



Tioga County Worksession Minutes **September 24, 2026 – 10:00 a.m.**

Legislators Present:

Legislator Aronstam
Legislator Bunce
Legislator Ciotoli
Chair/Legislator Monell
Legislator Standinger

Legislators Absent:

Legislator Brown
Legislator Cantella
Legislator Flesher
Legislator Rose

Guests:

Matt Freeze, Reporter, Morning Times

Staff present:

Peter DeWind, County Attorney
Cathy Haskell, Legislative Clerk
Jackson D. Bailey II, County Administrator
Breige Graven, Deputy Legislative Clerk
Linda Parke, Personnel Officer

Call Meeting to Order: Chair Monell opened the meeting at 10:00 a.m. with a ***Public Hearing on Local Law Introductory No. A of 2026; A Local Law Providing for the Collection of a Hotel and Motel Tax in Tioga County.***

Legislative Clerk Haskell took roll call and read the legal notice as published in the Tioga County designated newspapers. Public Hearing adjourned at 10:03 a.m. with regular Worksession immediately following.

M/C Salary Committee Recommendations: Personnel Officer Parke reported the Management/Confidential Salary Committee convened in July and August to discuss the following proposed 2027 recommendations for Legislature consideration:

Topic	Recommendation	Decision
Health Insurance	FT Employees – maintain 15% contribution 4 day/week Attorneys – maintain 15% contribution PT Attorneys – maintain 20% contribution PT Dentists – maintain 25% contribution	No Change – Legislators agreed.
Salary Ranges	Increase salary ranges by 3.5%	Legislators agreed.
Salary Increases	Increase FT and PT M/C Salaries by 3.5% Increase FT Board of Elections Salaries by 3.5%	Legislators agreed
Legislator's Salary Increases	Ms. Parke reported the Legislator salaries will need to be discussed and determined separately as part of the 2027 Tentative Budget process.	Legislators agreed to continue discussion of Legislator Salaries as part of the 2027 Tentative Budget process.
Vacation Sell-Back Policy	Currently, the Management/Confidential Vacation Sell-Back policy allows full-time employees who have been employed for six to thirteen years of consecutive service to sell back a maximum of five (5) days per budget year, and full-time employees who have at least fourteen or more consecutive years of service to sell back a maximum of (10) days per budget year. Proposal is to establish a third longevity tier, which allows full-time employees who have been employed for at least twenty-one consecutive years to sell back a maximum of fifteen (15) vacation days per budget year rather than the current ten (10) days.	Legislators agreed to changing the M/C policy to reflect the addition of a longevity tier allowing employees with twenty-one (21) consecutive years or more of service to sell back up to fifteen (15) days of vacation. Personnel will need to bring forth a policy change resolution.
Vacation and Floating Holiday Time	Currently, the M/C policy allows employees to use vacation and floating holiday accruals in one-hour or half-day increments. Proposal to amend the M/C policy to allow employees to use vacation and floating holiday accruals in fifteen-minute increments. The proposed change was reviewed with Payroll Coordinator Amy Potter, who indicated the revision would simplify the payroll process.	Legislators agreed. Personnel will need to bring forth a policy change resolution.

On a straw poll vote, all Legislators in attendance unanimously approved all proposed M/C Salary Committee recommendations, with the associated policy changes tentatively

approved pending adoption by resolution at the October 13, 2026 Regular Legislature Meeting.

County Administrator Report and 2027 Tentative Budget Update: County Administrator Jackson Bailey reported the following:

DEPARTMENTAL MANAGEMENT & LABOR RELATIONS

POLICY REVIEW & IMPLEMENTATION:

Disciplinary Procedure Policy - Mr. Bailey reported that he and Personnel Officer Parke have a meeting scheduled with the Civil Service Employees Association (CSEA) to review concerns regarding the current draft of the Disciplinary Procedure Policy and discuss potential revisions.

Assignment & Use of County Vehicles Policy - Mr. Bailey reported that the revised draft of the Assignment & Use of County Vehicles Policy remains under review and is anticipated to be presented to the Executive Committee in October, with the goal of bringing the revised policy forward for adoption in November.

Social Media Policy - Mr. Bailey reported that the Policy Review Committee continues to review the County's Social Media Policy with assistance and input from Chief Information Officer Brandon Clark.

Legislator Ciotoli inquired whether the policy would be reviewed by County Attorney Peter DeWind prior to implementation, noting the complexities associated with freedom of speech and regulating employee social media activity. He emphasized the importance of maintaining a comprehensive policy addressing social media use across County departments, particularly regarding employees' personal social media accounts, and circumstances in which employees may be perceived as speaking on behalf of the County due to their positions.

Mr. Bailey confirmed that all County policies undergo legal review prior to implementation. He further explained that development of the policy has been extensive to ensure compliance with applicable standards, including FOIL requirements and record retention procedures for County social media posts and associated comments.

