Bailey reported the above figures are without additional accruals. The figures represent a reduction in State Aid received and any expenditures held back from the budget reduction. Mr. Bailey reported the budget reductions made last year, buffered the shortfall.

Mr. Bailey explained currently, the unofficial fund balance is around \$27 million for all funds, including reserves. Once the reserves are taken out and appropriation of fund balance, it may be much less than that.

Mr. Bailey stated 2020 finances will be closed out at the end of March. At that time, Mr. Bailey will review the overall finances and report back to the Legislature.

- **Federal Stimulus Payment:** Mr. Bailey reported Tioga County is expected to receive over \$9 million in federal stimulus money. He suggested funding the reserve accounts and will work with the Treasurer's Office to create a proposal.

Legislator Mullen stated the stimulus funding will help the County when it's budget time. Half of the payment is expected this year and the other half is expected next year. Legislator Mullen believes the extra funds will help Tioga County stay under the Tax Cap.

Chair Sauerbrey explained the stimulus payment is meant to be tied with economic development. She reported money may be used for projects that were planned, but put off due to COVID-19. Chair Sauerbrey suggested part of the stimulus funding be used for updating Tioga County's emergency communication system.

Chair Sauerbrey explained the County's stimulus money is coming from the Federal Government. The U.S. Treasury Department will reach out to counties, who then have to respond in order to get the first half of the stimulus funding this year. Towns and Villages will receive their stimulus money from New York State.

Legislator Roberts was under the assumption Emergency Services was applying for grants in order to fund their communications upgrade. Chair Sauerbrey replied they are, but it's not guaranteed they will be awarded.

Legislator Roberts stated the best form of economic recovery is tax breaks.

Legislator Mullen suggested as the year goes on, if there is a significant balance left, the Legislature could think about cutting taxes. Legislator Mullen believes that would be the ultimate form of economic recovery. Legislator Roberts suggested funding other programs so there would be no tax increase.

Use of Tioga County's stimulus money will be discussed at a later date when more guidance and information is available.

- **Use of Facility by Outside Organizations:** Chair Sauerbrey reported the Ronald E. Dougherty County Office Building closes at 5:00 p.m. every day. She explained contracted cleaning employees lock the front door at 5:00 p.m. Employees are able to exit the building, but cannot enter without a key.

Before COVID-19, the building, specifically the Legislative Conference Room and Hubbard Auditorium, has been used for community meetings. Chair Sauerbrey reported there has never been any type of security or County employee on premise during those meetings. The contracted cleaning staff are responsible for locking the front doors.

Out of concern for security, Chair Sauerbrey proposes not opening the building back up to the community unless the County is willing to pay someone to be in the building during those meetings to ensure the building will be locked. Chair Sauerbrey does not believe the cleaning staff should be responsible for locking the doors at night.

Legislator Mullen suggested a Sheriff Deputy on patrol could come around to lock the building.

Legislator Sullivan stated there is more to it than just locking the door. She stated once the public enters the building, they can do whatever they want.

Legislative Clerk Haskell reported before COVID-19, organizations using the Auditorium were able to use the building's audio equipment. The Hubbard Auditorium recently had a microphone and sound system upgrade with expensive equipment. Ms. Haskell stated the equipment was set to the correct channels by the vendor and buttons should not be touched. There is a concern that outside organizations using the building may touch or press buttons on the system.

County Attorney DeWind reported IT has equipment that is completely open in hallways. For example, there is a panel near the DMV that contains wires running throughout the ceiling tiles. Mr. DeWind stated it wouldn't be hard for someone to come in and cut all those lines. He also reported there have been instances of homeless individuals wandering the building, mostly during the day. Mr. DeWind explained there has been a few times when a person was in the basement of the building.

Mr. DeWind stated Legislative Clerk Haskell was locking the front door at 5:00 p.m. when there was an issue with the front door locking. Ms. Haskell explained she contacted Buildings and Grounds Supervisor, Mike Bidwell, to fix the door. While the door was waiting to be fixed, the cleaning staff indicated they were uncomfortable being

responsible for locking it. Once the door was fixed, the cleaning staff agreed to lock the door.

County Attorney DeWind explained the cleaners typically leave between 9:00 p.m. - 9:30 p.m., but it is unknown if there is a consistent schedule for making sure the doors are locked. It also depends on when the cleaners arrive for their shift.

Legislator Sullivan asked if all employees working at 56 Main Street have keys to the building. Ms. Haskell replied yes, the same key is used to unlock the front door and individual department doors. Legislator Sullivan stated she is not in favor of holding cleaning staff responsible for locking the door.

Legislator Roberts asked if locking the door was part of the cleaning staff contract. County Attorney DeWind responded no. Ms. Haskell explained office doors are locked from the inside when the last person leaves for the day. The cleaners unlock the doors to clean the offices and then lock them again once cleaning is complete.

Legislative Clerk Haskell reported there has been no complaints from Buildings and Grounds that the doors have been unlocked overnight. Ms. Haskell expressed concern if the cleaning staff doesn't come to work one day, then who is responsible for locking the door?

