



Tioga County Worksession Minutes **September 18, 2025 – 10:00 a.m.**

Legislators Present:

Legislator Aronstam
Legislator Bunce (*departed 11:00 a.m.*)
Legislator Ciotoli
Legislator Monell
Legislator Roberts
Chair/Legislator Sauerbrey
Legislator Standinger (*arrived 10:16 a.m.*)

Legislators Absent:

Legislator Brown
Legislator Flesher

Guests:

None

Staff present:

Cathy Haskell, Legislative Clerk
Jackson D. Bailey II, County Administrator
Peter DeWind, County Attorney
Linda Parke, Personnel Officer
William Ellis, Deputy Director of Emergency Services (*departed 10:36 a.m.*)

Call Meeting to Order: Chair Sauerbrey opened the meeting at 10:00 a.m.

Radio Tower Project Update: Deputy Director of Emergency Services William Ellis provided a PowerPoint presentation on the radio tower project status update highlighting the new build sites, modifications to the existing tower sites, and next steps in the process.

New Tower Sites Update:

Hanson Farm, Richford, NY – Shelter and generator were set on June 3, 2025 and the tower was erected on July 3, 2025. The microwave and antennas were installed on September 8 and 15, 2025. This site is near completion and is awaiting utility connection with NYSEG.

Babcock Farms, Nichols, NY – Shelter and generator are set at this location. The tower is partially completed and will be erected when utility connection with NYSEG is completed. This is the tower that needs to be lit at all times.

Brock, Spencer, NY – This site is currently undergoing site and foundation preparation. Upon completion, the shelter, generator and tower are tentatively scheduled for the end of September. Consultant Frank Yoder is working with NYSEG for utility connection.

Pegasus, South Apalachin Road, Apalachin, NY – This is the largest lift for the tower sites currently. By way of Change Order #8, the County has contracted with Motorola and Patriot for the installation of utility cables to be buried under the roadway. This site has a 2,600 ft. driveway up hill.

Existing Tower Sites Update:

Carmichael Tower – This site is awaiting structural improvements by way of Change Order #8. It is anticipated that November 2025 will be the timeline for these improvements with installation of microwave equipment to follow.

Candor Tower – The power upgrade bid for this site has been awarded. 4th Assistant County Attorney Lanouette is working with the property owners to secure easements with an anticipated October/November for completion of work.

Ballou Road Tower – Consultant Frank Yoder coordinated with ITCS Deputy Director Clark and Southern Tier Network for the existing overhead fiber to be buried for crane access. The sitework will be completed with the installation of a new shelter and generator, as there is just a cabinet at this location currently. The work for this tower is also anticipated for October/November.

Popple Hill Tower – Microwave equipment was installed the weeks of September 8th and 15th.

Refurbished and Leased Tower Sites Update:

Prospect Tower – The tree and vegetation bid was awarded, and the work is completed on this refurbished tower site. The next step is evaluating the amount of work to be done on the roadway and proceed with an RFP bid. When the roadway is upgraded, the old dishes can be removed from the tower and the refurbishment of the shelter can begin, which will include a new roof, new HVAC, and removal of the old equipment.

Round Top Tower, Athens, PA – Mr. Ellis reported Tioga County will be moving forward with the compound expansion and shelter installation at this leased site. County Attorney DeWind reported he received the lease on September 16, 2025 for the site use agreement and there is no cost to the County for this site. Mr. Ellis reported the shelter that will be installed at this site was given to the County by the Pennsylvania State Police at no cost.

Mr. Ellis reported he is mainly working on the radio and end-user needs of this project whereas Director of Emergency Services Cornelius and Consultant Frank Yoder are working on the tower sites.

Radios, Channels, and Talk Groups Update:

The committee meets monthly, and the next meeting is scheduled for next week. Mr. Ellis reported there are 4-5 frequencies and each frequency has six talk paths that will be trunked. The Committee is currently in the process of determining the various talk groups including law

enforcement, fire, EMS, etc. One frequency will be dedicated to just Fire/EMS. There will be sufficient bandwidth to ensure the end-users and dispatchers are able to get through when needed. Mr. Ellis reported part of the project is the purchase of all the radios for the County, fire departments, EMS, law enforcement, and Department of Public Works. The radios that are being ordered are multi-band, so they will have UHF and VHF frequencies which give us State and Federal interoperability.

Chair Sauerbrey inquired as to whether the radios have been ordered. Mr. Ellis reported radios are expected to be ordered in the next few months. Motorola has two radios that we will be ordering. The County will be ordering model 8000 for portable radios and model 8500 for mobile radios.

