



Tioga County Worksession Minutes **January 21, 2021 – 10:00 a.m.**

Legislators present:

Legislator Balliet
Legislator Hollenbeck
Legislator Monell (*arrived at 10:04 a.m.*)
Legislator Mullen (*arrived at 10:16 a.m.*)
Legislator Roberts
Chair/Legislator Sauerbrey
Legislator Standinger
Legislator Sullivan (*arrived at 10:30 a.m.*)
Legislator Weston

Guests:

None

Staff present:

County Attorney Peter DeWind
Budget Officer Jackson Bailey
Chief Accountant Stephanie Jerzak
Personnel Officer Bethany O'Rourke
Chief Information Officer Douglas Camin (*departed at 10:16 a.m.*)
Legislative Clerk Cathy Haskell
Deputy Legislative Clerk Amy Eiklor

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

Set Salary of County Treasurer: Chair Sauerbrey stated the Legislature needs to decide on the salary of the County Treasurer, as a local law, public hearing, and Special Meeting are required for this matter. Legislative Clerk Cathy Haskell explained that if a salary was decided today, a Special Meeting would take place at the February 4, 2021 Legislative Worksession. The local law would be introduced at the Special Meeting and the Legislature would adopt a resolution to set the public hearing. Ms. Haskell stated the public hearing would be held before the February 9, 2021 regular Legislative Meeting. The local law would then be adopted at the Second Legislative Worksession on February 18, 2021. Ms. Haskell explained the above-referenced timeframe allows interested candidates to know the annual set salary prior to carrying petitions the week of February 23, 2021.

Personnel Officer Bethany O'Rourke stated that in the past, the County has used a variety of methods to set the salaries of elected officials. She distributed a handout to the Legislators

detailing the various options and figures for consideration. Ms. O'Rourke explained she conducted a Survey of County Treasurer Salaries and presented her results on the handout. Ms. O'Rourke's handout displayed salaries from counties of similar population size to Tioga County. She reported the current salary of Tioga County's Treasurer is \$68,000 and in the past, the salary typically stayed the same for the entire four-year term. However, Ms. O'Rourke stated it is not a requirement for the salary to remain the same throughout the four-year term of office.

Ms. O'Rourke explained another option the Legislature has looked at in the past are non-union salary increases. Ms. O'Rourke used the current four-year term, 2018-2021, to apply those same non-union increases to the current salary of the County Treasurer. Using those figures, Ms. O'Rourke determined the County Treasurer's salary would be \$74,304. She also averaged the non-union salary increases over the four-year period (2.25%) and applied that average to the County Treasurer's salary over those four years. Ms. O'Rourke determined the salary would be \$75,059.

Lastly, Ms. O'Rourke reported another option used in the past is the change in the Consumer Price Index (CPI). Ms. O'Rourke obtained her CPI percentages from the Federal Department of Labor's website. She used the percentage changes from 2018-2020 to determine the salary to be \$71,771. Ms. O'Rourke stated a figure has not yet been posted for 2021 so she averaged the CPI over the last three years, 2018-2020. Using the average percentage change in CPI (1.82%) over the course of four years, Ms. O'Rourke determined the salary to be \$73,087.

Legislator Roberts proposed \$71,500 and stated that figure is on the low side. Legislator Roberts verified with Ms. O'Rourke that the upcoming County Treasurer term is four years, 2022-2025. Legislator Roberts asked the other Legislators if they had any suggestions and emphasized that the discussion is about the position, not the individual.

Chair Sauerbrey gave the Legislators time to consider Ms. O'Rourke's presentation. Ms. O'Rourke stated that \$71,500 is a 5% increase from the current salary of \$68,000. Ms. O'Rourke asked if the proposal of \$71,500 was for all four years. Legislator Roberts concurred. Chair Sauerbrey stated she is in favor of the concept of a consistent set salary for the four-year term.

Legislator Roberts asked Ms. O'Rourke if setting the salary now is an Election Law or County Policy. Ms. O'Rourke replied that she does not know the answer to that. Ms. Haskell stated, it is her understanding, that setting the salary of an elected official is done by way of local law and is the long-standing practice of the County. Ms. Haskell reported this practice is also followed for setting the County Clerk and Sheriff annual set salaries. Mr. DeWind reported the County has always set the salaries by local law, but not necessarily required under Election Law. Mr. DeWind reported, under Municipal Home Rule, changing this practice amidst someone's term, requires a referendum.

Legislator Monell stated he is not in favor of the \$71,500 proposed salary, as he believes it is too low. He does not have a problem going with \$73,000-\$74,000. Chair Sauerbrey stated that halfway in between the two proposed amounts is \$73,000. Legislator Monell replied that he would be okay with that amount. Chair Sauerbrey proposed \$73,000 and asked if this was a fair compromise. Legislator Roberts said he is fine with that amount. Chair Sauerbrey asked all the Legislators if they were fine with her proposal. Legislator Monell inquired if they were going

to make it \$73,087 or flat \$73,000. Chair Sauerbrey proposed \$73,087 and Legislator Monell concurred. Chair Sauerbrey asked for a show of hands of those in agreement on \$73,087. All Legislators present were in agreement.

Ms. Haskell stated she would put out a Special Meeting Notice for February 4, 2021.

Network Administrator Salary Discussion: Chief Information Officer Douglas Camin reported he interviewed a candidate for the Network Administration position, which has been vacant since last summer. Mr. Camin stated he has found a candidate that he likes, but he wanted to discuss a salary range before an offer is made. Mr. Camin stated the posted salary range is \$52,800-\$62,800. Mr. Camin would like to start the candidate in the \$54,000-\$56,000 range, but wanted Legislative approval first.

