



## **Tioga County Worksession Minutes** **August 22, 2024 – 10:00 a.m.**

### **Legislators Present:**

Legislator Brown  
Legislator Ciotoli  
Legislator Monell  
Legislator Roberts  
Chair/Legislator Sauerbrey  
Legislator Standinger

### **Legislators Absent:**

Legislator Flesher  
Legislator Mullen

### **Guests:**

None

### **Staff present:**

Ron Lanouette, 4<sup>th</sup> Assistant County Attorney  
Jackson D. Bailey II, County Administrator  
Linda Parke, Personnel Officer  
Corinne Cornelius, Director of Emergency Services

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

**County Administrator Report / 2025 Budget Update:** County Administrator Bailey provided the following County Administrator Report:

- Training with Pracademic Partners – Spoke with consultant, Ian Coyle, and anticipates starting training with Pracademic Partners in September/October. Mr. Bailey will work with Chair Sauerbrey and Mr. Coyle to develop a training plan focused on specific areas as it relates to the position.
- Facility Tours – Mr. Bailey and Chair Sauerbrey have been touring departmental and municipal facilities with the most recent being the Village of Owego and Town of Owego Halls.
- Departmental Visits – Mr. Bailey is starting to schedule departmental visits to gain a better understanding of their daily operations. The first visit is scheduled with the Probation Department from August 28-30, 2024.

- Public Information Officer (PIO) Training – Mr. Bailey plans to start PIO training in September/October.
- NYSAC 2024 Fall Conference – Mr. Bailey will be attending this conference in Monticello, NY from September 9-11, 2024 and is interested in the following workshops: Civil Services Changes/Hiring, Housing the Hard to House, Risk Management/Avoiding Costly Claims, and Ethics for County Officials.

Mr. Bailey distributed a budget packet and provided the following 2025 Budget Update:

- Budget status has rolled from Level 1 (Department) to Level 2 (Budget Officer). Departments no longer have direct access to their budgets.
- Preliminary Budget Summary by Org – Information will change as we move forward in the budget process. This document reflects the 2025 Appropriations, Revenues, and Local Share compared to 2024 Appropriations, Revenues, and Local Share with the dollar and percent changes noted by Department.
- Tax Cap 5-Year Analysis Worksheet – This document reflects information from 2021 – 2025 (Estimated). Mr. Bailey reported he received the estimated PILOT projections from the Tioga County IDA, towns, and villages; therefore, the PILOT receivable amount is included in this document. As of today, the total allowable taxation we can enforce is \$27,048,612. Mr. Bailey reported a proposed tax levy of 2.86% increase noting \$752,223 is the maximum allowed without overriding the tax cap.
- General Fund Balance Worksheet – This document reflects data from 2022 – 2025 (Estimated). When factoring estimates, Mr. Bailey reported he uses the 2024 YTD Revenues and Expenses. Our current fund balance as of close of business on August 21, 2024 was \$51,502,715. If we take the remainder of the revised budgets for the the year (revenues and expenses), the fund balance will be \$32,699,335. There is approximately \$16,000,000 appropriated fund balance that is expected to be spent. Legislator Monell inquired about the significant fund balance discrepancy between year-end 2023 and estimated year-end 2024. Mr. Bailey reported in the revised budgets, the salaries and fringe is included for all the funded positions, and we currently have approximately 40 funded vacancies noting a lot of these positions may not be filled. Mr. Bailey reported the Unrestricted Fund Balances for 2024 YTD and 2025 Estimated exceeds the County's Fund Balance Policy high level of 28% by approximately \$951,980. Mr. Bailey noted this does not include anything for fringe, retirement, or salary increases.
- Capital Fund Balance Worksheet – This document reflects the same methodology with the appropriated fund balances and includes the ARPA estimated amounts. For 2025, Mr. Bailey reported an approximate \$19,689,846 for capital fund balance. The County has \$17,464,354 in restricted funds. As the 2025 capital budget stands as of now, we will be appropriating \$507,047 and will be absorbed by the reserves.
- Outside Agency Funding Request Worksheet – This document reflects data from 2020 – 2025 with a dollar and percentage change noted. Several agencies have requested additional funding. Mr. Bailey reported the County received a new request from the Spencer-Van Etten Community Food Cupboard in the amount of \$80,000. Question was raised as to whether this amount was specifically for the Spencer-Van Etten pantry or for all food pantries in the County with Spencer-Van Etten distributing funds accordingly. Mr. Bailey reported detailed letters from the outside agencies are included in today's packet regarding their request for additional funds. Mr. Bailey reported he heard from all outside agencies except for one, Newark Valley Historical Society. Discussion ensued

as to whether the libraries have their own taxing district. Mr. Bailey will inquire which, if any libraries, have their own taxing districts.

