

## PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MINUTES

August 7, 2025

Present: Legislator Andrew Aronstam; Legislator Raymond Bunce; Legislator Barbara Roberts; Linda Parke, Personnel Officer; Camille Corneby, Benefits Manager; Kelly Quick, Senior Civil Service Technician; and Christie Farnham, Secretary to Personnel Officer.

Guest(s): Marte Sauerbrey Legislative Chair; County Administrator, Jackson Bailey; Legislative Clerk, Cathy Haskell; Katie Chandler, Deputy Treasurer; and Laura Schurter, Chief Accountant

Absent: Legislator Keith Flesher and Christa Anderson, Benefits Assistant

The meeting of the Tioga County Personnel Committee was called to order at 10:31 a.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Motion was made by Legislator Bunce, seconded by Legislator Roberts to approve the July 10, 2025, Personnel Committee meeting minutes, motion carried.

### I. FINANCIAL

Camille Corneby, Benefits Manager:

Nationwide: Our Nationwide rep, Kevin Calegari, visited the various buildings and departments on July 23<sup>rd</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>. Kevin reported a good turnout. He met with over 20 employees and had 12 enrollments.

Orientation: We had 8 new hires in July.

Workers' Compensation: Tioga County's current contract with Midwest for Excess Liability Insurance is set to expire in December 2026. We are currently evaluating the possibility of transitioning away from this policy and instead establishing a self-funded reserve to cover excess liability exposure.

Camille has contacted the New York State Association of Self-Insured Counties (NYSASIC) to gather information on which counties maintain excess Workers' Compensation liability coverage through a carrier versus those that manage their own reserves, including the reserve amounts. Responses are still being received.

Linda and Camille met with Treasurer Jim McFadden to review the Workers' Compensation budget. During the discussion, it was noted that the Interest and Earnings line currently holds approximately \$4.5 million, while the Interest and Earnings Reserve contains about \$1

million. The group explored the possibility of offsetting the Workers' Compensation budget—specifically the portion billed to the County, Towns, Villages, and Soil & Water—by utilizing a portion of this available fund balance.

Additionally, a meeting was held with Nicholas Spencer from Smith Brothers to discuss Excess Liability Insurance. In 2025, Tioga County paid Smith Brothers \$14,476 for the Excess Liability Insurance renewal and \$208,795 for the Workers' Compensation renewal. The \$208,795 payment is expected again in 2026. The County is considering the option of discontinuing the Excess Liability coverage through Smith Brothers and instead building its own reserve. According to Mr. Spencer, to his knowledge, Tioga County has never drawn on the excess coverage.

Linda Parke, Personnel Officer:

Budget Tracking Report: The budget tracking report as of the end of July was reviewed. We have collected \$2,607.25 (36.1%) of our projected revenue and spent 41.6% of our appropriations.

II. OLD BUSINESS  
None.

III. NEW BUSINESS  
None.

IV. PERSONNEL

The Head Count Report as of August 1, 2025, was reviewed. There are 38 FT and 50 PT funded vacancies. Funded vacancies with active recruitment: DSS: Caseworker, Social Welfare Examiner; PT: Caseworker, Community Services Worker, Youth Bureau Director; Emergency Services: PT Skills Instructor, Victim Helper; IT: Chief Information Officer, Office Specialist II; Network Administrator; Law: 3<sup>rd</sup> Assistant County Attorney; Mental Hygiene: Certified Peer Specialist, Certified Alcohol and Drug Counselor, Clinical Social Worker, Senior Clinical Social Worker; PT: Account Clerk Typist; Probation: Probation Officer 1; Accounting Associate III; Public Health: Early Intervention Service Coordinator, Community Health Program Supervisor, Supervising Public Health Nurse, PT: Dentist and Speech Language Pathologist; Public Works: Mechanical Equipment Operator II; Automotive Mechanic II; Sheriff's Office: Public Safety Dispatcher's, Deputy Sheriff and PT Cook; Personnel: Civil Service Assistant; Clerk: Recording Clerk; Veterans': PT Veterans' Service Officer; Treasurer's: Accountant; Legislature: Deputy Clerk to the Tioga County Legislature

The Vacancies Filled-Salary Difference Report shows four (4) changes since the July meeting with a monthly impact of (\$50,706.00) and YTD

of (\$60,321.00). The Temporary Appointments chart shows zero (0) changes since July's meeting.

