



Tioga County Work Session Minutes **September 10, 2020 – 1:00 p.m.**

Legislators present:

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

Legislators absent:

Legislator Mullen

Staff present:

Peter DeWind, County Attorney
Jackson Bailey, Budget Officer
Cathy Haskell, Clerk of Legislature
Diane Stephens, Secretary to County Attorney
Gary Grant, Deputy Commissioner Social Services
Bethany O'Rourke, Personnel Officer
Lisa McCafferty, Director of Public Health

Guests:

Matt Freeze, Reporter, Morning Times (*departed @ 1:12 p.m.*)

Call Meeting to Order: Chair Sauerbrey opened the meeting at 1:05 p.m.

Budget Update: Budget Officer Jackson Bailey reviewed the budget worksheets he prepared.

- **2021 Budget Analysis by Fund:** This summary compares the 2021 summary of Level 2 to the 2020 summary of Level 5 (the final budget for last year compared to where we are at this year with the budget).

General Fund appropriations at this point are at \$71,127,379 with revenues of \$69,611,897 resulting in a shortfall of \$1,515,481. This does not include anticipated reductions in State Aid (20%) or salary and fringe adjustments.

The Capital Fund currently is at \$2,445,000 with State Aid, revenue funding, and possible sales tax funding of \$2,223,249, resulting in a shortfall of \$221,750 without any appropriations from reserves. These numbers reflect anticipated reduced CHIPS funding.

At this time, the appropriation from the Fund Balance would be \$1.7 million.

- **Tax Cap Analysis:** \$25 million has been earmarked for this. Mr. Bailey has been in contact with the NYS Comptroller's Office to review the tax cap calculation, and with their guidance, the proposed tax levy for 2021 is \$24,947,680, which is a 1.4% increase. The option exists to raise this to the 2% tax cap to cover the shortfall.
- **Fringe Benefit Estimate:** State retirement is estimated at \$2.8 million, which is a \$100,000 increase from 2020. Workers Comp is estimated at \$538,720, a decrease from 2020. Numbers for social security, life insurance, and unemployment are taken from last year. Once final payroll numbers are available, figures will be updated. Disability insurance reflects approximately a \$12,000 savings. Health insurance and HRA numbers are not updated yet. Medicare Part B currently is at \$111.00 per person. Mr. Bailey estimated the number of people that might be eligible for it, so this number will change. The County will have to decide whether they will seek a higher reimbursement of this cost from those eligible. Mr. Bailey reported EAP fringe numbers have been kept at the 2020 amount.

Legislator Sullivan asked when the health insurance numbers could be expected. Personnel Officer O'Rourke stated hopefully by the end of this month.

- **2021 Tentative Capital Budget with Reserve Analysis:** Total capital budget is \$221,750, which includes State Aid and funding from sales tax. The reserves have a total balance of \$2.6 million. Expected expenditures currently total \$631,000. At this time, the total capital costs for 2021 show a credit of \$409,249 back into the H Fund. These numbers will be updated due to changes made to the Public Works Capital budget earlier today.

Mr. Bailey explained that the capital equipment reserve is for larger pieces of equipment that have a 20-year life span.

- **2021 Tentative Outside Agency Funding Requests:** Mr. Bailey reviewed the information he has for outside agencies. At this time, he has not received budget requests from all outside agencies. Some agencies have sent requests with reduced budgets and others have not.

Chair Sauerbrey stated the amount allocated for the Local Development Corporation is paid to Finger Lakes Tourism, which she believes will be taken off. A conversation needs to take place with LeeAnn Tinney, Director of ED&P to confirm this. It is believed that 2020 is the last year of a three-year agreement with Finger Lakes Tourism, so by contract it will end.

Legislator Sullivan stated outside agencies that are requesting the same amount as last year have to be challenged. Legislator Sullivan reported this includes Tioga County Tourism and A New Hope Center unless someone can convince her why they are unable to make the requested budgetary cut.

Chair Sauerbrey stated Tioga County Tourism's budget is based on what comes in for hotel/motel tax from two years prior; therefore, their 2021 budget is based on 2019 collection. Chair Sauerbrey reported their 2022 budget would most likely see a decrease in their budget due to the effects of the Coronavirus in 2020.

Mr. Bailey stated Soil & Water Conservation District made a 10% reduction to their budget request, but asked that the Dean Creek portion of it (maintaining the dam and watershed in Spencer) stay the same.

Chair Sauerbrey stated the Tioga County Agricultural Society (which includes the Fair Board) generally do not make a request until the last minute so an estimate can be made of what the County would give them with the 10% reduction applied.

