



## **Tioga County Worksession Minutes** **May 20, 2021 – 10:00 a.m.**

### **Legislators Present:**

Legislator Balliet  
Legislator Hollenbeck  
Legislator Monell  
Legislator Mullen  
Legislator Roberts  
Legislator Standinger (*arrived at 10:06 a.m.*)  
Legislator Sullivan  
Legislator Weston

### **Legislators Absent:**

Chair/Legislator Sauerbrey

### **Guests:**

Andrew Aronstam, Deputy Mayor of the Village of Waverly  
Keith Correll, Village of Waverly Trustee  
Steven A. Barrows (*departed at 10:09*)  
Patricia Barrows (*departed at 10:09*)  
Larry Schutts (*departed at 10:09*)  
Don Sherman (*departed at 10:09*)

### **Staff Present:**

Peter DeWind, County Attorney  
Cathy Haskell, Clerk of Legislature  
Amy Eiklor, Deputy Clerk of Legislature  
Lisa McCafferty, Public Health Director  
Lori Morgan, Director of Community Services  
Bethany O'Rourke, Personnel Officer  
Christopher Korba, Director of Finance-Mental Hygiene  
Ellen Pratt, Sustainability Manager

**Call Meeting to Order:** Deputy Chair Hollenbeck opened the meeting at 10:00 a.m.

**Public Hearing: Local Law Introductory No. C of 2021:** Deputy Chair Hollenbeck called the Public Hearing to order at 10:00 a.m. for Local Law Introductory No. C of 2021, a local law authorizing twelve (12) and thirteen (13) year-old licensed hunters to hunt deer with a firearm or crossbow during hunting season with the supervision of an adult licensed hunter. Legislative Clerk Haskell read the Public Hearing Notice and asked for public comments. Tioga County

resident, Steven A. Barrows read a statement of support for the adoption of Local Law Introductory No. C of 2021. There were no further comments. The Public Hearing adjourned at 10:05 a.m.

**Village of Waverly Office Discussion:** Legislator Mullen reported he has been communicating with Village of Waverly representatives regarding office space in the Village of Waverly Annex for Mental Hygiene. Currently, Mental Hygiene's satellite office in Waverly rents office space from Barterra Properties. The lease with Barterra Properties was recently renewed until August 30, 2023 with annual rent of \$22,960, plus the cost of prorated utilities. Director of Community Services, Lori Morgan, reported Mental Hygiene pays an additional \$64,000 per year to operate at Tioga County's Health and Human Services Building in Owego.

Legislator Mullen stated the Village of Waverly is considering bonding the office space to fit the needs of Tioga County's Mental Hygiene Department. Ms. Morgan reported Tioga County currently pays about \$11 per square-foot of office space and tentative figures from the Village show their office space is projected to cost just over \$6 per square-foot.

Legislator Mullen explained should the Legislature choose to rent from the Village of Waverly, Tioga County's portion of rent would equal the Village of Waverly's bond payment. The term of the lease would be for the term of the bond. Legislator Mullen reported the Village of Waverly discussed a 30-year bond, but it can be negotiated. Legislator Mullen expects renovations to be completed in roughly two years, just about the time the Barterra Properties lease is set to expire.

Legislator Mullen reported Tioga County's Probation Department already has a presence working with the Waverly PD in the Village of Waverly Annex. Legislator Mullen believes having more of a presence in Waverly will be beneficial to the residents of Tioga County as many are not able to travel to Owego for services. He stated there is additional space in the Village of Waverly Annex for more departments, if needed. Legislator Mullen explained the Village of Waverly Annex does not flood, which occasionally happens in Owego.

Legislator Weston stated he is in favor of moving offices in the Village of Waverly Annex. Legislator Weston believes expanding offices to other areas of Tioga County could greatly benefit residents. Legislator Weston reported he has tried in the past to have more discussion about this matter, with no success. He suggested using the space for a satellite DMV or DSS office.

Legislator Sullivan stated the Village of Waverly office discussion has occurred in the past and she would like facts, figures, and more information about the proposal. She would like to see the differences in square footage, utility costs, and so forth instead of spending time asking a bunch of questions. Legislator Monell concurred and stated the proposal needs to be in writing.

Village of Waverly Trustee, Keith Correll, stated the Village would need to know exactly what Tioga County was looking to do before a financial proposal could be presented. Mr. Correll brought maps and layouts of the building that were available for viewing. Mr. Correll stated he spoke with Ms. Morgan and it was his understanding that Tioga County would need a separate entrance and parking lot, but the Village is willing to accommodate other requests.

Village of Waverly Deputy Mayor, Andrew Aronstam, reported the Village of Waverly already uses County computers and phones. Mr. Aronstam believes the next step is to put together a business plan with the specifications that Tioga County is looking for. Then, the Village of Waverly can come back to the Legislature to present their proposal with financial data included. At that point, the Legislature could make their decision to move forward or not.