## RESOLUTIONS

Amend Employee Handbook: Section IV. Personnel Rules; Subsection j. Management/Confidential Benefits: Tioga County's Employee Handbook Section IV. Personnel Rules; Subsection j. Management/Confidential Benefits Section II. Leave Accruals A. Vacation needs to be amended. This amendment pertains specifically to the sixth bulleted paragraph on additional vacation days granted for years of relevant prior experience at time of employment and the condition set forth for payout at time of employment separation. The Tioga County Handbook, Section IV. Personnel Rules; Subsection j. II. Leave Accruals A. Vacation, sixth bulleted paragraph regarding years of relevant experience be amended as follows:

### II. Leave Accruals

#### A. VACATION

Years of relevant prior experience shall be determined at the time of employment with Tioga County (within the Management/Confidential plan) by the Personnel Department and shall take into account all of an employee's relevant prior work experience. When an employee leaves the County, any additional vacation days granted for prior work experience will only be paid out if the employee has completed at least one year of service. The judgment of the County in this matter shall be at its sole discretion and shall be final and binding on all parties concerned.

The remainder of this policy remains unchanged.

Resolution to Declare Workday Status for Elected and Appointed Officials: Resolution Nos. 206-09, 127-16, 230-17, 30-18, 59-18, 308-19, 160-19, 229-22, 410-24, 465-24, 37-25 and 196-25 established a standard workday for elected and appointed officials for New York State and Local Employees' Retirement System reporting purposes. The County of Tioga, Location Code 10049, hereby establishes the following as the standard workday for the title below, for the purpose of determining

days worked reportable to the New York State and Local Employees' Retirement System as follows:

Appointed Officials

**Five-day work week, seven-hour day:**

Case Manager  
Public Works Project Technician  
Housing Development Specialist  
County Planning Director Trainee

Authorize Reappointment of Real Property Director (Real Property Department): The current 6-year term for Real Property Director Steven B. Palinosky will expire on September 30, 2025. The County Legislature would like to reappoint Mr. Palinosky for another 6-year term. Steven B. Palinosky is hereby reappointed as Real Property Director for another 6-year term, which shall be effective October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2031.

Amend Employee Handbook: Section IV. Personnel Rules; Subsection q. Tioga County Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy: Resolution No. 210-23 adopted on May 9, 2023, revised Section IV. Personnel Rules; Subsection q. entitled Tioga County Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy in its entirety. The Tioga County Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy needs to be amended due to updates and changes. The County Attorney has reviewed the Employee Handbook for compliance with State and Federal Law and has identified the need to amend the policy to include a discriminatory harassment policy. The County Attorney has revised the Tioga County Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy to now include a discriminatory harassment policy. The Tioga County Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy be amended to now include "II. Discriminatory Harassment Policy". The remainder of the Tioga County Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy remains unchanged.

q. SEXUAL HARASSMENT PREVENTION POLICY

II. Discriminatory Harassment Policy:

A. Policy Statement:

It is the policy of the County of Tioga to provide and maintain a work environment which is free from unlawful discrimination based on race, creed, color, national origin, sexual orientation, military

status, sex, age, marital status, domestic violence victim status, disability, pregnancy-related condition, predisposing genetic characteristics, prior arrest or conviction record, familial status, gender identity, and any other class protected by law (collectively referred to as "discriminatory harassment" or "harassment"). Harassment based on these characteristics is a form of unlawful discrimination and is prohibited in each and every work environment and each and every situation which directly impacts the work environment.

The County of Tioga will take appropriate steps to prevent and correct unlawful harassment and discrimination as defined by both federal and state law. The federal laws include Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act. The state law is the New York State Human Rights Law.

The County of Tioga considers discriminatory harassment to be a form of employee misconduct and considers this type of misconduct to be a serious offense which will not be tolerated. Allegations of harassment will be investigated thoroughly and if substantiated, will be met with appropriate corrective and/or disciplinary action commensurate with the seriousness of the offense(s), and in accordance with the parameters of applicable collective bargaining agreements and/or state law.

This policy applies to all applicants and employees of the County of Tioga and prohibits harassment, discrimination and retaliation whether engaged in by fellow employees, by a supervisor or manager or by someone not directly connected to the County (e.g., an outside vendor, consultant or citizen).

Conduct prohibited by this Policy is unacceptable in the workplace and in any work-related setting outside the workplace, such as during business trips, business meetings, and business-related social events.

All information gathered during an investigation of a harassment complaint will be handled in a confidential manner, to the extent possible.

Retaliation against any individual making a harassment complaint or assisting in the investigation of such a complaint is forbidden. Retaliation is a serious violation of this policy which may result in disciplinary action.

