



## **Tioga County Worksession Minutes** **June 24, 2021 – 10:00 a.m.**

### **Legislators Present:**

Legislator Balliet  
Legislator Hollenbeck  
Legislator Monell (*arrived at 10:03 a.m.*)  
Legislator Mullen  
Legislator Roberts  
Chair/Legislator Sauerbrey  
Legislator Standinger  
Legislator Sullivan  
Legislator Weston

### **Legislators Absent:**

None

### **Guests:**

Christine Curtis, IDA Executive Administrator (*arrived at 10:03 a.m. & departed at 10:57 a.m.*)  
T Hanson, Executive Director of Cornell Cooperative Extension  
Jen Gregory, Southern Tier 8 Regional Board Executive Director

### **Staff Present:**

Peter DeWind, County Attorney  
Cathy Haskell, Clerk of Legislature  
Amy Eiklor, Deputy Clerk of Legislature  
Jackson Bailey, Budget Officer  
LeeAnn Tinney, Director of ED&P  
Elaine Jardine, County Planning Director  
Bethany O'Rourke, Personnel Officer  
James McFadden, Treasurer (*arrived at 10:03 a.m.*)  
Stephanie Jerzak, Chief Accountant  
Lisa McCafferty, Public Health Director (*arrived at 10:03 a.m.*)  
Douglas Camin, Chief Information Officer (*arrived at 10:06 a.m.*)

**Call Meeting to Order:** Chair Sauerbrey opened the meeting at 10:01 a.m.

Chair Sauerbrey took a moment to congratulate Legislator Roberts on his primary victory for the Town of Owego Superintendent of Highway position.

**Southern Tier 8 Regional Board – Dues Increase:** Southern Tier 8 Regional Board Executive Director, Jen Gregory, reported the dues for member counties of Southern Tier 8 Regional Board have remained the same at \$10,000 per year since 1968. Ms. Gregory stated with inflation, that amount would be \$48,000 in today's economy. Southern Tier 8 was created to serve and adapt to the region's economic development, workforce investment, infrastructure adaptation, and rural advancement. Ms. Gregory directed the Legislators to Southern Tier 8 Regional Board's webpage for more information on upcoming initiatives.

Ms. Gregory stated Southern Tier 8 Regional Board has asked the Federal government, New York State, and the private sector for donations to sponsor outreach events. She reported every grant received must be matched by Southern Tier 8. Ms. Gregory would like more financial support from the local level. She reported the organization has regional development analysts, which the organization currently does not have enough funds to pay. Ms. Gregory stated the Board is well aware of the uncertain financial future the pandemic brought about.

Chair Sauerbrey inquired how often Southern Tier 8 receives funding, if it's quarterly, monthly, etc. She also asked how much of an increase the dues will be next year. Ms. Gregory replied that the increase will be \$2,000 per year over the next three years. After three years, the Board will re-evaluate the dues based on rate of inflation. County Planning Director, Elaine Jardine, stated Southern Tier 8 sends invoices in January and the full amount is paid by the County once the invoice is received.

Legislator Sullivan inquired if Southern Tier 8 is willing to accept the increase year by year instead of Tioga County committing to increases over a three-year span. Ms. Jardine responded the intention was to increase dues yearly at each budget cycle over the course of the next three years.

Chair Sauerbrey stated the Legislators will discuss the matter in Executive Session and take the request into consideration as part of the 2022 Budget process.

**CCE Agriculture Position:** T Hanson, Executive Director of Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE), reported CCE is looking to expand their agricultural presence in Tioga County. Ms. Hanson is looking for support from Tioga County to hire a full-time agricultural position. She asked the Legislators for \$20,000, which is 50% of the agricultural position's salary. Ms. Hanson stated this payment would be a one-time payment. CCE hopes to secure a USDA grant in the next few years that could cover the agricultural position's salary in the future.

Ms. Hanson reported CCE has a \$1.1 million budget, but Tioga County appropriations were reduced from \$268,000 to \$241,000 due to budget cuts as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Ms. Hanson expressed the need to increase agriculture opportunities in rural areas of Tioga County. She stated Tioga County has 535 farms, which is a lot less than in the past. The addition of a full-time agriculture educator will allow CCE to talk and listen to local farmers about what their needs are in order to sustain their farms. Ms. Hanson explained that many farmers in Tioga County are aging, some without a succession plan.