Mr. Aronstam asked the Legislature if there was any opposition to more discussion and a proposal. Legislator Roberts inquired if the commitment has to be for 30 years. Mr. Aronstam replied it depends on what the bond number comes back at. Legislator Roberts stated he is not in favor of a 30-year commitment. Legislator Mullen stated the timeframe can be negotiated.

Legislator Monell reiterated his desire for a written proposal. County Attorney Peter DeWind asked Legislator Mullen who will be working on the proposal and collaborating with the Village of Waverly. Legislator Mullen replied that a committee will be formed consisting of himself, Lori Morgan, and Commissioner of Public Works, Gary Hammond, in conjunction with Village of Waverly officials. A proposal will be developed and presented to the Legislature at a later date.

**Approval of Worksession Minutes:** On motion of Legislator Weston, seconded by Legislator Monell and unanimously carried, the May 6, 2021 Legislative Worksession minutes were approved.

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

### **Other:**

- **COVID Mask Protocol:** Legislator Balliet reported COVID mask guidance is ever-changing and he was concerned about the impact on Tioga County employees. Legislator Balliet proposed if everyone in a department is fully vaccinated, those employees probably don't need to wear a mask. In higher traffic departments that frequently interact with the public, it's probably best to wear a mask. Legislator Balliet suggested using a department by department approach to implement a mask protocol.

County Attorney Peter DeWind stated he polled other counties to see what their mask protocol is. Mr. DeWind reported most counties are relying on the honor system for employees and visitors to appropriately mask and social distance. Erie County is an outlier as they require all visitors and staff to wear masks into the building, when leaving workstations, and in elevators. Mr. DeWind asked if the Legislature would like to adopt the CDC's updated guidelines for the fully vaccinated or move forward with department by department exceptions. He stated some departments, like corrections, are automatically exempt from adopting CDC guidelines and masks must be worn regardless of vaccination status. Mr. DeWind explained that the Courthouse Annex is covered under the Office of Court Administration (OCA), which does not plan to relax the mask mandate until May 24<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. DeWind reported the Probation Department has concerns about meeting with clients without a mask on. As the Probation Department is located within an OCA covered facility, clients would have to wear a mask into the building. However, once in the Probation office, fully vaccinated clients are not required to wear a mask under the CDC's new guidelines.

County Attorney DeWind reported an exemption to the CDC's guidelines exists for facilities designated as healthcare settings. He believes Mental Hygiene falls into that category and the entire Health and Human Services building can be designated as a healthcare setting.

Legislator Sullivan suggested a policy in which fully vaccinated individuals are not required to wear a mask. However, fully vaccinated individuals may wear a mask if they choose to.

Legislator Mullen stated he would like to leave the decision of employee mask protocol up to department heads. Personnel Officer, Bethany O'Rourke, asked what protocol the general public should follow when in County buildings. Legislator Mullen stated employees will not ask the public to show proof of vaccination.

Public Health Director, Lisa McCafferty, said she is concerned about high-traffic areas, like the DMV. She explained there are some individuals that refuse to wear masks. County Attorney DeWind stated the DMV has OSHA approved Plexiglas barriers between customers and employees. Mr. DeWind asked if signs should be put up around the building to advise of mask protocol. Ms. McCafferty replied yes, signs should be placed at the entrance of the building as the DMV has heavy foot traffic.

Legislator Balliet suggested a policy of wearing masks into the building and once in a department, the individual should follow whatever protocol was decided by the department head. His biggest concern is mask-less individuals that are not actually fully vaccinated. Ms. McCafferty again stated there will be individuals that refuse to wear a mask and there is really nothing that can be done about that.

Ms. O'Rourke proposed posting signs near public entrances that state those fully vaccinated are not required to wear a mask. As far as employees go, let department heads decide. The Legislators in attendance agreed with Ms. O'Rourke's suggestion. Legislator Sullivan asked Ms. McCafferty if she was good with Ms. O'Rourke's proposal. Ms. McCafferty replied yes.

Legislative Clerk Haskell stated signs requiring the general public to wear masks were taken down yesterday and there are currently no signs on the doors. The Legislators in attendance agreed that new signs are to be made and hung up.

Legislator Sullivan made a motion to have signs made that say, "No mask required, if fully vaccinated." Legislator Standinger stated he would like to add the phrase, "Per CDC Guidelines." Legislator Mullen seconded Legislator Sullivan's motion with the added language suggested by Legislator Standinger. All Legislators in attendance voted in favor of a sign that states, "Per CDC Guidelines, No Mask Required If Fully Vaccinated." County Attorney DeWind stated the signs will go up informing the public of the mask protocol and employee protocol will be left to department heads.

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

Meeting adjourned at 10:50 a.m.

Next Worksession scheduled for Thursday, June 10, 2021, at 1:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Amy Eiklor*

Deputy Legislative Clerk