Chair Sauerbrey stated she met with T. Hanson, Director of Cornell Cooperative Extension and explained to her the 20% cut that the County is anticipating from the State. She explained that County departments have already made a 10% cut to their 2020 budget, which they did not ask outside agencies to do. However, moving forward outside agencies could see a minimum 20% cut to their 2021 budgets.

Board of Elections Staffing: Chair Sauerbrey stated additional help is needed at BOE due to the Governor implementing mandated requirements they must do. Legislator Balliet stated there have been two edicts; requirement for paper ballots and imposition of time limits for getting information out. BOE presented a breakdown of what they need, which showed the need for an additional 22 hours a day to complete the work over a ten week time period. There is some money already in their budget to pay for this due to unfilled positions. Temporary full-time employees are not covered with health insurance.

Chair Sauerbrey stated many other counties are hiring temporary people with the election situation so this is not unique to Tioga County. She came up with the idea of "job loaning". Chair Sauerbrey reported she would like to propose the concept to Department Heads to loan some of their employees through a voluntary system to work at BOE during this time. She would like to have two full-time people working there during this time period, but it may have to be a combination of people working only half a day. This concept would save the County money. Chair Sauerbrey reported County employees volunteered and were used during the Primary election and it worked out.

Legislator Roberts asked about using a temporary job service agency. There was some discussion about this and whether it costs the County more money to do this because of the additional agency fee. Legislator Roberts stated he has used temporary agencies in the past and believes them to be substantially cheaper.

Chair Sauerbrey asked if they could all agree to do this by whatever method is cheapest with the money BOE currently has in their budget. Mr. Bailey stated it appears at this time from the estimate provided by Democratic Election Commissioner Wahls that there is a current shortfall of \$2,500, but by moving money around within their budget they would be covered for two people for ten weeks.

Legislator Monell stated he has a problem with taking employees from other departments to work in BOE. If a department can afford to give a person up, then why is that person needed in the first place, and if they are needed and they are working in BOE, who is doing their job during this time. Legislator Balliet suggested that some positions in some departments are cyclical; there are quieter periods and busier periods.

The Legislature agreed to let BOE hire two people for ten weeks using the money already currently in their budget.

ACTION: Personnel Office will draft a late-file resolution to hire two temporary full-time Election Clerks for Legislature consideration at the September 15, 2020 Legislature meeting.

UPDATE: Late-file resolution was prepared, presented, and adopted at the Ninth Regular Legislature Meeting on September 15, 2020.

Chair Sauerbrey asked if everyone was good with implementing her "job loaning" idea. The consensus was she could also proceed with this concept.

Hiring Discussion: Chair Sauerbrey proposed instituting a 90-day hiring freeze. A resolution for this went through the Personnel Committee.

Personnel Director O'Rourke explained the resolution and the exceptions to the 90-day hiring freeze. The resolution will affect positions that become vacant on or after October 1, 2020.

Exceptions to the hiring freeze:

- Elected officials, department heads and corrections staff.
- A higher-level vacancy that results in a series of promotions, the position that is affected is the entry-level position only.
- A new hire does not work out during the probationary period or the new hire decides not to stay, that position is not subject to the hiring freeze.
- Probation has a vacancy for a probation officer and a caseworker is hired from DSS, DSS does not have to wait 90 days to fill their position.

Ms. O'Rourke stated any other exception to the 90-day hiring freeze has to be brought by the Department Head in resolution form before the full Legislature, so the whole body has to act on the exception.

Legislator Sullivan asked if a vacancy occurs in a "critical" position, if the Department Head could fill the critical position and reduce their headcount elsewhere. The consensus of the Legislature was that this "exception" would have to come before the full Legislature as outlined in the resolution.

Ms. O'Rourke stated in the past the tendency was just to make exceptions and she wanted the Legislature to make sure this was something they really want to do.

Legislator Monell pointed out that right now, Chair Sauerbrey has to make the decision and this resolution will make the decision fall on the whole Legislature. He believes it is a good thing and they need to go forward with it.

Ms. O'Rourke stated in the Personnel Committee meeting there was some discussion whether Mental Hygiene should be added as an exception.

Chair Sauerbrey stated the number of people needing counseling has increased, resulting in Mental Hygiene being very busy. Director of Community Services Morgan is already backfilling a position and she may come back next month with the request to fill a position that she cut with the 10% budget cut. It was suggested that if she does ask for this, she should be asked to

take the 10% cut from somewhere else. It was agreed that she would need to go through the resolution process as outlined in the hiring freeze resolution.

