**LEGAL/SAFETYCOMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES – January 12, 2021**

PRESENT: Legislators Sauerbrey, Balliet, Standinger, Weston, Hollenbeck, Monell, Mullen, and Sullivan, County Attorney Peter DeWind, Treasurer Jim McFadden, Stephanie Jerzak, Chief Accountant, (and County Attorney Secretary Diane Stephens – Minutes)

ABSENT: Legislator Roberts

Meeting convened at 10:30 a.m.

**Minutes** - On motion of Legislator Mullen, seconded by Legislator Hollenbeck and unanimously carried the minutes from the December 15, 2020 meeting were approved.

**YTD budget** - Financials are tracking well.

**New Business:**

* **Resolution to hire Safety Officer**. Dawn Thorpe has accepted the position of Safety Officer and will start on February 1, 2021.
* **Transition to Westlaw** – Service is underway. Cost savings will be realized using this legal research tool.
* **Transition to Twin Tiers CDL Drug & Alcohol Testing**  - Twin Tiers will be working directly with the consortium members regarding testing results and invoicing. Information needs to be provided to Twin Tiers from consortium members and the new Safety Officer will be working on providing that to them.

There was some late year activity by the previous company to fill out the 50% random testing requirement, which was all taken care of.

* **22nd Congressional district election case** – This matter continues. Attorney DeWind stated that he monitors the proceedings even though this case doesn’t really affect Tioga County. One appeal has been filed, and more will most likely follow. It could be months before this is concluded.
* **In Rem Tax Foreclosures** – 2018 foreclosures are still on hold. Attorney DeWind stated that he spoke with OCA staff. Governor Cuomo signed an order on December 28, 2020 affecting tax foreclosure proceedings until May 1, 2021 due to economic hardship from COVID 19. Those affected can file a hardship declaration affidavit. With the filing of the petition for 2019 delinquent taxes, a communication has to be sent informing people that they can file the hardship affidavit. Some of these properties may be redeemed so it may make sense to wait until after the redemption date to send this information out.

Treasurer Jim McFadden stated he would like to hold off on sending out the letter regarding hardship until March since of the 368 filed, approximately 100 most likely will be redeemed.

Legislator Sullivan asked who and how hardship is decided. Attorney DeWind stated there has been no direction from the State about this yet and how a challenge can be made.

There was a brief discussion about the 2018 tax foreclosures regarding the interest that is accruing and the County’s obligation to make the school and municipalities whole.

* Attorney DeWind discussed leases for agencies who rent office space at the County office building. Currently there is no lease with Cornell Cooperation or ACCORD. It appears CCE would like a lease and it is advisable to have one. A space use agreement exists with CCE for rooms in the basement that had been leased to SUNY Broome. The SUNY Broome lease has historically been handled by ED&P and the status of this is uncertain at this time. It was the consensus of the Legislators that leases should be drawn up for the office space rented by CCE and ACCORD. Legislator Sullivan stated she believes they should be short term leases. Attorney DeWind stated they can be short term and a provision can be outlined in the lease that allows the County to have the space vacated by the tenant upon a certain number of days’ notice given to them. Chair Sauerbrey stated that these leases need to be “owned” by someone and tracked. The Legislative office will track these leases and their renewal.

* Attorney DeWind reported that a FBI memo was issued regarding protests and demonstrations on January 20 at all State capitols and possibly at the local level. Right now they are not aware of anything transpiring locally, however, it may be wise to have some safeguards in place at the County office building since there is no security at the building. Legislator Sullivan stated she believes they should provide something, possibly the presence of a deputy in the building. The consensus of the Legislators was that a security presence of some sort should be provided. Attorney DeWind will work with the Sheriff and Undersheriff regarding providing a security presence on that date. He stated that concern has been voiced by some employees about this and doing nothing will open the County up to liability if something does occur.

* **Action Items**: None
* **Executive**: None

Meeting adjourned at 10:50 a.m.