Legislator Roberts inquired if the doors leading upstairs are locked at night. County Attorney DeWind replied yes, after the cleaners leave. Mr. DeWind explained sometimes the cleaners will lock the upstairs doors when they first come in, but it is personal preference. Legislative Clerk Haskell agreed and stated the doors are locked to prevent BCC students and others from accessing the second floor.

Legislator Weston inquired if Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) employees have a key to the front door. County Attorney DeWind stated CCE employees have keys so they can access the basement conference room and the door next to their office. Legislative Clerk Haskell reported CCE is considered a tenant of the building, therefore, they are granted access to the building in the evening and on weekends. CCE staff typically notify the Legislative Office when they will be in the building on the weekend.

Legislator Weston asked if there is a lock on the Legislative Conference Room door. Ms. Haskell reported there is a lock, but she had to use a key to lock it. Legislator Weston inquired about Broome Community College (BCC) using the basement. Ms. Haskell stated BCC has not used the building in over a year. Before COVID-19, if there was an evening class, it was the responsibility of the BCC professor to lock the classroom door. Mr. DeWind reported a meeting is scheduled next week with BCC to discuss the eventual resumption of classroom activities in the basement.

Ms. Haskell explained that if someone were to come into the building after hours, they would have access to the hallways, the Legislative Conference Room, the Hubbard Auditorium, and the basement. County Attorney DeWind reported there are locked gates to the basement, but it's easy to jump over them.

Legislator Roberts asked if there is a problem and asked what exactly the Legislature was trying to fix. Chair Sauerbrey replied that this is being discussed so the County can be prepared down the road. Legislator Roberts responded that citizens pay taxes so they should be able to use the room. Chair Sauerbrey asked Legislator Roberts if he wanted the County to incur the cost of having security. Legislator Roberts stated he doesn't think there is a problem. He believes the Legislature is trying to fix something that isn't broke. Chair Sauerbrey explained there is a sense of responsibility to look to the future for the security of equipment and employees. Legislator Roberts stated the Legislature also has to serve the taxpayers and using the auditorium is a service they provide to the community.

Chair Sauerbrey asked where organizations have met over the last year. Legislator Roberts responded they meet via Zoom. Chair Sauerbrey replied that they should keep using Zoom for the time being if it means employees can be protected.

Legislator Mullen suggested setting a protocol for organizations before they utilize the auditorium. Ms. Haskell responded that in the past, if an organization held an event that was deemed controversial by the Chair of the Legislature, the organization had to provide their own security for the building.

Legislator Weston stated if someone wanted to go in the building after hours, all they have to do is put something in the door to prevent it from closing all the way. Unless an employee checks every door in the building at night, there is no way to know if all doors are locked.

Legislator Sullivan asked if department doors have glass windows. County Attorney DeWind responded yes, they have glass windows.

County Attorney DeWind reported Safety Officer, Dawn Thorpe, just completed her first presentation at new hire orientation. The employees attending orientation brought up the same concern about security in the building. Ms. Thorpe shares the same concerns about evening security and the front door. Mr. DeWind stated there is no policy in place regarding security. Legislator Roberts agreed that a policy should be made, but the building should still be available for use.

Legislator Sullivan suggested all interior spaces be locked and exposed panels be protected. Once doors are secured, the Legislators can look at opening up the Legislative Conference Room and Hubbard Auditorium to the community. Legislator Roberts stated building security was discussed in the past and it was decided only 90% of the building can be secured. He said there is nothing that can be done about the other 10%. Legislator Roberts believes there is no way to make the building 100% secure.

Legislator Mullen stated the County's other buildings are not freely open to the public. He agreed with Legislator Sullivan's idea of putting locks on IT equipment and infrastructure. Legislator Mullen suggested using key fobs that are programed to be activated and deactivated. Key fobs have the ability to track who has been in the building and at what time.

Legislator Roberts recommended the Legislature form a committee regarding building security issues as there are many things to consider. Legislator Roberts offered to Chair the committee. Chair Sauerbrey stated she wanted to be on the committee. Legislator Sullivan suggested Safety Officer Thorpe be on the committee as well. Legislator Roberts suggested Public Works Commissioner Hammond also be on the committee. Chair Sauerbrey reported more people will be added in the future.

UPDATE: Chair Sauerbrey will establish the 56 Main Street Building Committee at the April 13, 2021 Legislature meeting. The new committee will not convene until after Legislator Roberts returns from vacation in late April.

- **Acknowledgement & Appreciation for Budget Officer:** Legislator Mullen thanked Budget Officer Jackson Bailey for his hard work during a tough year. Legislator Mullen said Mr. Bailey started the position in 2020, amidst the pandemic. Mr. Bailey thanked the Legislature and commended his fellow employees.

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

Meeting adjourned at 10:47 a.m.

Next Worksession scheduled for Thursday, April 8, 2021, at 1:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Eiklor

Deputy Legislative Clerk