



Tioga County Legislative Worksession Minutes

April 23, 2020 – 10:00 a.m.

Zoom Phone Conference Meeting

Legislators Present:

Legislator Balliet
Legislator Hollenbeck
Legislator Mullen
Legislator Roberts
Chair/Legislator Sauerbrey
Legislator Standinger

Legislators Absent:

Legislator Monell
Legislator Sullivan
Legislator Weston

Guests:

Matt Freeze, Reporter, Morning Times

Staff Present:

County Attorney Peter DeWind
Legislative Clerk Cathy Haskell
Budget Officer Jackson Bailey
Deputy Treasurer Katie Chandler
Public Health Director Lisa McCafferty
ITCS Deputy Director Drew Griffin

Call Meeting to Order -

Chair Sauerbrey called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. with a roll call noting participation of six Legislators with Legislators Monell, Sullivan, and Weston being absent. In addition, Chair Sauerbrey noted participation of two County staff via phone with in-person attendance including Legislative Chairwoman Sauerbrey, County Attorney DeWind, Legislative Clerk Haskell, Budget Officer Bailey, and ITCS Deputy Director Griffin. Chair Sauerbrey reported this is an audio conference and the recording would be posted on the County website.

Welcome & Introduction:

Chair Sauerbrey welcomed Jackson Bailey as the County's new Budget Officer.

Financial Update:

Mr. Bailey reported he, along with Chairwoman Sauerbrey and County Treasurer McFadden, have been analyzing countless NYSAC updates regarding possible COVID-19 impacts.



The Budget Report emailed to all Legislators on April 22, 2020 is a compilation of this information as it pertains to Tioga County.

Mr. Bailey reported the Budget Report reflects the following:

- **COVID-19 Potential Impacts:**
 - Sales Tax Implications
 - Reduction in State Aid Casino Revenue
 - Local Revenue Impacts
 - State Retirement Fund Losses
 - Reduction in State Aid
- **Current Status:**
 - Current Cash on Hand
 - Current Reserve Balances
 - Current Fund Balances

Sales Tax Implications: Mr. Bailey reported the County's budgeted sales tax for 2020 is \$23.2 million.

Mr. Bailey reported NYSAC provided the County with two scenarios for sales tax implications brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. In the mild case scenario, the County would experience a loss of 3.2% or \$745,000 for a new anticipated sales tax amount of \$22.5 million. In the severe case scenario, the County would experience a loss of 9.9% or \$2.3 million for a new anticipated sales tax amount of \$20.9 million.

Mr. Bailey reported the distribution of sales tax to towns and villages is also factored in to the above-referenced scenarios at 25% across the board. Mr. Bailey reported the 25% reduction for the mild case scenario is \$189,000 less and \$587,000 less in the severe case scenario.

Chair Sauerbrey inquired whether this is just sales tax distribution and not AIM funding. Mr. Bailey reported the amount budgeted for the sales tax includes the AIM funding.

Legislator Roberts inquired as to whether NYSAC takes into consideration that Tioga County is not a strong retail county and most of our past increase has been through Internet sales. Mr. Bailey reported he believes there is a distributive share for the Internet sales tax, therefore, taking this into account.

Chair Sauerbrey reported NYSAC provided a chart specifying the different categories where Tioga County receives sales tax and last year the Internet was listed as #13; however, believes this could easily move up the chart based on the current situation.

Mr. Bailey reported the overall sales tax impact for Tioga County is \$17.3 million. This would be reduced to \$16.7 million for the mild case scenario and \$15.6 for the severe case scenario.

State Aid Casino Revenue: Mr. Bailey reported Tioga County averages approximately \$100,000 per month for an annual total of \$1.3 million. Mr. Bailey estimated a three-month loss of \$300,000 for a new anticipated revenue of \$1 million.



Local Revenue Impact Forecast: Mr. Bailey analyzed the County's local revenue in the areas where the majority of funding is received and forecasted a 15% reduction across the board. Basing this on eight weeks of inactivity, Mr. Bailey reported a total reduction in the 2020 budget scenario of \$568,000.

Potential State Retirement Fund Losses: Mr. Bailey reported NYSAC noted potential losses in the State Retirement Fund might cause increases in the County's contribution rates for retirement in 2021. Furthermore, Mr. Bailey reported NYSAC indicated a potential 20% impact increase. Mr. Bailey reported the 2020 County Budget amount is \$2.7 million; however, there are currently no projections to analyze the pension bill for 2021.

Reduction in State Aid: Mr. Bailey reported percentages have not been provided, however, NYSAC stated the Governor has the authority to reduce State Aid by 1% across the board on a quarterly basis. Currently, there are no projections for 2021.

