



## **Tioga County Work Session Minutes**

**July 23, 2020 – 10:00 a.m.**

### **Legislators present:**

Legislator Balliet  
Legislator Hollenbeck  
Legislator Mullen  
Chair/Legislator Sauerbrey  
Legislator Sullivan  
Legislator Weston

### **Legislators absent:**

Legislator Monell  
Legislator Roberts  
Legislator Standinger

### **Staff present:**

Peter DeWind, County Attorney  
Jackson Bailey, Budget Officer  
Cathy Haskell, Legislative Clerk  
Diane Stephens, Secretary to County Attorney  
Ellen Pratt, Sustainability Manager  
Bethany O'Rourke, Personnel Officer

### **Media/Guests:**

Lexie Cutmore – WENY  
Wendy Post – Owego Pennysaver  
Jim Ehmke – Channel 34  
Erin Page – Channel 34  
Eric Betts – Spectrum

**Call Meeting to Order:** Chair Sauerbrey opened the meeting at 10:00 a.m. with the **Sixth Special Legislative Meeting** for Legislature consideration of the following resolution:

- ***Resolution Calling on Governor Andrew Cuomo to Support the Southern Tier Region with the Re-opening of Tioga Downs and Vernon Downs***

After the prayer and pledge, the Legislators in attendance voted in favor of the resolution and the meeting was adjourned at 10:08 a.m. with regular Legislative Worksession immediately following.

**Changes to Recycling Local Law:** Sustainability Manager Pratt presented the draft local law, which will replace the current local law for recycling. County Attorney DeWind stated this

draft has a different requirement about who is actually doing the source separation and taking it to a recycling facility. The local law requires material waste haulers within the County to provide for their commercial and residential customers recycling pick up as well. This law continues to require residences and businesses to separate recycling out and requires the haulers to provide the service of separating recycling vs solid waste material. It is anticipated this will be brought to the August Legislative meeting after being brought to the Public Works Committee.

In answer to a question presented by Legislator Sullivan, Ms. Pratt stated other counties such as Cortland, Broome and Chemung are going this route with recycling. Legislator Mullen stated he does not think the County has a choice but to come up with a new plan because of the significantly increased cost for curbside.

Legislator Sullivan stated this increase was anticipated and an attempt was made to put bids out for weekly pickup as well as bi-weekly pickup. She also stated that within her district, there are many agricultural residents and the current method by which those residents are charged does not take into account that a farmer with a house and family and 200 acres is being taxed as if there are homes on that 200-acre parcel. Legislator Sullivan reported these property owners have been negatively impacted because of that method and will probably be very pleased with the change, while others will not be pleased with the change. The bottom line is that the cost for curbside is just not sustainable especially since the County will be hit with the "State's budget woes". Legislator Sullivan thanked Ms. Pratt and others for their work.

Attorney DeWind stated changes could still be made to this proposed local law.

Legislator Mullen reiterated this was put out to bid and the lowest bid was \$1.16 million more per year for five years, which is not sustainable. Ms. Pratt stated it was a 103% increase.

**Approval of July 9, 2020 Worksession Minutes:** On motion of Legislator Sullivan, seconded by Legislator Hollenbeck and unanimously carried the July 9, 2020 minutes were approved.

**Action Items:**

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

Chair Sauerbrey stated this action item would be carried forward to 2021 or 2022, with work possibly starting in 2021.

**ACTION ITEM #1– 6/18/2020 – Public Health Recognition**

Chair Sauerbrey stated we would reach out to Legislator Standinger to make sure this in process for the August 11, 2020 Legislative meeting.

**Budget Update: Jackson Bailey, Budget Officer**

Budget Officer Bailey reported he has done research, reached out to other counties, as well as spoken to former County Budget Officer Rita Hollenbeck to get feedback on how to go about the budget cut more feasibly.

After consultation, Mr. Bailey proposed that a resolution be done to modify the budget to reflect the 10% budget cut. Mr. Bailey asked Chief Accountant Stephanie Jerzak to create a contingency account specifically for COVID-19 to hold the 10% budget cut funds noting that

in the event a department falls short because of their 2020 budgetary cut, the money can be pulled back out of that contingency account. Mr. Bailey reported a contingency account would also keep funds separate from normal operations. The resolution will be broken out for every single account line that was reduced and clearly state what is being pulled. The total amount of the reduction is \$1.73 million, which is 2% of total appropriations for 2020's budget and 6.5% of what he considers available.

Legislator Sullivan wanted to clarify that all 2020 budgetary reductions will go into this COVID-19 contingency account. Mr. Bailey concurred this was correct. Mr. Bailey stated that at the end of the year those funds (or the balance remaining of those funds) will drop back into the fund balance and will help close any gap where there might be a shortfall.

Legislator Sullivan also asked if a department has a shortfall, does that shortfall have to be directly related to COVID-19. Mr. Bailey stated no, if the money they previously cut is needed, Departments could go to the Legislature for approval to get the money transferred back to their 2020 budget through the standard resolution process.

Legislator Balliet asked what options are available if we have to go higher. Mr. Bailey stated that appropriations would have to be made from the fund balance.

Legislator Weston asked if the State made any stipulations regarding the 2% tax cap. Mr. Bailey stated they have just put out their factor adjustments for the tax cap and he will be working with Real Property Director Huseby and County Treasurer McFadden.

Regarding the 2021 budget, Mr. Bailey stated August 7 is the deadline for submission to him. It was brought to his attention that some committees meet after that date, so he is offering flexibility with that. His plan is to shut off department level entry on August 14.

At the August 20 Legislative Worksession, Mr. Bailey reported he plans on reviewing the tax cap percentages and giving tentative proposals of what the tax cap number will be, as well as looking at what has been proposed and the preliminary fund balance. Mr. Bailey reported he would keep the Legislature informed of the revenues being tracked, sales tax projections, and status of outside agency funding. He will continue to monitor any mandated services mandates, new employment contracts, casino revenue and any State and Federal Aid reductions.

Chair Sauerbrey stated outside agencies have been notified that the County has taken a 10% budgetary cut for 2020 and that these agencies can expect to have the same funding directive and possibly more in 2021. Chair Sauerbrey has spoken with a couple of these agencies and they have been very understanding of the circumstances. Legislator Sullivan asked Chair Sauerbrey if these agencies recognized that they were not asked for a budgetary cut in their 2020 allocations. Chair Sauerbrey reported they are aware and very appreciative of that.

Mr. Bailey stated he would be conducting a "Budget 101" seminar next Thursday. An invitation was emailed to all Directors stating there is a RSVP process with Legislative Clerk Haskell, as the ITCS Computer Lab is limited to 12 computer stations. Chair Sauerbrey expressed her appreciation to Mr. Bailey for doing this.

Chair Sauerbrey stated Congressman Reed was here last week to talk about their efforts to get support for the states and municipalities. Chair Sauerbrey stated the Governor sent out an announcement petitioning the Federal government to allocate \$500 billion dollars for the states. Chair Sauerbrey reported she expects something will happen within the next two weeks and should have a better idea at that time of what we are dealing with in New York.

**Executive Session:** On motion of Legislator Sullivan, seconded by Legislator Mullen and unanimously carried, the meeting went into Executive Session to discuss contract negotiations at 10:35 a.m. Executive Session adjourned at 11:07 a.m.

Meeting adjourned at 11:07 a.m.

Minutes submitted by Diane Stephens