Chair Sauerbrey inquired about the previous employee's salary. Mr. Camin reported the previous employee was making \$60,000 before leaving the position. All Legislators present were in agreement with Mr. Camin's salary range request of \$54,000-\$56,000.

Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative Update: Chair Sauerbrey reported there would be a Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative Zoom Meeting taking place on January 27, 2021. Chair Sauerbrey reached out to Mayors and Supervisors from all over Tioga County, asking for suggestions on individuals that could participate in the meeting. Chair Sauerbrey wanted to make sure all areas of Tioga County were addressed. She reported that a press release was issued stating the meeting is open to the public, though only 50 spots are available. Chair Sauerbrey explained individuals interested in participating should send an email to the designated email address, which is listed in the press release, in order to secure a spot. So far, Chair Sauerbrey has two spots reserved, but she expects more residents to sign-up once the press release is published.

Chair Sauerbrey reported the Sheriff Howard would start the meeting by addressing concerns local residents brought up on a previously issued survey. The Sheriff will also talk about the changes his department has made to come into compliance with the Governor's requirements. Chair Sauerbrey explained residents will have the opportunity to ask questions, make comments, or voice concerns. The meeting will be recorded and uploaded to the County's YouTube channel. Chair Sauerbrey reported comments would be open until February 1, 2021 through the designated email address.

After the Zoom Meeting and comment period, Chair Sauerbrey hopes to wrap up the Police Reform and Reinvention Collaboration. Chair Sauerbrey stated the Police Reform requirements have been challenging, and in her opinion, unnecessary. Legislator Standing commented there was a lot of time and energy spent on a non-existent problem. Chair Sauerbrey stated there are other issues, such as the COVID vaccine, that need to be addressed.

Board of Ethics Appointments Discussion: Legislative Clerk Haskell reported she was notified by the Law Department that the Board of Ethics has two members with terms expiring on March 31, 2021. Mr. Jochum of the Apalachin area and Mr. Yetter from Newark Valley have already served two full, three-year terms and, according to policy, those members cannot be reconsidered for reappointment until one-year from their last expired term has passed. Ms.

Haskell reported the Legislature is responsible for reaching out to individuals in the community to fill these positions. Geographically, Ms. Haskell stated there does not appear to be any representation from Berkshire, Newark Valley, Richford, Spencer, Tioga, or Barton. She reported it is not a requirement to fill these positions by based on geographic location, however, in the past, the Legislature wanted countywide representation. Ms. Haskell informed the Legislators of the upcoming term expirations so they could think about potential candidates for appointment.

Ms. Haskell stated she was unsure how soon the Board of Ethics would be meeting. County Attorney DeWind reported the last meeting was held via Zoom, which worked out well. Mr. DeWind does not expect the next meeting to take place until the fall, however, stated the Legislators need to find replacements before the current term expires on March 31, 2021.

Approval of Worksession Minutes: On motion of Legislator Monell, seconded by Legislator Hollenbeck, the January 7, 2021 minutes were unanimously approved.

Action Items: None

Other:

COVID-19 Vaccination: Legislator Mullen reported he attended Zoom meetings on the COVID-19 vaccine. Legislator Mullen hopes three vaccine clinics will take place next week in Tioga County. He expects the clinics to take place in Richford, Owego, and Waverly/Barton. Legislator Standinger stated they only received 100 of the 600 requested vaccines.

Legislator Mullen reported Guthrie patients that fit the vaccination criteria in Pennsylvania, are able to schedule a vaccination appointment, even if they are New York State residents. The Sayre Guthrie is holding a three-day, drive-thru vaccination clinic this week in the old K-Mart parking lot in Sayre, PA. Legislator Weston inquired where patients go to sign up. Legislator Mullen reported that patients call the Guthrie to make an appointment.

Legislator Mullen reported teachers in the Waverly School District hope to get vaccinated this Friday, January 22, 2021. Legislator Mullen stated those living on the Pennsylvania border are getting vaccinated in Pennsylvania. Legislator Mullen stated this speaks volumes about the vaccination distribution in New York State.

Chair Sauerbrey stated vaccination distribution should have come from Public Health Departments, not the Governor. She explained Public Health Departments have trained for years and believes they would have had an equitable distribution of the vaccine as it became available. Chair Sauerbrey reported she will continue to share her comments on Control Room Meetings with the Governor's Office.

Legislator Monell stated the community doesn't understand that it is not the Legislature's fault that vaccines are not available. Chair Sauerbrey agreed and explained the Legislature has no say in the matter. She stated the Governor is holding the reigns and she has no problem telling residents that.

Legislator Mullen reported the Governor's Office and the State Department of Health release information that contradicts one another. He stated Tioga County's Public Health Department

is spending the next two days calling every individual that signed up for a now-canceled vaccination clinic. Legislator Mullen explained State Law requires Public Health Departments to input every name of those signed up for a clinic, in a State computer system. He reported the State's computer system was hacked. Legislator Mullen reported Public Health was told the issue would not be fixed anytime soon.

Legislator Weston inquired if individuals with pre-determined conditions were eligible to receive the vaccine in Pennsylvania. Legislator Mullen replied individuals need a note from their doctor documenting their medical condition. He reported those over the age of 65 are also eligible.

COVID-19 Vaccination Paid Leave Time: Chair Sauerbrey reported the Governor is proposing, as part of the 2021-2022 State budget, to allow employees up to four hours of paid leave time for COVID-19 vaccinations.

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

Meeting adjourned at 10:32 a.m.

Next Worksession scheduled for Thursday, February 4, 2021, at 1:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Amy Eiklor
Deputy Legislative Clerk