



## **Tioga County Worksession Minutes** **September 7, 2023 – 1:00 p.m.**

### **Legislators Present:**

Legislator Brown  
Legislator Ciotoli  
Legislator Flesher  
Legislator Mullen  
Legislator Roberts (*Departed at 2:05 p.m.*)  
Chair/Legislator Sauerbrey  
Legislator Standinger  
Legislator Weston

### **Legislators Absent:**

Legislator Monell

### **Guests:**

None

### **Staff present:**

Peter DeWind, County Attorney  
Cathy Haskell, Legislative Clerk  
Amy Eiklor, Deputy Legislative Clerk  
Jackson Bailey, Budget Officer  
Linda Parke, Personnel Officer  
Gary Hammond, Commissioner of Public Works (*Departed at 2:06 p.m.*)

**Call Meeting to Order:** Chair Sauerbrey opened the meeting at 1:05 p.m.

### **Management/Confidential Salary Committee Recommendations – Personnel**

**Officer:** Personnel Officer, Linda Parke, reported the Management/Confidential Salary Committee met and made the following recommendations for the 2024 Budget:

- Employee health insurance contribution remain the same at 15%
- Employee health insurance contribution remain the same for part-time attorneys & part-time dentists at 20%
- Management/Confidential salary increase of 4.5%
- Salary range adjustment of 4.5%

Personnel Officer Parke explained that there is a base range and a top range for salaries. Typically, a new hire will start at the base range unless the department receives Legislative approval to start at a higher rate. The range is usually adjusted at the same rate as Management/Confidential salary increases. Chair Sauerbrey asked if there were any objections to the proposed salary range adjustment increase of 4.5%. There were no objections.

Ms. Parke explained that new this year, the Management/Confidential Committee proposed the creation of a Longevity Policy. The committee recommends employees that reach 20 years of service be given an additional week of vacation. Legislator Mullen inquired how many vacation days employees with 20 years of service currently receive. Ms. Parke responded 4 weeks of vacation. There were no objections to the creation of the policy or the additional week of vacation for employees with 20, or more, years of service to Tioga County. Legislative Clerk Haskell clarified that the creation of the Longevity Policy would go into the Employee Handbook, therefore, a resolution would be needed later this year to add that section. Ms. Parke will present a resolution with the policy later this year.

Chair Sauerbrey asked the Legislators if they had any objection to keeping employee health insurance contributions the same at 15% and 20%. Chair Sauerbrey asked if health insurance premiums will increase in 2024. Ms. Parke responded, yes, the premiums are expected to increase, but at this time, she does not know the amount of the increase. The quote came back at a 13% increase, but Ms. Parke hopes to come in much lower. Legislator Weston asked what percentage would be ideal. Ms. Parke replied that she would like the rate to be closer to what it was last year at 5% or 6%. There were no objections to the employee health insurance contribution remaining the same at 15% and 20%.

Chair Sauerbrey asked the Legislators if there were any objections to the proposed 4.5% salary increase for Management/Confidential employees. There were no objections to the proposed 4.5% increase.

**2024 Budget Update – Budget Officer Bailey:** Budget Officer Bailey distributed a budget packet to the Legislators and highlighted the following budget items in regard to the Capital Budget:

- The total Fund Balance at year-end 2023 is estimated at \$11,911,275. This is comprised of Unrestricted/Assigned, Unappropriated (Unrestricted), estimated to be \$825,056 at year end and Restricted (Reserves), which is estimated to be \$11,086,219 at year-end.
- Mr. Bailey reported Interfund Transfers is revenue that comes from the General Fund. As the Capital Budget sits right now, the General Fund would be charged \$7,087,542.63. Mr. Bailey explained the typical amount is between \$2 million and \$4 million.

Chair Sauerbrey asked if the large increase was due to the Public Works budget. Mr. Bailey replied yes, as it sits now, the Fund Balance in the Capital Fund cannot absorb the Capital Budget. The General Fund will have to pick up the difference.