Approval of August 20, 2020 Worksession Minutes: On motion of Legislator Roberts, seconded by Legislator Monell and unanimously carried the August 20, 2020 minutes were approved.

Action Items:

ACTION ITEMS FROM JUNE 4, 2020:

ACTION ITEM #1– 6/4/2020 – Personnel Non-Union Salary Study

Legislative Clerk Haskell asked the Legislature if they wanted to continue carrying this item forward or for her to make a note to bring it forward at a future date, as Chair Sauerbrey previously reported action item would be carried forward to 2021 or 2022.

Ms. O'Rourke reported there is no money in the 2021 budget for this study.

The consensus was for Ms. Haskell to make a note and bring back to the Legislature's attention in January 2022. **This item will be removed from the Action Item List and brought forward again in January 2022.**

Legislative Support:

- ***Approval of August 6, 2020 Minutes:*** On motion of Legislator Roberts, seconded by Legislator Hollenbeck and unanimously carried the August 6, 2020 Legislative Support minutes were approved.
- ***Financial Reports:*** Ms. Haskell emailed the YTD Budget Report and Fringe Reports to the Legislators prior to this meeting noting there is no issue of concern.
- ***Ninth Regular Legislative Meeting:*** Meeting is scheduled for September 15, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. with Finance/Legal Committee meeting at 4:30 p.m. in the Hubbard Auditorium. Legislator Balliet will do the prayer, pledge and start the voting process.

Ms. Haskell reviewed the resolutions, recognitions and proclamations.

Recognition Resolution:

- ***Recognize Bernadette Poppert's 13 Years of Dedicated Service – Department of Social Services*** – This resolution will just be noted in the minutes of the September 15, 2020 Legislature meeting. Ms. Poppert retired last month and will not be attending this meeting.

Veteran Recognition:

- Veterans' Service Agency Director Middaugh requested to be on the agenda of the September 15, 2020 Legislature meeting to do a special presentation recognizing former Director John Holton's service.

Proclamations: The following proclamations will just be noted in the minutes of the September 15, 2020 Legislature meeting, as they have been read and presented in previous years:

- National Preparedness Month
- National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month
- National Alcohol Substance Abuse Recovery Month

Resolutions:

- Appoint Member to Board of Ethics
- Appointment of Tioga County Veteran Services' Agency Director as Veteran Indigent Burial Designee for Tioga County
- Adopt the Owego-Nichols Ag District (#2)
- Authorize the submission of 2020-21 NYS STOP DWI Crackdown Application
- Approved 2021 STOP DWI Plan
- Establish Equalization Rates
- Approve Change Order for Bridge Preventative Maintenance Project Phase VI
- Authorize implementation and funding re "Marchiselli"
- Authorize implementation and funding re costs of Transportation Project
- Local Law re collection of Hotel and Motel Tax
- Schedule Public Hearing for Local Law re collection of Hotel and Motel Tax
- Local Law establishing Mandatory Source Separation
- Schedule Public Hearing for Local Law re Mandatory Source Separation
- Authorize Contract with ShelterPoint Life Ins. Co.
- Authorize Contract with The Hartford
- Broome-Tioga Stormwater Coalition Agreement
- Award Construction Dean Creek Road Bridge Scour Repair
- Award door replacement contract – HHS
- Amend Resolution #77-20 re NYS 2020 Census
- Amend budget and appropriate funds – Public Health
- Transfer of funds – DSS
- Transfer of COVID 19 Contingency Funds for DSS vehicle fleet purchase
- Change allocation of funding for IT Shared Services Grant and modify 2020 budget
- Authorize sale and transfer of 112 Liberty St. to Tioga County Property Development Group
- Implement 90-day hiring freeze
- Amend Employee Handbook – Fixed Asset Inventory Policy

Discussion and clarification ensued on some resolutions.

Other:

- **Deputy Legislative Clerk Vacancy:** Legislator Hollenbeck asked that filling the vacant position of Deputy Legislative Clerk be considered for 2021. Ms. Haskell stated her part of the 10% budget cut was leaving this position unfilled for the remainder of 2020. However, asked permission to start the process for filling this position in 2021.

On a straw poll vote, the Legislature gave their permission for her to proceed with filling this position.

- **Recycling Drop-off Locations:** Legislator Sullivan asked for an update on the recycling drop-off locations. Legislator Roberts stated they are going to go with the sites already maintained by Taylor, with no additional sites added.

Meeting adjourned at 2:15 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Diane Stephens