Chair Sauerbrey inquired about the dead zones and the portable radios the officers will be carrying. Mr. Ellis reported the new towers will provide significantly greater coverage, however, there will be a couple of small areas in the county where coverage may not be as great. The idea is that when the officer is on their portable radio they should have as close to the same coverage as if they were on their mobile radios.

Mr. Ellis reported that Tioga County participates in two different radio consortiums. Tioga County's core will be connected to the Onondaga consortium, which will allow us to connect with the other participating counties in the consortium.

Legislator Bunce inquired as to whether NYSEG is holding up the project, as it has been mentioned throughout the presentation that we are waiting for them, and they have not been able to give anticipated dates. Mr. Ellis reported he does not believe they are holding up the project and Consultant Frank Yoder has been communicating regularly with them.

Legislator Standinger inquired as to whether interagency radio frequency is still available. Mr. Ellis reported the Interagency (IA) channel is still available and in use.

Legislator Ciotoli inquired if the portable radios will be numbered for inventory purposes prior to distribution. Mr. Ellis reported the County is purchasing all the radios on behalf of the County departments and the external agencies. All radios will be inventoried, but not all will receive fixed asset tags due to distribution to the external agencies. Mr. Ellis reported he created an inventory spreadsheet that will include all radio models and serial numbers prior to distribution. Once the radios have been distributed to external agencies, the radios will become their responsibility for maintenance, replacement, etc. County Administrator Bailey reported we will properly record the procurement and the disposition of the radios on the County's records upon distribution to external agencies. The County will be responsible for budgeting for maintenance and replacing radios for the internal County departments.

A New Hope Center – Domestic Violence Awareness Month: Chair Sauerbrey reported she received a letter of request from A New Hope Center to convert the lights on the Courthouse to purple for the month of October to engage Tioga County to participate in the state/national "Shine the Light on Domestic Violence" awareness campaign. A New Hope Center will procure purple glass, or gel covers with no cost to the County. All Legislators in attendance were in favor of this request. Chair Sauerbrey will notify Executive Director Bialy.

Interview Search Committee Appointment: Per County policy, the Chair of the Legislature is responsible for appointing a search committee for any Department Head vacancy. Chair Sauerbrey reported Public Defender Cline has verbally announced his

upcoming retirement at the end of the year; however, the Personnel Office has not received a written resignation. Personnel Officer Parke reported she spoke with Mr. Cline, and a resignation letter will be forthcoming for his retirement at the end of the year.

Chair Sauerbrey will appoint the following Legislators/Staff to the Public Defender Search Committee at the October 14, 2025 Legislature meeting:

- Legislator Monell
- Legislator Standing
- County Administrator
- County Attorney
- Personnel Officer

M/C Salary Committee Recommendations: Personnel Officer Parke reported the Management/Confidential Salary Committee convened to discuss the following proposed 2026 recommendations for Legislature consideration:

Topic	Recommendation	Decision
Health Insurance	FT Employees – maintain 15% contribution 4 day/week Attorneys – maintain 15% contribution PT Attorneys – maintain 20% contribution PT Dentists – maintain 25% contribution	No Change – Legislators agreed.
Salary Ranges	Increase salary ranges by 3.5%	Legislators agreed.
Salary Increases	Increase FT and PT M/C Employees by 3.5% Increase FT Board of Elections by 3.5%	Legislators agreed
Legislator's Salary Increases	Ms. Haskell reported the Legislator salaries will need to be determined and published in the legal notice for the 2026 Tentative Budget Public Hearing. Ms. Haskell reported the current 2025 salary is \$13,394 for each Legislator. Standard practice has been for the Legislators to follow the same salary increase as Management/Confidential staff. Ms. Haskell reported at the September 4, 2025 Legislative Worksession, the 2026 Chair salary was determined to be \$29,071, which is in addition to the regular Legislator salary.	Legislators agreed to continue the standard practice of following the Management/Confidential salary increase. Legislators will receive a 3.5% salary increase for 2026.
Vacation Sell-Back Policy	Currently, the Management/Confidential Vacation Sell-Back policy allows full-time employees who have been employed for at least ten (10) consecutive years to sell back a maximum of 5 days per budget year and must maintain at least a balance of 10 days of vacation after the sell-back occurs. Proposal is to be more in line with the CSEA agreement, which allows for full-time employees who have been employed for at least six (6) consecutive years and who have a vacation balance of more than twenty (20) days may sell-back vacation days providing they have a balance	Legislators agreed to changing the M/C policy to reflect the eligibility change of six (6) consecutive years and those who have a vacation balance of more than twenty (20) days may sell back up to ten (10) days of vacation based