- Bond Principal & Interest Worksheet and Public Improvement (Serial) Bonds Worksheet– Mr. Bailey reported we have one bond with six years remaining. The total bond expense for 2025 is \$709,767.89.

Mr. Bailey reported he will review the Capital Budget, Budget Summary, Funding Reserves, Sales Tax, further budget recommendations, and Retirement estimates at the next Legislative Worksession. Mr. Bailey reported the County should be receiving the actual retirement bill soon, however based on the estimated bill, Mr. Bailey reported an increase of \$1,000,000 for retirement.

### **Radio Communications Project Update – Director of Emergency Services:**

Director of Emergency Services Cornelius provided the following update on the Radio Communications Project:

- Dispatch Upgrade – The upgrade was done August 6-9, 2024 consisting of new furniture, equipment, and carpeting. This upgrade included an additional station for a total of four. We are still on the old radio system, but the new VESTA phone system is in and working. Fiber will need to be run from Tioga County Public Safety Building to Broome County Public Safety Building. The radio consoles will need to be upgraded soon because they run off Windows XP, but we need to ensure everything is in place before completely switching over to the new system. Capital Area Communication (CAC) recommended holding off on switching over the radios for now but should be able to do so in the next couple of months. Once the fiber is in place, we will do a MOU with Broome County. Ms. Cornelius reported she has been working closely with the County's Chief Information Officer, ITCS Deputy Director, and Southern Tier Network to connect the fiber. Chair Sauerbrey reported the ITCS staff have been very essential in this process however it was not expressed that they would be taking a role in this project. Ms. Cornelius concurred and stated ITCS and ITCS Deputy Director Clark did a fantastic job regarding connectivity and assisting with a last-minute order for the computer screens, which was overlooked in the project.
- CAD System - The CAD System is working, and the NYS State Police, Sheriff, and Candor EMS are on the system with different fire/EMS agencies now asking to join. Ms. Cornelius reported the CAD System also falls to the ITCS Department for connectivity. Ms. Cornelius reported ITCS has developed a list of required equipment to meet the County's standard for connectivity to the County server.
- Tower Updates –
  - Carmichael and Popple Hill Towers – There is a lot of activity currently for these two towers.
  - Ballou Road Tower – A change order was done for this tower to add a new shelter. NYSEG leases this tower to the County. They are expected to climb this tower today to map it and ensure there are no issues.
  - Candor Tower – This is one of our existing towers and needs an electrical upgrade. CAC representatives have been good with assisting the County to determine what needs to occur. They have been working with NYSEG engineering and is waiting for an update on the cost. Currently, the power runs from Candor Hill over to Benton Road where the tower is located, and it is not enough. It trips the

breaker if the heat or air conditioning comes on in the shelter. This has been an ongoing issue, but due to the additional equipment, it needs to be addressed.

- Prospect Tower - This is a County-owned site that has raised some concern regarding the level of maintenance this site is going to require. The shelter requires a new roof, tree clearing, and creation of a very long driveway for access to the tower. Ms. Cornelius reported she is working with Commissioner of Public Works Hammond on an outline for an RFP. This is going to be a significant cost that we weren't expecting to do this year. This shelter will also need a whole new complete HVAC system. CAC will be stripping off old equipment from the towers that are not needed such as old antennas, etc. leaving only the useable equipment. This will also provide space to lease tower space to other companies, if the County so chooses. The Prospect Hill Tower has 12-foot decommissioned dishes on the tower and at time of installation never had any type of ice break to preserve the shelter. All the new equipment will have the necessary ice breaks to avoid further problems.
- Greenfield Sites/New Towers – In the process of ordering steel for the four green field sites located in Spencer, South Apalachin, Berkshire, and Nichols. Ms. Cornelius reported Motorola is trying to get their final permitting packages done and should be done in the next couple of weeks. The permitting packages will need to be sent to the towns where these towers will be located, and she does not anticipate any issues.
- Maine and Union Towers – The County is renting space from the Maine and Union site towers, and we are in the process of executing a MOU.
- Roundtop Tower Site – We are leasing this tower site from the Pennsylvania State Police in Athens, PA. Currently, we are in the process of working to get park access for truck traffic as gates are locked at sunrise and sundown, as well as the off season. Ms. Cornelius reported a new shelter will also be needed at this tower site. The current shelter is not large enough to accommodate the equipment. This may be more cost-effective to do an RFP for a prefab shelter versus Motorola adding to their project.
- Ridge Road Tower – This is an existing tower with no reported issues.
- Spaulding Hill Tower – This is an existing tower that had a few maintenance issues but is not part of the new project.
- Shirley Road Tower - This is an existing tower in the Jenksville State Lands. Currently, in the process of doing a State law to renew the lease every ten (10) years. Ms. Cornelius reported she did not realize the importance of the crossband repeater on the top of the tower until it went down. It left Berkshire, Newark Valley, and Richford fire departments without the ability to talk to dispatch and to communicate with each other very well. This also included Newark Valley's paging system so half of the pagers were non-functioning when a call was dispatched. Additionally, NYSEG is only in charge of the lines on the roadway and everything off the roadway back to the tower is private property. Ms. Cornelius reported emergency repairs on this tower has occurred twice, therefore, she is exploring the possibility for tree clearing and a set maintenance schedule until everything is up and running. In working with CAC, Ms. Cornelius reported they do not believe the County will need the repeater in the future because of the Hanson tower site in Berkshire. Also, this tower has equipment for the Newark