This Policy does not preclude the filing of discriminatory harassment

complaints with either the New York State Division of Human Rights or the Federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, or the pursuing of any other remedies as permitted by law.

## DEFINITIONS

### 1. "Sexual Harassment" is defined as:

A form of gender-based discrimination. Unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- A. Submission to such conduct is made explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment (e.g., promotion, training, assignments, etc.);
- B. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for employment decisions (e.g., hiring, evaluation, promotion) affecting such individual; or
- C. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Examples of specific behaviors that may be considered sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:

- Spoken or written words related to an employee's sex
- Any sexual advance that is unwelcome
- Sexually oriented comments
- Showing or displaying pornographic or sexually explicit objects or pictures in the workplace
- Offensive touching, patting or pinching
- Requests for sexual acts or favors
- Abusing the dignity of an employee through insulting or degrading sexual remarks or conduct
- Threats, demands or suggestions that an employee's work status is contingent upon her/his toleration of or acquiescence to sexual advances
- Subtle pressure for sexual activities
- Leering at a person

Sexual harassment is gender neutral and may involve members of the same or different gender.

### 2. Other unlawful harassment:

Harassment on the basis of any other protected characteristic is also prohibited. Under this policy, prohibited

harassment is verbal or physical conduct that is offensive to or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of a protected characteristic which includes race, creed, color, national origin, sexual orientation, military status, sex, age, marital status, domestic violence victim status, disability, pregnancy-related condition, predisposing genetic characteristics, prior arrest or conviction record, familial status, and gender identity (and any other class protected by law) , and that: (i) has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment; (ii) has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance; or (iii) otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment opportunities.

Employees and applicants for employment are also protected against

Harassing conduct includes, but is not limited to epithets, slurs or negative stereotyping; threatening, intimidating or hostile acts; denigrating jokes and display or circulation in the workplace (including through e-mail) of written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group, based on an individual's protected class.

### 3. Other Unacceptable Conduct:

This policy also prohibits conduct of one employee toward another that may not rise to the level of discrimination or harassment in violation of the law but nonetheless creates a degree of hostility or intimidation that adversely affects the work environment. Teasing, ridicule, and other conduct intended to annoy, personally attack, belittle or embarrass another individual is inappropriate and also unacceptable in the workplace. Therefore, the County encourages the use of its complaint procedure by employees who believe they have been subject to inappropriate conduct by another employee, even if such conduct may not be harassment or discrimination per se. The County endeavors to create an environment in which employees may feel free to raise concerns and are confident that those concerns will be addressed.

## **III. Responsibilities**

### 1. Managerial and Supervisory Personnel

All managerial and supervisory personnel of the County of Tioga shall be responsible for enforcing this Policy and shall have particular responsibility for ensuring that the work environment under their supervision is free from discriminatory harassment and its effects. Failure of a manager or supervisor to comply with this responsibility may result in disciplinary action.

All managerial and supervisory personnel who receive discriminatory harassment complaints will be responsible for reporting such in accordance with Section IV.2 below.

## 2. The County

The County of Tioga will conduct periodic training for managerial and supervisory personnel in each Department of the County on the issues surrounding discriminatory harassment, its effects and its appearances, and the role and responsibility of managerial/supervisory personnel in preventing incidents of harassment complaints.

The County of Tioga shall distribute this Policy to all County employees and all others covered by its parameters. Copies of this Policy will be distributed to new employees as they are hired.

Copies of this Policy will be conspicuously posted.

## **IV. Reporting and Resolution Procedures**

1. If an individual is subjected to a situation which they believe constitutes discriminatory harassment in violation of this Policy, the County recommends that the employee confront the harasser directly and advise the harasser that their behavior is not welcomed and will not be tolerated. Note that neither this policy nor state/federal law requires that an individual tell an alleged harasser to stop their actions. Employees should feel free to keep written records of any alleged sexual harassment incidents, including the date, time, location, names of people involved, witnesses (if any), and who said or did what to whom.
2. A written or verbal complaint should be filed by the affected employee with the employee's immediate supervisor. The supervisor will immediately forward the complaint to the Department Head. In the event the employee does not believe it would be appropriate to file the complaint with the



immediate supervisor, it may be filed directly to the appropriate Department Head or to the County's Personnel Officer. If the Department Head is unavailable or a party to the violation, the supervisor shall forward the complaint to the Personnel Officer or County Attorney.