	<p>of no less than ten (10) vacation days after the sell-back occurs based on the following years of service:</p> <p>6-13 Years of consecutive service – sell back up to five (5) days</p> <p>14 and over years of consecutive service – sell back up to ten (10) days</p>	<p>on consecutive service of 14 years or more.</p> <p>Personnel will need to bring forth a policy change resolution.</p>
Personal Time	<p>Proposal to amend the M/C policy to grant a 5th personal day to employees with twenty (20) years of service effective on their 20th anniversary. Personnel Officer Parke reported the purpose is to recognize and award employees for their longevity.</p>	<p>Legislators agreed. Personnel will need to bring forth a policy change resolution.</p>

County Administrator Report: County Administrator Bailey provided the following report:

DEPARTMENTAL MANAGEMENT & LABOR RELATIONS

- **Collective Bargaining** - Tioga County Corrections Association, Inc. (TCCA) and Tioga County Law Enforcement Association (TCLEA) negotiations are ongoing. The current Collective Bargaining Agreements expire December 31, 2025.
- **Department Head Evaluations** - County Administrator Bailey reported he would like to have evaluations completed, signed, and returned to Personnel by September 30, 2025.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT & BUDGETING

Budget Officer - The following 2026 budget documents were distributed and reviewed:

- **Sales Tax Analysis Worksheet** – Mr. Bailey reported he meets with Treasurer McFadden once a year to do the sales tax forecast for the upcoming budget year. Mr. Bailey reported we have budgeted very conservatively for 2021-2024 and the actuals for each year are well over the budgeted amounts. Mr. Bailey reported the 2025 sales tax was estimated at \$26,800,000 and YTD we are at \$19,030,981. For the 2026 budget, Mr. Bailey and Mr. McFadden agreed to budget \$30,000,000. Mr. Bailey reported the budget has three lines for sales tax with two sources; one is the primary source of sales tax, and the other is the 1% extender, which comes in as a discretionary amount. Mr. Bailey proposed budgeting \$26,000,000 into the general fund for the standard sales tax, \$2,500,000 in the discretionary account and \$1,500,000 in the Capital budget. Mr. Bailey reported anything over and above the \$2,500,000 flows over to the Capital Budget. Mr. Bailey reported on paper the distribution of sales tax to the towns and villages is 25%, but there are factors to consider, therefore using the sales tax analysis and equalization report for a budget breakdown of \$7,380,000 to the towns and villages except for the Town of Richford that has an offset of \$120,000. Mr. Bailey reported over the last five years the towns and villages have received \$36,619,417.15 in sales tax distribution.

Chair Sauerbrey inquired about the reason for the Town of Richard's offset of \$120,000. Mr. Bailey reported we will retain \$120,000 and keep that off the tax so every year when the tax cap is calculated, the amount will be reduced by \$120,000. Mr. Bailey reported this keeps their property tax rate low.

- **Liability Insurance Worksheet** – Mr. Bailey reported we received the quote from Smith Brothers for the general liability insurance, and they are projecting \$610,163 which is higher than last year's actual of \$575,320 for a 6% increase. Mr. Bailey reported the premium is allocated to multiple departments, specifically Health & Human Services, so they can do chargebacks and other departments who have funding mechanisms. Mr. Bailey reported we have not received quotes for cyber or flood insurance therefore the worksheet reflects estimates at this time. The worksheet also reflects a breakdown of the excess workers' compensation insurance. Legislator Monell reported we have been doing business with Smith Brothers for several years. County Attorney DeWind reported Smith Brothers Insurance is the only one who has NYMIR for the region. Legislator Ciotoli reported we have boiler and machinery insurance and inquired as to whether the Commissioner of Public Works has explored this for when we experience issues with the boilers and chillers. Mr. DeWind reported we deal with the boiler and chillers all the time and Safety Officer Holbrook ensures that the work is done before the annual inspection. Mr. DeWind reported this Insurance only covers catastrophic issues. Mr. DeWind reported they review the insurance rates and at times challenge the rate for a reduction. Mr. Bailey reported the only significant change was the increase in automobiles. Mr. DeWind will inquire about the increased rate for automobiles.
- **General Fund Balance Worksheet** – Mr. Bailey reviewed the fund balance worksheet, as this includes the increase in insurance, the amounts estimated for the Management/Confidential recommendations, and placeholders for the proposed insurance benefit. Personnel Officer reported she received the Excellus quote, and it came in at 4.5%. Mr. Bailey reported this worksheet reflects 2025 YTD amounts. Per the County's fund balance policy, if the fund balance exceeds the limit of the policy, the excess can fund reserves or offset property tax increase. Mr. Bailey reported last year at this time we were projecting a \$6.8 million appropriated fund balance and currently this stands at \$5.6 million.
- **Tax Cap 5-Year Analysis Worksheet** – Mr. Bailey reviewed the worksheet and reported there was a change in the PILOT calculations for the Industrial Development Agency (IDA) resulting in a small increase, but it does change the tax cap formula. The 2026 estimated real property tax levy is \$26,767,59 which considers the \$120,000 offset for the Town of Richford. The levy before adjustment is \$27,450,883 for an increase of \$563,283 from last year. This allows a 2.09% increase without overriding the tax cap. The increase of \$563,283 is already taken by the increase in retirement. Mr. Bailey reported other counties are overriding the tax cap and looking for push back against the Governor's office to not impact Raise the Age funding because that is still the primary component that is implicated by maintaining the tax cap. Chair Sauerbrey inquired as to how many years the County has complied with the tax cap. Mr. Bailey reported if this year's budget is approved and we remain at the tax cap it will be the County's 13th year.