Legislator Bunce noted the importance of maintaining a Social Media Policy, particularly as surrounding counties have adopted similar policies.

Purchasing and Payment Policy – Mr. Bailey reported that the Administrative and Fiscal Review Committee will begin reviewing the Purchasing and Payment Policy in October. The Committee will review the existing policy and identify necessary revisions.

Mr. Bailey further reported that he anticipates the revised policy to be completed by January, allowing sufficient time for the Legislators to review the policy prior to presenting a resolution for its adoption at the First Special & Organizational Meeting of 2027.

DEPARTMENT HEAD EVALUATIONS:

Mr. Bailey reported that only a few Department Head Evaluations remain outstanding and anticipates completing the appraisal process after meeting with the Legislators and Department Heads for final review and signatures.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT & BUDGETING

BUDGET OFFICER: – County Administrator Bailey distributed and reviewed the following budget documents:

- **YTD Budget Report (ALL FUNDS) as of August 2026:**

For Objects of Revenue, Mr. Bailey reported the original budget of \$100,796,636 with modifications of \$24,422,645 resulting in a revised budget of \$125,219,281 with actual revenue earned and recorded of \$82,069,865 and an estimated remaining revenue balance for 2026 of \$43,149,416. Mr. Bailey shared we are at 66% expectation of YTD revenue as of August 2026.

For the Objects of Expense, Mr. Bailey reported the original budget of \$109,596,570 with modifications of \$34,916,567, resulting in a revised budget of \$144,513,137 with total actual expenditures to date as of August 2026 of \$73,245,132 of the remaining appropriation budget of \$71,268,005. Mr. Bailey shared we are at 51% utilization of expenditures as of August 2026.

Mr. Bailey reported the total applied fund balance at the beginning of the year was \$8,799,933 with additional appropriations and carryforwards of \$10,493,922, including General Fund and Capital Fund expenditures with a total applied fund balance for year-end 2026 anticipated at \$19,293,856 across all funds.

Mr. Bailey noted that August increases were attributed to resolutions associated with Snowmobile Fund Grants, ILS funding, and Public Works "Marchiselli" funding.

- **YTD Budget Report for County Administrator Budget: A1230 & Budget A1340**

As of August 2026, Mr. Bailey reported the County Administrator's budget reflects 55.8% utilization with no concerns or challenges for 2026.

Mr. Bailey also reviewed Budget A1340 report and reported that Sales and Use Tax, Sales Tax Capital, Tax on Adult-Use Cannabis, Emergency 911, OTB Distribution, Opioid Settlement Funds, Unclassified Revenues, State Aid Casino Revenue and Fees, and Contracted Services remain on track with projected 2026 budget estimates. He reported that the actual sales tax revenue for 2026 continues to track consistently with the total estimated revenue for the year.

- **High-Profile Criminal Case (HPCC)**

Mr. Bailey reported that as of August 2026, approximately \$48,000 remains available in the High-Profile Criminal Case (HPCC) budget for potential transfer to departments

as needed. He stated that departments utilizing the HPCC funding were contacted regarding anticipated 2027 expenditures. The District Attorney's Office and Indigent Legal Services (ILS) indicated there may be residual expenditures in 2027. Accordingly, Mr. Bailey recommended maintaining the original \$250,000 appropriation in the 2027 budget until it is confirmed that there are no more outstanding costs.

Legislator Ciotoli questioned whether unused funds could be reallocated later in the year once outstanding expenditures related to the case are resolved. Mr. Bailey reported the unused 2026 funding will go back into Fund Balance and a new amount for 2027 will be appropriated. Mr. Bailey confirmed funds may be moved through the appropriate budget process mid-year.

Legislator Standinger stated that the ILS and District Attorney's Office's projections appeared accurate and supported maintaining the original appropriation at this time, with the understanding that funds may be reallocated if no longer needed.

- **Sales Tax Analysis**

Mr. Bailey reviewed the Sales Tax Analysis Worksheet, which provided a five-year comparison of budgeted versus actual sales tax revenue, as well as the 2026 budget breakdown and proposed 2027 distribution.

Mr. Bailey reported that total sales tax revenue received in 2025 was \$33,837,150. He stated that 2026 sales tax revenue is currently tracking near that amount, with \$20,294,192 received YTD. For 2027, Mr. Bailey reported that the estimated total sales tax revenue has increased from the 2026 estimate of \$30,000,000 to \$32,500,000. Mr. Bailey explained that this amount is calculated using a formula that takes into account the County's sales tax extender, as well as the remaining funds that have been appropriated to capital, resulting in approximately \$24,375,000 available for distribution. Mr. Bailey explained that the County retains 66.67% of the distributable amount, with the remainder distributed among towns and villages. He noted that the distribution percentages are based on equalization information and Census data, which is updated every ten years.