## **V. Complaint Investigation**

1. Harassment complaints should be investigated as promptly as possible and resolved within a reasonable time after the receipt of the complaint. **The Office of the County Attorney** and with the oversight of the Personnel Officer and/or their designee(s) will coordinate an investigation of the complaint. Following the investigation, **the County Attorney and/or their designee(s)** may issue a written report of findings and conclusions.
2. Thereafter, any conclusions may be issued from the County Attorney and/or their designee(s), in writing, back to the complainant.
3. Retaliation against any individual making a harassment complaint or assisting in the investigation of such a complaint is strictly forbidden. Retaliation, like discrimination and harassment, is against the law and is a serious violation of this Policy. Employees who retaliate against other employees who complain about harassment and/or participate in investigation of harassment may be subject to disciplinary action.

## **VI. Response Procedures**

1. In the event a complaint of discriminatory harassment is determined to be founded, the County may take disciplinary action in accordance with the provisions of applicable collective bargaining agreements and/or state law, if applicable.
2. If disciplinary charges are filed against an employee on the grounds that the County has determined the employee is guilty of unlawful harassment, the accused employee may exercise their rights through the disciplinary procedure provided for in their labor contract and/or state law, if applicable.
3. Reporting a false complaint is a serious act. In the event it is found that the individual bringing the complaint has

knowingly made false accusations, the County will take action in accordance with the provisions of the applicable collective bargaining agreement and/or state law, if applicable.

Authorize Appointment of Housing Development Specialist (Economic Development & Planning): The Director of Economic Development and Planning received authorization to fill said vacancy per Resolution No. 226-25. The Director of Economic Development and Planning reviewed applications, conducted interviews and identified a qualified candidate with prior relevant work experience. That the Director of Economic Development and Planning is hereby authorized to provisionally appoint Tara Patton to the title of Housing Development Specialist, pending successful completion of civil service examination requirements at an annual Management/Confidential salary of \$56,640.00 effective September 8, 2025. In accordance with Tioga County Employee Handbook Management/Confidential Benefits policy, Ms. Patton shall be eligible for any authorized 2026 Management/Confidential salary increase effective March 8, 2026, following a successful six-month evaluation.

Create and Fill Seasonal Social Welfare Examiner Positions and Seasonal Office Specialist I Positions for the HEAP Program (Department of Social Services): The Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) will tentatively begin outreach in mid-August and be in full season on November 1, 2025. The Social Services budget allows for the hiring of the following staff for the HEAP Program:

Two, full-time, seasonal Social Welfare Examiners for a combined total of 202 seven-hour days, at the starting salary of \$17.75 per hour.

Three, full-time seasonal Office Specialist I positions for a combined total of 274 seven-hour days, at the starting salary of \$15.50 per hour.

Seasonal HEAP staff will start working no sooner than September 22, 2025, and stop working no later than April 30, 2026.

No individual Seasonal staff member will work more than 129 seven-hour days

The NYS Minimum Wage is scheduled to increase on December 31, 2025, to a rate to be published by the Commissioner of Labor on or before October 1, 2025, and Tioga County intends to pay at least minimum wage so the hourly rates for Office Specialist I positions will be

adjusted accordingly as of December 31, 2025. the Department of Social Services be authorized to create and fill the seasonal HEAP positions listed above.

Appoint Secretary to the Public Defender (Public Defender's Office:  
Due to the announced retirement of Secretary to the Public Defender Kathy A. Coyne as of August 8, 2025, a vacancy has been created. The position is fully funded by the State's Hurrell/Harring Grant. The Public Defender has recruited and identified a satisfactory candidate to fill the position. Amanda J. Pullano has been employed as part-time paralegal and then full-time Office Specialist III at the Family Court Public Defender since 2019, has extensive experience in office management including case management and financial system entry and is well qualified by reason of substantial experience and judgment to fill the position. The Public Defender is hereby authorized to appoint Amanda J. Pullano to the title of Secretary to the Public Defender, with a start date of August 23, 2025, at an annual Management/Confidential salary of \$47,500.00. in accordance with Tioga County's Civil Service Rules, Ms. Pullano shall serve a probationary period of eight to fifty-two weeks. In accordance with Tioga County Employee Handbook Management/Confidential Benefits policy, Ms. Pullano shall be eligible for any authorized 2026 Management/Confidential salary increase effective February 23, 2026, following a successful six-month evaluation.