Following this meeting, Mr. Bailey reported the budget will roll from Level 2 to Level 3 (Legislative); therefore, any additional changes will need to come before the Legislature for consideration.

Mr. Bailey reported the following dates for upcoming budget discussion:

Date	Meeting	Topic of Discussion
October 9, 2025	Legislative Worksession	Legislative Revisions Fringe Benefit Analysis
October 23, 2025	Legislative Worksession	Final Tax Cap Updated Budget Summary *NOTE: Following this meeting, the budget will roll from Level 3 (Legislative) to Level 4 (Tentative)
November 6, 2025	Legislative Worksession	Final Revisions Review of Budget Brief Presentation
November 12, 2025	Tentative Budget Public Hearing	Budget Brief Presentation *NOTE: Public Hearing will be held at 10:00 a.m. in the Hubbard Auditorium. Quorum is required.

ADMINISTRATION & COMMUNICATION

- **Leaders Meetings (Quarterly)** - The next Leaders Meeting is scheduled for October 28, 2025 at the Public Works facility. The focus of the meeting will be on contracts and procurement.

Community Outreach/Communication

- **New Internship Program – Waverly High School** – Mr. Bailey reported the Waverly Central School District intern has been at the District Attorney's office and the department has requested an extension of another two weeks. Mr. Bailey reported he provides updates every two weeks to the school district and BOCES. Mr. Bailey spoke with Public Defender Cline, and he is very agreeable for the intern to spend time in their office. By being at the District Attorney's office, the intern has had the opportunity to meet people in the different departments.

MISCELLANEOUS

- **Leadership Tioga** – Mr. Bailey reported the September session on Government was held in the Hubbard Auditorium yesterday. Mr. Bailey thanked Chair Sauerbrey and Legislator Aronstam for their presentations and noted Dr. Ellen Pratt did a presentation on sustainability and he did a presentation on County leadership. The next session will be held on October 8, 2025 at Tioga Hardwoods.
- **2025 NYSAC Fall Seminar** – Mr. Bailey reported he attended the September 8-10, 2025 conference in Niagara Falls, NY and thanked the Legislators for the opportunity to attend.

Approval of Worksession Minutes: On motion of Legislator Monell, seconded by Legislator Roberts, the September 4, 2025 minutes were unanimously approved.

Action Items: Currently, there are no action items.

Other: None.

Executive Session: Legislators Aronstam, Ciotoli, Monell, Roberts, Sauerbrey, and Standinger were in attendance along with Legislative Clerk Haskell, County Administrator Bailey, and County Attorney DeWind. Motion by Legislator Monell, seconded by Legislator Ciotoli, to move into Executive Session to discuss contract negotiations and matters pertaining to the employment of particular individuals at 11:13 a.m. Legislative Clerk Haskell and County Attorney DeWind were excused at 11:30 a.m. Motion carried.

Motion by Legislator Ciotoli, seconded by Legislator Roberts to adjourn Executive Session at 11:50 a.m.

Meeting adjourned at 11:50 a.m.

Next Worksession scheduled for Thursday, October 9, 2025, at 10:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathy Haskell

Legislative Clerk