Mr. Bailey highlighted the following Capital Budget accounts:

- Renovations at 56 Main Street - \$750,000
- Court Annex Improvements - \$775,000
- Building Construction TF - \$5,000,000
- Courthouse Renovations - \$35,000
- IT Software Expense - \$142,312.63
- Computer - \$102,000
- Public Safety Car/Truck - \$165,830
- Security Equipment - \$50,000
- Public Health Car/Truck - \$60,000 (a percentage is funded by State Aid)
- Road Machinery Equipment (Not Car) - \$11,000
- One Ton Flatbed/Rollback Truck - \$160,000
- Tandem Axle Truck - \$640,000
- Boom Mower - \$190,000
- DSS Car/Truck - \$28,000 (a percentage is funded by State Aid)

**Building Construction TF Discussion:** Legislator Mullen inquired what the Building Construction TF account was for. Mr. Bailey replied it is for the truck storage facility that Commissioner of Public Works Gary Hammond would like to build. Commissioner Hammond stated DPW currently uses an unheated pole barn to store their trucks, that are valued at several million dollars. Commissioner Hammond stated this project has been in the Capital 5-year plan for a number of years, but it keeps getting pushed back. Chair Sauerbrey inquired if a Reserve account could be set up to fund this project and each year, funds could be appropriated and built up. Mr. Bailey stated yes, a Reserve Fund could be created, and he thinks about \$2 million from the General Fund is a reasonable amount to begin with. Commissioner Hammond reported that creating a Reserve account would be the light at the end of the tunnel for this project since it has been pushed back for many years.

Legislator Roberts inquired about the condition of the current storage facility as the Town of Owego lost equipment due to a heavy snowstorm. Commissioner Hammond reported the pole barn was probably constructed in the early 1980's and is made up of treated wood, trusses, and sheet metal. He doesn't believe there is a structural issue with the current facility but believes it has reached the end of its useful life. Legislator Ciotoli stated Tioga County needs to protect its investment in heavy equipment and begin the process of figuring out how to fund the project. Legislator Flesher mentioned that the Town of Berkshire had a wooden structure that caught fire during the day and was able to be contained. He would ere on the side of sooner rather than later in order to protect equipment and employees. Legislator Weston indicated that he is in favor of creating an account and he agreed the equipment needs to be protected. Commissioner Hammond stated he could probably compile more information and come up with updated figures on the project that may be lower than the proposed \$5,000,000. He stated a portion of the expense would be used for a fire suppression system. Commissioner Hammond stated his entire fleet has a battery disconnect that helps prevent fires that have occurred in other towns.

Chair Sauerbrey asked the Legislators if there were any objections to creating a Reserve Fund in order to move forward with the truck storage facility project. Legislator Flesher stated since the account will be funded over the course of a number of years, the cost of the project will

likely increase. Chair Sauerbrey agreed and acknowledged the project cost will more than likely increase over time. On a straw poll vote, the Legislators in attendance agreed to create a Reserve Fund and appropriate \$2.5 million in that account for 2024. Mr. Bailey will bring forth a resolution by year-end that establishes a Reserve Fund and appropriates funds. He will re-run the numbers and provide an updated summary of the Capital Budget at the next Worksession.

**Budget Updates:** Mr. Bailey stated he will change the appropriation of the General Fund and interfund the \$2.5 million, plus any residual Unfunded Capital amounts. Chair Sauerbrey reported an estimate came in at around \$1 million for the Mental Hygiene building renovations at the Village of Waverly Annex. She believes Tioga County should pay that amount using Reserves. She also mentioned refunding part of IT's Hardware and Software Reserves as IT used some of their funds to serve other departments with camera purchases. Mr. Bailey stated he will analyze those accounts later in the year when funds have been spent and recommend an appropriation at that time.

**Additional Funding for District Attorney & Public Defender:** Chair Sauerbrey reported that Tioga County anticipates at least one high-profile trial to take place next year. The trial involves multiple defendants and is expected to have a significant budgetary impact on the District Attorney and Public Defender's Offices. Chair Sauerbrey believes additional funds will need to be made available for those budgets as the large cost was not anticipated or submitted with the 2024 budget. She would like to ensure additional funds will be available for 2024. Mr. Bailey will work with those departments to come up with a rough estimate that can be added to their 2024 budgets.