Valley School bus garage and Berkshire Town Highway Department, so she will reach out to see if they are willing to contribute towards repair costs.

- Committee Establishment – Ms. Cornelius reported she is working on establishing committees to discuss channel and radio breakdowns and ordering the subscriber unit, which are more mobiles and portables. The committees are valuable because there are a few departments that are going to need cross county communication. For example, Waverly/Barton wants Chemung and Bradford Counties in their radio systems. We want to make sure we are not overlooking any interoperability we could have.
- Warehouse Lease – Ms. Cornelius reported they have been in the warehouse and working on grouping equipment by tower site so they can start shipping and staging to each site. They are in the process of setting up cold installs of the rack so Union, Maine, Carmichael, Popple, and Candor existing sites can move the equipment and stage it at the tower site. Ms. Cornelius reported the lease was initially on an annual basis, however, is now month-to-month lease.
- Tower Site & Propagation Maps - Legislator Monell requested a copy of the map showing all the tower sites. Ms. Cornelius will also send the propagation maps that show current coverage and what it should be at time of project completion.

Ms. Cornelius gave the following financial update of the Radio Communications Project:

- Grants – Current expenditures have been coming from the grant funds. Ms. Cornelius reported some grants will need to be fully expended by year-end 2024.
- ARPA – Dedicated ARPA funds will need to be fully expended by year-end 2026.
- State Formula Grant
- E911 Surcharge Funds – These funds come in yearly.
- Leases – In addition to the warehouse, we are paying leases on the tower sites.
- Total amount owed currently on the project is \$17,764,566.43. Ms. Cornelius reported she believes the project budget is on track despite the unexpected costs being incurred.

Ms. Cornelius reported she has completed the first round of interviews for the Deputy Director position and is down to two candidates. One candidate would need to relocate, and the other is local.

**Approval of Worksession Minutes:** On motion of Legislator Brown, seconded by Legislator Monell, the August 8, 2024 minutes were unanimously approved.

### **Action Items:**

#### **ACTION ITEM #1 – 5/23/24 Legislative Worksession – Confidential Databases/Software Programs**

The Legislature was in favor of County Attorney DeWind speaking to Chief Information Officer Loveland regarding the amendment of the Comprehensive Security Policy to include language regarding access and usage of confidential databases/software program and disciplinary action for improper usage or access to unauthorized users. The Legislature expressed there was no immediate urgency but did want the policy revised at some point to address this issue. **This action item will be carried forward to the September 5, 2024 Legislative Worksession.**

## **Other:**

- CSEA Negotiations – Personnel Officer Parke reported the proposal has been received and the first meeting will be scheduled. Ms. Parke reported Attorney Roemer's office will be handling the negotiations in person versus Zoom.
- Management/Confidential Salary Committee – Personnel Officer Parke reported the follow-up Management Confidential Salary Committee will be held in the beginning of September.
- Employee Recognition Month – Chair Sauerbrey reported the Legislators received the schedule for the pin ceremonies and the luncheon. Those in attendance for the pin ceremonies will receive a ticket for the Country Boys Food Truck that will be on site for all the pin ceremonies. There is a \$20.00 cost for the ERC Luncheon at Donoli's on September 26, 2024.
- Dog Days of Summer – This event will be held on September 12<sup>th</sup>, and we will be grilling hotdogs for the staff at 56 Main Street with other foods available in the Personnel Conference Room.

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

Meeting adjourned at 11:14 a.m.

Next Worksession scheduled for Thursday, September 5, 2024, at 1:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Cathy Haskell*

Legislative Clerk