Legislator Standing reported if the Governor is able to take 1% quarterly then we can be guaranteed that he will.

Chair Sauerbrey reported Commissioner of Public Works Hammond forwarded an email to her yesterday from the Public Works lobbyist in Albany indicating the rumor of a possible 20% reduction.

Legislator Hollenbeck reported Broome County Executive Garnar made the statement on the radio of a possible 20% or more reduction.

As we move forward, Mr. Bailey reported he would continue to analyze potential projections against the current budget and provide forecasted impacts to the Legislature.

Current Cash on Hand: Mr. Bailey provided a breakdown by each Fund. Mr. Bailey reported total cash of all Funds in 2019 was \$37 million and as of March 31, 2020 was \$48 million. Mr. Jackson reported this encompasses a lot of tax revenues received and not all expenditures have been taken into account, therefore, this figure is expected to be reduced.

Current Reserve Balances: Mr. Bailey listed the details for all the current reserves noting a total of \$3.7 million.

Current Fund Balances for All Funds: Mr. Bailey provided individual totals per Fund for 2019 and 2020 through March 31st, however, noted there are additional factors such as unaccounted expenditures that will further reduce the 2020 figures. Mr. Bailey reported the 2019 year-end totals for each Fund results in an overall unrestricted Fund Balance of \$25 million. Mr. Bailey noted a portion of the CE Fund is earmarked for the IDA small business grant program and the K Fund is a fixed asset contra account.

Review: Mr. Bailey reported the following worst-case scenarios:

- Sales Tax – estimated loss in sales tax revenue could be over \$1.5 million.
- State Aid Casino – estimated loss of \$300,000.



- Local Revenues – estimated 15% reduction. Major contributors could show total losses of more than \$500,000
- Major Increases in State Retirement Fund Contributions in 2021
- Reductions in State Aid – currently estimated at 1% quarterly for up to 4% annually.

Mr. Bailey reported the current status:

Total Cash on Hand	\$48 million
Total Reserves	\$3.7 million
Total Unrestricted Fund Balance	\$27 million

Legislator Mullen thanked Mr. Bailey for a great job in preparing this report.

Chair Sauerbrey reported the challenge lies in the unknown. Chair Sauerbrey reported she is establishing a Financial Working Group consisting of the financial staff from the major Departments, Chief Accountant Jerzak, Budget Officer Bailey, and herself. The purpose is to be actively pursuing what the Department's affiliated organizations and NYSAC are forecasting so we can be prepared. At this time, counties are discussing possible layoffs. To date, we are aware of six Upstate NY counties that have begun a layoff process.

ITCS Deputy Director Griffin reported there has been much discussion on the IT Director's Association list serve regarding layoffs.

Chair Sauerbrey reported she and Mr. Bailey are participating on a NYSAC Budget webinar tomorrow in hopes of garnering additional information.

Chair Sauerbrey reported she spoke to the Directors yesterday and requested they start thinking about developing a plan on how to open for business. Chair Sauerbrey reported Upstate NY has been divided into regions for the Governor's re-opening process. Chair Sauerbrey reported Lt. Governor Hochul will be responsible for determining how, when, and under what conditions Western NY will re-open and former Lt. Governor Duffy is responsible for the Finger Lakes region. To date, we have not received information who is responsible for the Southern Tier region. Chair Sauerbrey reported she believes this will be a gradual, phased-in process with the conditions of wearing masks and social distancing continuing to be observed.

In regards to re-opening, Legislator Standing reported it is prudent that the Legislature consider a resolution to request the State's immediate consideration of the impact COVID-19 has on the Upstate communities and the precautions in relation to the loss.

County Attorney DeWind reported he has not seen any resolutions of this nature from the other surrounding counties. Legislative Clerk Haskell concurred that she has not seen a resolution of this nature through the Legislative Clerks list serve. At this time, Ms. Haskell reported the resolutions of late pertain to temporary layoffs.



Approval of Worksession Minutes – April 9, 2020 -

Legislator Hollenbeck motioned to approve the April 9, 2020 Legislative Worksession minutes as written, seconded by Legislator Standinger with Legislators Balliet, Hollenbeck, Mullen, Roberts, Sauerbrey, Standinger voting yes with Legislators Monell, Sullivan, and Weston being absent. Motion carried.

Action Items –

Currently there are no action items.

Other –

- **Daily Governor’s Conference Call:** Chair Sauerbrey reported she is on a daily conference call at 3:30 p.m. with the Governor’s Office and is primarily an update from his 11:30 a.m. press conference.
- **Confirmed Cases:** Chair Sauerbrey reported the more concentrated cases in Upstate NY are from nursing homes. Unofficially, Chair Sauerbrey reported that is the same here with over 50% of the cases in Tioga County are out of nursing homes. Chair Sauerbrey reported there is a lot of fear, people want to know where the cases are, and we are maintaining our position of protecting our citizens. We do not have many cases outside of the nursing homes and believes it is important to protect our citizen’s privacy.