Legislator Sullivan asked if hiring the agriculture position was tied to CCE's intent to purchase a farm in Candor. Ms. Hanson replied no, she believes the position is necessary with or without the farm. However, she thinks having the farm will attract more qualified candidates for the

position. Ms. Hanson stated the agricultural position requires a Master's Degree, though the salary is only \$40,000.

Legislator Sullivan reported, in the past, the Legislature has denied outside agency requests for increased funding outside of budget time. She stated in her opinion, she would only consider the increase in funding for the upcoming budget year.

Legislator Mullen asked how long CCE expects the recruitment and hiring process to last. Ms. Hanson replied she hopes the position will begin by August 2021. She explained she will be visiting a farm next week and has an individual in mind that may be interested in the position.

Ms. Hanson reported CCE will have upcoming retirements, leaving her with four open positions. Legislator Mullen stated if there will be four open positions, CCE should be able to move money around to fund the agricultural position. Legislator Mullen agreed farmers are aging and he would like more schools in Tioga County to offer the Future Farmers of America (FFA) program. If there was a way to increase the funding, Legislator Mullen said he is supportive of the idea, but finances are tight and the budget process is just beginning. Ms. Hanson stated local corporations and individual philanthropists should step-up and donate to CCE.

Legislator Standinger said he was a past CCE Board member, but he didn't like that Cornell was moving more towards a social organization than the original intent of an agricultural program. Ms. Hanson replied that she is trying to move CCE in a more agricultural direction. CCE was able to recruit six new Board members, including five farmers.

Chair Sauerbrey stated the matter would be discussed in Executive Session, but any increase would have to go through the budget process.

**IDA Letter of Support for Temple & Liberty Street, LLC PILOT Application:** IDA Executive Administrator, Christine Curtis, came back to the Legislators to answer some questions they had from the June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2021 Legislative Worksession regarding the Temple & Liberty Street, LLC project. Ms. Curtis answered the following questions the Legislature had on the project:

***Can the water and sewer system handle the increased capacity?*** Ms. Curtis confirmed with Suez Water and the Village of Owego that the sewer and water system can handle the increased capacity.

***What will parking be like?*** Ms. Curtis stated there will be one parking space per unit. There will be a total of two parking lots. According to Village Code, the site is considered to have adequate parking. A small, ten-space parking lot will be on the side of the property, which requires a variance. A variance is needed as parking lots are typically located in the back of buildings. Ms. Curtis stated a traffic study has not been conducted, but the engineers are looking into it.

Ms. Curtis asked the Chair of the Legislature if she would sign a letter of support for the development. Chair Sauerbrey asked her fellow Legislators if there were any objections to writing a letter of support. There were no objections.

**Stimulus Recovery Funds:** Budget Officer, Jackson Bailey reported Tioga County will receive a total of \$9.362 million from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), paid in two installments. The Department of Treasury released an interim Final Rule containing guidance on how counties can spend the funds. Mr. Bailey reported Tioga County received the first installment of \$4.681 million on June 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021. He explained all municipalities that receive funding need to submit a First Interim Report to the Department of Treasury by August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021. The report must detail what the funds are being spent on and is required to be submitted on a quarterly basis. All stimulus recovery funds must be used by December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2026.

Mr. Bailey reported there are four categories for eligible uses of the stimulus funds:

1. Responding to the Public Health Emergency/Negative Economic Impact (aid to impacted industries, small businesses, non-profits, etc.)
2. Premium Pay for Essential Workers
3. Revenue Loss
4. Water, Sewer, Broadband, & Infrastructure

Mr. Bailey reported he is looking at revenue loss first. He provided the following calculation:

Base year Revenue	12/31/2019	\$68,672,503.98
Growth Adjustment	4.10%	\$2,815,572.66
Months Elapsed (/12)	12.00	1.00
Actual General Revenue	12/31/2020	\$64,881,524.09
<b>Reduction in Revenue</b>		<b>\$6,606,552.55</b>

Mr. Bailey stated Tioga County can use the \$9.362 million to make up the revenue loss, up to the \$6,606,552.55. Chair Sauerbrey stated the remaining funds will have to be used in the remaining eligible use categories. Mr. Bailey outlined what steps need to be taken to properly spend and administer the funds:

- Determine what the funds can and cannot be used for
- Identify what the strongest needs are for Tioga County
- Determine how the funds will be administered and who will monitor, report, and administer funds
- Create a formal plan for the administration of the Fiscal Recovery Funds
- Legislature passes a Resolution to support the plan

Mr. Bailey noted that interest earned does not have to be remitted to the Treasury Department. Funds may be used for the administration of the money, but cannot fund reserve accounts.