**Outside Agency Funding:** Mr. Bailey reported two outside agencies requested an increase in funding in 2024. The Berkshire Free Library requested an additional \$1,388 and Tioga Opportunities requested an additional \$2,814. Legislator Flesher spoke with Town of Richford Supervisor Davis and Town of Berkshire Supervisor Gehm-Jordan about absorbing the increase in their budgets. They both agreed that their budgets could absorb the additional \$1,388.

Chair Sauerbrey stated that Tioga Opportunities handles aging programs on behalf of Tioga County. If Tioga Opportunities did not handle those programs, it would fall to Tioga County, but at a much higher cost. Legislator Brown reported the increased funding request is partially due to administrative costs. Legislator Flesher mentioned that due to COVID budget cuts, Tioga Opportunities received a decrease in funding from 2020 to 2021. Tioga Opportunities is the only outside agency that was not brought back up to the pre-COVID funding level. Mr. Bailey stated when Tioga Opportunities submitted their 2022 budget request, they did not request any additional funding. On a straw poll vote, all Legislators in attendance agreed to increase Tioga Opportunities funding by the requested \$2,814.

Mr. Bailey will report back to the Legislature at the September 21, 2023 Worksession. He plans on providing updated figures on outstanding payroll and benefit issues, as well as departmental adjustments. At the conclusion of today's meeting, the budget will roll from the Budget Officer Level (Level 2) to the Legislative Level (Level 3).

**Approval of Worksession Minutes:** On motion of Legislator Brown, seconded by Legislator Flesher, the August 24, 2023 minutes were unanimously approved.

**Action Items: ACTION ITEM #1– 8/24/2023 – Outside Agency Funding Requests –**

Budget Officer Bailey will email the Outside Agency Funding Requests from Berkshire Free Library and Tioga Opportunities to the Legislators. The Legislature will discuss and decide if any action will be taken on the requests.

**This item is completed and will be removed from the Action Item List.**

**Legislative Support:** Legislative Clerk Haskell has typed the Legislative Support minutes.

**Resolutions:** Ms. Haskell reviewed the agenda and resolutions for the September 12, 2023 Legislature meeting with discussion occurring on the following:

- ***Amend 2023 Budget – Social Services:*** Legislator Mullen stated this resolution is to transfer funds due to the increase in costs for JD Foster Care. He said he was shocked by the large amount of money it takes to house and care for one JD Foster Care individual. This service is a mandate from New York State, so Tioga County has no choice but to pay the cost.
- ***Requesting Tioga County Veterans' Service Agency Be Allowed to Exceed Food & Beverage Purchase Guidelines:*** Legislator Mullen clarified that the funds used to pay for the events within the resolution are entirely funded with various grants. The Director of Veterans Services must use the grant funds by the end of the year as they cannot be carried over to 2024. Chair Sauerbrey reported in 2024, all the Dwyer grant funding will be used for staffing, therefore, there will not be funds left to hold large events.

**Other:**

- ***NYSAC Fall Seminar:*** Chair Sauerbrey reported the NYSAC Fall Seminar will be held at Turning Stone on September 13<sup>th</sup> – September 15<sup>th</sup>. Chair Sauerbrey and Legislator Roberts will attend on behalf of Tioga County. Chair Sauerbrey will ask Deputy Chair Monell to preside in her absence.
- ***State of Emergency Declaration:*** Chair Sauerbrey reminded the Legislators that she signed the State of Emergency Declaration Extension #4. Tioga County will have the State of Emergency in place for an additional 30 days due to the possibility of incoming migrants. Chair Sauerbrey sent an email to Department Heads informing them of the extension as she became aware some employees did not know about the Declaration, which has been in place since May 11, 2023.

**Executive Session:** Seven Legislators were in attendance with Legislators Monell and Roberts being absent. Personnel Officer Parke, County Attorney DeWind, Budget Officer Bailey, and Legislative Clerk Haskell remained in attendance. Motion by Legislator Brown, seconded by Legislator Mullen, to move into Executive Session to discuss matters pertaining to the appointment and promotion of particular individuals at 2:10 p.m. Motion carried. Motion by Legislator Brown to adjourn, seconded by Legislator Ciotoli. Executive Session adjourned at 2:46 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 2:46 p.m.

Next Worksession scheduled for Thursday, September 21, 2023, at 10:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Amy Eiklor*

Deputy Legislative Clerk