In regards to nursing homes, Legislator Standinger reported the residents are medically compromised which is why they are there. It is not unusual to hear of someone passing daily in nursing homes from various reasons; however, the numbers are being attributed to COVID-19 in certain locations such as the metropolitan areas. Therefore, skewing the numbers.

- **Supplies:** Chair Sauerbrey reported we are starting to receive supplies. Chair Sauerbrey reported we received a shipment of 10,000 cotton masks. Chair Sauerbrey reported the public is making and donating masks to Home Central who generously agreed to be a donation center for the County. In addition, Chair Sauerbrey reported a local business is donating 150 masks.
- **Show of Support:** Legislator Mullen reported there would be a show of support for the Elderwood Nursing Home next Tuesday, April 28th, at 2:00 p.m. through the direction of Director of Emergency Services Simmons and Town of Barton Fire Chief Donnie Howard. Local emergency first responders, Greater Valley Police Department, and Tioga County Sheriff’s Office have been invited to show our appreciation and pride for what they have been able to accomplish.
- **Disseminating Information to the Public:** Legislator Balliet reported people in his District have requested additional information. Legislator Balliet reported they are appreciative of the information he has been able to convey thus far, but suggested reaching out to the television and press outlets to send the message that Tioga County is doing fairly well. Legislator Mullen reported he has received calls from constituents, as well. Legislator Mullen reported his community is a little unique in the County, as he lives in a community of over 20,000 that has a state line running through it. Legislator Mullen reported one of



the questions brought forward is safety for older people to go out and grocery shop and locations of the positive cases. Legislator Mullen reported he believes this information could be drafted appropriately in a press release without jeopardizing HIPAA and noting that a vast majority of the cases are in a concentrated healthcare facility. Legislator Mullen reported it is public every day in the newspaper and radio, but it would be nice if Tioga County confirmed this information. It gives the appearance that Tioga County is not forthcoming with information when surrounding counties are identifying the number of cases and the breakdown by municipalities. Legislator Mullen reported it has been a little intense the last few weeks.

Chair Sauerbrey reported it has been very difficult. Chair Sauerbrey reported she has spoken with the facility director several times and they care about their residents, working seven days a week, and doing the very best they can. Chair Sauerbrey reported she could hear the pride in the Director's voice about her employees and the job they are doing and appreciative of the support they are receiving from Guthrie and Tioga County.

Legislator Mullen reiterated it is a unique situation with a very concentrated population in the community compared to the rest of the County. There is a lot of discussion about the confirmed cases. Legislator Mullen reported he is in favor of giving information to the limit allowable and still maintaining people's privacy. Legislator Mullen reported people just want to know how to stay safe and if we can provide additional information then I am in favor of doing it. This way they do not feel that we are withholding information.

Chair Sauerbrey reported the Legislative Office is sending out daily statistics in the press releases, as well as Public Health and Mental Hygiene Departments disseminating continual safety and health precautions. In addition to press releases, Chair Sauerbrey reported information is disseminated via Facebook and websites. Chair Sauerbrey reported she is working with Mr. Griffin to work towards disseminating information on YouTube.

UPDATE: The Legislative Office sent a press release following this meeting regarding weekly press conferences starting on Wednesday, April 29th, and every Wednesday thereafter until further notice as an additional effort to inform the public.

Legislator Mullen reported he is on the phone daily for several hours dealing with agencies. Legislator Mullen reported we have been able to assist some of the Pennsylvania first responding agencies, for example, Greater Valley who covers a large portion of Tioga County, in obtaining N95 masks that Pennsylvania was not able to secure. Legislator Mullen reported Mr. Simmons and his wife delivered PPE to Elderwood at 11:45 p.m. last Sunday evening to get them the equipment needed. There is a tremendous effort underway by many people and County employees. Legislator Mullen reported regardless of the differences of opinion, we are trying to save lives and in a community with a significant concern, it tends to consume your entire day. Chair Sauerbrey reported she could relate to that, as can our staff.

Legislature



Legislator Balliet reported he appreciates all the work that is being done. Legislator Balliet reported with his District bordering Broome County his neighbors tend to focus in that direction.

Executive Session -

With no confidential topics of discussion, an Executive Session was not necessary.

Meeting adjourned at 10:40 a.m.

Next Worksession scheduled for Thursday, May 7, 2020, at 1:00 p.m. (*via Zoom phone conference*).

Respectfully submitted,

Cathy Haskell

Legislative Clerk