



Tioga County Work Session Minutes February 18, 2021 – 10:00 a.m.

Legislators Present:

Legislator Balliet
Legislator Hollenbeck
Legislator Roberts
Chair/Legislator Sauerbrey
Legislator Standinger (*Arrived at 10:16 a.m.*)
Legislator Sullivan
Legislator Weston

Legislators Absent:

Legislator Monell
Legislator Mullen

Guests:

Kienan Dixon, Reporter, WBNG
Joan Davis
Irena TRH Raia
Raluca Iorga
Laura Eberly

Staff Present:

Peter DeWind, County Attorney
Megan Griffiths, Agricultural Development Specialist (*Departed at 10:11 a.m.*)
Stephanie Jerzak, Chief Accountant (*Departed at 10:09 a.m.*)
Cathy Haskell, Legislative Clerk
Amy Eiklor, Deputy Legislative Clerk

Call Meeting to Order: Chair Sauerbrey opened the meeting at 10:06 a.m. with the ***Third Special Legislative Meeting*** for Legislature consideration of the following resolutions:

- **Adopt Local Law No. 2 of 2021-A Local Law establishing the salary for the Office of County Treasurer for the four-year term of office commencing January 1, 2022, continuing through, and including, December 31, 2025**
- **Adopt Tioga County Police Reform & Reinvention Collaborative Plan**
- **Establish and Fund E911 Reserve from Local Law No. 3 of 2017 and Local Law No. 1 of 1991**

After the prayer and pledge, the Legislators in attendance voted in favor of the resolutions and the meeting was adjourned at 10:09 a.m. with a Public Hearing on the Annual Agricultural District Inclusion Request immediately following.

Chair Sauerbrey opened the Public Hearing at 10:09 a.m., which adjourned at 10:11 a.m. with regular Legislative Worksession immediately following.

Approval of Worksession Minutes: On motion of Legislator Roberts, seconded by Legislator Balliet and unanimously carried the February 4, 2021 minutes were approved.

Action Items:

Currently there are no action items.

Other:

- ***Opioid Litigation:*** County Attorney Peter DeWind reported he was contacted by Attorneys regarding the Opioid Litigation. The Attorneys asked to add a potential Defendant to the court proceeding. Mr. DeWind stated the case is New York State Opioid Litigation that Tioga County filed locally. He explained that cases have been consolidated together. Mr. DeWind reported counties are in different stages of litigation and Tioga County is still in the discovery phase.

Mr. DeWind stated it is not unusual to add a Defendant to a case as the discovery process moves forward. Nationwide, the company is being added to lawsuits. Mr. DeWind explained that a consulting firm allegedly assisted opioid producers in ensuring they were saturating the market with their products.

Mr. DeWind reported the Attorneys recommended the company be added to the case and stated that he is in favor of adding them as a Defendant. Mr. DeWind said he wanted to make the Legislature aware of the request.

Chair Sauerbrey asked the Legislators if they had any questions regarding this. Legislator Sullivan asked what the company's name is. Mr. DeWind reported the name is McKinsey & Company. He reported there is still time to discuss the matter at a later date.

- ***Acknowledgment of County Coroner Stewart Bennett:*** County Attorney Peter DeWind reported Tioga County Coroner, Stewart Bennett, was invited to speak at an International Forensic Conference in Osaka, Japan. Mr. DeWind is unsure if Mr. Bennett will attend the Conference, but wanted to mention the significance of the invitation.

Legislator Sullivan stated the Legislature is aware of Mr. Bennett's recognition statewide, as he is well-known for his professional expertise. Legislator Sullivan said she is happy and proud that Mr. Bennett is being recognized on an international level. She believes the opportunity is a career accomplishment and thanked Mr. DeWind for sharing it with Legislature.

- ***COVID-19 Case Reporting:*** Chair Sauerbrey reported a significant decline in active COVID-19 cases. She reported active cases went from over 200, down to 83. Chair Sauerbrey explained that New York State's Department of Health has a tracking system for active, quarantined, and recovered COVID-19 cases. She reported the system is known as CommCare and New York State requested Tioga County track COVID-19 cases through CommCare. Chair Sauerbrey stated Tioga County was tracking their own

cases, but due to the increase in numbers, the County needed help in tracking. Beginning in 2021, Tioga County started using the CommCare program. Chair Sauerbrey reported during the transition to CommCare, the COVID-19 case numbers became skewed as active cases were not removed from the system. As a result, the numbers reported from the State were much higher than reality.

- **COVID-19 Vaccine Update:** Chair Sauerbrey reported the Governor's Office wants the County to be aware of the number of Tioga County residents that received the COVID-19 vaccination. She stated Tioga County receives very few vaccines every week. Chair Sauerbrey reported the Governor's Office sent her a list of residents vaccinated, based on zip code.

Chair Sauerbrey expressed her concerns to the Governor's Office about Tioga County's unique location. Tioga County borders Pennsylvania and many residents traveled to Guthrie Clinic, Sayre, PA to receive their vaccination. Chair Sauerbrey reported that Guthrie has regular vaccination clinics. She asked the Governor's Office if residents vaccinated elsewhere, such as Guthrie, were reported in the list provided. Chair Sauerbrey believes the State did not realize there were that many people in Tioga County that use Guthrie in Sayre, PA.

Chair Sauerbrey reported some residents, with zip code 13760, are counted in Broome County's numbers, however, are actually Tioga County residents. She explained that she does not want individuals to come forward later on, claiming Tioga County did not offer opportunities for residents to be vaccinated.

Legislator Sullivan asked what the Governor's Office reply was when Chair Sauerbrey brought up these concerns. Chair Sauerbrey responded the State was not aware of these issues, however, will take another look at Tioga County's numbers and get back to her.

Legislator Sullivan asked if Tioga County could go back to tracking its own numbers. Chair Sauerbrey replied she does not believe so, as Tioga County has several providers that administer the vaccine. She explained that New York State supplies vaccines for large clinics, Public Health Departments, and some pharmacies. The Federal Government supplies vaccines for other pharmacies. Chair Sauerbrey reported the two agencies are not working or consulting with one another.

Legislator Sullivan inquired if vaccine providers are required to report numbers to Public Health Departments. Chair Sauerbrey responded those numbers are reported to the State.

Legislator Roberts stated this scenario is exactly what happens when government gets involved in healthcare.

Legislator Standinger concurred and stated those issuing the mandates are not being held accountable. He explained that Legislators are held accountable to residents and if someone has a complaint, it is addressed.

Legislator Sullivan stated counties across the New York are probably going through a similar situation. Chair Sauerbrey agreed and reported counties along the Pennsylvania border are dealing with the same issues. Legislator Sullivan stated the CommCare tracking system is no help to the counties and is skewed information. She expressed her concern that New York State residents are receiving inaccurate numbers.

Legislator Sullivan asked Chair Sauerbrey to keep the Legislators informed of the Governor's reply. Chair Sauerbrey replied that she would keep the Legislators informed of any updates on the matter.

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

Meeting adjourned at 10:22 a.m.

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

Respectfully submitted,
Amy Eiklor
Deputy Legislative Clerk