Chair Sauerbrey reported some counties are working with financial firms to help manage and administer the funds. She stated the Legislature could designate someone from Tioga County to administer the funds and send reports to the Treasury or hire an outside firm.

Legislator Monell stated the amount is significant and he believes Tioga County should hire an outside firm. The eligible use guidance changes frequently and the County needs someone that can stay apprised of the changes. Chair Sauerbrey suggested Budget Officer Jackson Bailey as the administrator since the First Interim Report is due by August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021. Tioga County Treasurer, James McFadden, stated a solid plan for 2022 must be submitted to the Treasury by the end of October 2021. Legislator Standinger inquired to County Attorney Peter DeWind if using an outside firm requires a Request for Proposal (RFP). Mr. DeWind responded yes, he recommends an RFP.

Legislator Mullen agreed with Legislator Monell about hiring an outside firm. Legislator Mullen believes Tioga County needs a firm that understands the small details. He doesn't want to add more tasks or reports to a Tioga County employee's workload. Legislator Mullen suggested forming a Steering Committee. Chair Sauerbrey stated a Steering Committee could be formed and Legislators can volunteer to be on it if they are willing to do the required work. Legislator Sullivan stated she has further questions and will speak with Chair Sauerbrey after the meeting.

**Budget Discussion:** Budget Officer Jackson Bailey reported Tioga County's 2022 Budget Hearing will take place on November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Mr. Bailey stated departments should use their 2020 original budget as a baseline number for their 2022 Budget, not including any COVID-19 reductions. Chair Sauerbrey asked the Legislators if they agreed with that plan. There were no objections.

Mr. Bailey suggested the following Budget Directives:

- No increases to any expense line with the exception of salaries and employee benefits.
- No new positions added to the 2022 budget without Legislative Committee & Personnel approval.
- Position & title changes are to be reviewed with Personnel prior to Legislative Committee.
- Position and title changes must have supporting documentation detailing salary costs, fringe estimates and must be provided to the Budget Officer for review upon approval.
- Succession planning related changes require Legislative Committee approval.
- Any and all Capital Budget requests must be presented on a five-year plan to the Tioga County Legislature.
- All Capital Equipment requests shall be reviewed by the Public Works Commissioner, and are included in the five-year plan.
- All IT equipment requests for computer and technology needs, including hardware and software, are to be included in the IT five-year plan.
- Legislative Committees shall agree on all proposed IT requests
- All budget requests shall be reviewed by the Legislative Committee.
- Present any differences in revenue or expenses from the 2020 or 2021 budget.

- Explain any new accounts and justify their need.
- Highlight staffing changes and Capital requests.

There were no additional questions for Mr. Bailey. Mr. Bailey will discuss the 2022 Budget at a Legislative Worksession in August.

**Approval of Worksession Minutes:** On motion of Legislator Monell, seconded by Legislator Mullen and unanimously carried, the June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2021 Legislative Worksession minutes were approved.

**Action Items:** Currently, there are no action items.

**Other:**

- ***Diane Stephens Retirement:*** Chair Sauerbrey reported Secretary to the County Attorney, Diane Stephens, will retire on July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2021 with over thirty years of service. There will be a retirement party on June 29<sup>th</sup>, 2021 to celebrate.

**Executive Session:** Motion by Legislator Roberts, seconded by Legislator Hollenbeck to move into Executive Session to discuss financial matters. Motion carried unanimously to go into Executive Session at 11:05 a.m. Executive Session adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Next Worksession scheduled for Thursday, July 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021, at 1:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Amy Eiklor*

Deputy Legislative Clerk