Amend Employee Handbook: Section IV. Personnel Rules; Subsection d. Personnel Policies and Procedures for Employees of Tioga County:  
Tioga County's Employee Handbook Section IV. Personnel Rules; Subsection d. Personnel Policies and Procedures for Employees of Tioga County; II. Salary Rules/Evaluations; Department Head Evaluations needs to be amended. the Tioga County Handbook, Section IV. Personnel Rules; Subsection d. II. Salary Rules/Evaluations: Department Head Evaluations be amended as follows:

Department Head Evaluations:

All Department Heads, prior to the adoption of the next year County budget and before the start of the new fiscal year, will be evaluated by the County Administrator in conjunction with input from the respective Legislative Committee Chair and Legislative Chair, and shall receive the formal evaluation in-person from the County Administrator and/or the Committees' designee. New Department Heads shall be evaluated after (6) months from their date of appointment following the same process. Compliance with the evaluation system within the

department shall be taken into consideration on the Department Head's evaluation.

The remainder of this policy remains unchanged.

Authorization to Create Full-Time Administrative Coordinator for Tioga County IDA and Property Development Corporation (Economic Development & Planning): The Director of Economic Development and Planning would like to create a full-time Administrative Coordinator for Tioga County IDA and Property Development Corporation position. Legislative approval is required for the creation of any position within a Tioga County department. The Personnel Officer has met with the Director of Economic Development and Planning and has reviewed the description of work duties for the proposed full-time Administrative Coordinator for Tioga County IDA and Property Development Corporation position. A full-time position titled Administrative Coordinator for Tioga County IDA and Property Development Corporation be created at an annual Management/Confidential salary (\$42,981 - \$52,981) effective August 12, 2025.

Amend Employee Handbook; Section IX. Safety Rules, Subsection j. Workplace Violence Prevention Program Policy and Discriminatory Harassment Policy: Tioga County's Workplace Violence Prevention Program Policy and Discriminatory Harassment Policy was reviewed by Roemer Wallens Gold & Mineaux LLP at the request of the Tioga County Attorney for necessary updates. The Workplace Violence Prevention Program Policy and Discriminatory Harassment Policy upon review warrants revisions in several sections and the need for forms to be removed in their entirety and the policy to be renamed.

**Section 2. Discriminatory Harassment Policy, Subsections I-VI.** are hereby removed in their entirety from this policy and relocated to the Sexual Harassment policy.

**Section I. Workplace Violence Prevention Program Policy, Subsection III. Definitions** regarding sexual harassment is hereby amended to read as follows:

### III. Definitions

While sexual harassment (as defined herein and New York State Human Rights Law) is prohibited by Tioga County. It is specifically excluded from the definition of a workplace violence incident. An

employee should refer to the Tioga County Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy for more information about this topic.

**Section 3. Forms** is amended to delete Forms 4 and 5 as they pertain to Discriminatory Harassment and are no longer covered by this policy and is renamed as Section 2. Forms.

The Workplace Violence Prevention Program Policy and Discriminatory Harassment Policy is hereby updated and renamed the Workplace Violence Prevention Program Policy.

The remainder of the Workplace Violence Prevention Program Policy remains unchanged.

Reclassify Vacant Part-Time Fire Coordinator Position (Emergency Management): One Part-Time Assistant Fire Coordinator position has been vacant since April 17, 2025. Upon review of the department needs, the Director of Emergency Services submitted a New Position Duties Statement to the Personnel Department on July 23, 2025. The Personnel Officer has determined the appropriate classification for said title be Assistant EMS Coordinator PT. The Legislature hereby authorizes the reclassification of one vacant, part-time Assistant Fire Coordinator (M/C \$11,813) to a part-time Assistant EMS Coordinator position at a Management/Confidential salary of \$11,813, not to exceed 10 hours per week effective August 13, 2025.

Authorize Appointment of Accountant (Treasurer's Office): The position of Accountant became vacant as of May 31, 2025, within the Treasurer's Office. The Treasurer has conducted a recruitment search and has identified a desirable candidate. Natalie Kouterick is appointed to the title of Accountant, at an annual Management/Confidential salary of \$60,000, effective August 25, 2025. In accordance with Tioga County's Civil Service Rules, Mrs. Kouterick shall serve a probationary period of eight to fifty-two weeks. In accordance with Tioga County Employee Handbook Management/Confidential Benefits policy, Mrs. Kouterick shall be eligible for any authorized 2026 Management/Confidential salary increase effective February 25, 2026, following a successful six-month evaluation.

PROCLAMATIONS – None

ADJOURNMENT – 11:01