For 2027, Mr. Bailey proposed a tentative \$28,437,500 in sales tax revenue, \$2,250,000 for the discretionary amount, and \$1,812,500 for capital. He further reported that based off these estimates, approximately \$8,124,180 is anticipated to be distributed to towns and villages.

Legislator Standinger stated that the County's distribution method appears fair. Mr. Bailey confirmed, noting that distribution is based on population and apportionments.

Legislator Bunce inquired whether the approximate \$24,000,000 reflected in the report represented what is estimated to be available for distribution for the entire 2027 budget year, or if it is the projected amount for 2026. Mr. Bailey clarified that the figure represents the estimated amount available for distribution in 2027. For 2026, Mr.

Bailey reported approximately \$7.7 million is for distribution to towns and villages, as the County retains approximately \$16.5 million

- **Hotel and Motel Occupancy Tax Allocation**

Mr. Bailey reviewed the Hotel and Motel Occupancy Tax revenue and proposed adjustments for 2027, noting that historical budget lines have remained relatively unchanged because of previously lower collections. Due to recent growth in total occupancy tax received, Mr. Bailey proposed adjusting the budgeted amounts accordingly for 2027.

Mr. Bailey reported that the 2025 and 2026 budgets included \$14,000 for the Treasurer's Office, \$35,000 for the Department of Economic Development & Planning (ED&P), and \$150,000 for Tourism. He explained that the budgetary expectation was for \$170,000 to be contributed to Tourism from the reserve, with \$150,000 returned as revenue, resulting in a projected \$20,000 shortfall to the reserve. However, Mr. Bailey reported that actual 2025 contributions were approximately \$18,000 to the Treasurer's Office, \$86,000 to ED&P, and \$259,000 to Tourism.

Based on how YTD 2026 revenues are tracking and current formulations for the distribution of Hotel and Motel Occupancy Tax, Mr. Bailey suggested that the County budgets \$17,500 for the Treasurer's Office, \$83,125 for ED&P, and \$249,375 for Tourism in 2027. He explained that based on the currently approved Tourism appropriation of \$200,000 for the 2027 budget year and estimated Tourism revenue of \$249,375, approximately \$49,375 would potentially be available for contribution to the Tourism reserve.

Chair Monell requested a breakdown identifying the sources of occupancy tax revenue. Mr. Bailey reported that the Treasurer's Office tracks the distributions and agreed to provide the Legislature with a report.

Legislator Ciotoli inquired whether potential marketing associated with Binghamton University events, including Parents' Weekend and graduation, could fall within tourism-related activities. Mr. Bailey confirmed that it could.

Mr. Bailey further reported that additional budget information will be presented at the October 8, 2026 Worksession, including liability insurance estimates, salary impacts and benefit estimates.

CAPITAL PROJECTS:

- **Radio Communications Tower Update:**

Mr. Bailey reported concerns regarding the condition of the South Apalachin tower driveway, as portions of the grading and material placed at the site have begun to wash out. He stated that the Department of Public Works (DPW) and consultants from Motorola Solutions plan to visit the site to inspect the driveway and develop a plan to bring it to County standards and ensure its long-term suitability for the tower site.

Mr. Bailey further reported that site testing has been completed at nine radio tower locations. Upon activation of the Carmichael Tower, radio signal testing is anticipated to begin, including updates to handheld radios and testing of communication channels. Mr. Bailey noted that Deputy Director of Emergency Services William Ellis plans to be present for the handheld radio updates. The project remains on schedule.

- **Consolidated County Office Building (CCOB):**

Mr. Bailey reported that the demolition Invitation for Bids (IFB) has been prepared and is with DPW. The IFB is anticipated to be posted on September 25, 2026, with the award process planned for October 16, 2026.

Mr. Bailey noted that a Special Meeting may be necessary in October to award the demolition contract. He further noted that the previously scheduled September 26, 2026 CCOB meeting will be postponed to October 28, 2026, as he will be away at the NYSAC conference. Additional information regarding the award and demolition timeline is anticipated to be available at the meeting.

GRANTS & SHARED SERVICES:

- **USDA FY26 Congressional Directed Spending Grant –**

Mr. Bailey reported receiving additional guidance regarding the \$1,500,000 grant from Congressman Langworthy's Office dedicated to the Radio Communications Tower Project. He explained that due to USDA requirements, use of the funding is subject to various compliance measures. Mr. Bailey reported the County is working with their counsel and the people in charge of overseeing the grant from Congressman Langworthy's Office process, along with representatives from Motorola Solutions, to identify components of the project that can appropriately utilize funding while remaining in compliance with grant requirements. He noted that use of the funds for certain construction activities could require additional environmental review. Once all components are reviewed and finalized with the USDA, the grant funding process will move forward.

- **NYS 250th Commemoration Commission Award –**

Mr. Bailey reported that the projects funded through the County's \$15,000 New York State Education Department (NYSED) award for the 250th Commemoration remain ongoing. He further reported that approximately \$6,700 remains available from the funding, and that County Historian Emma Sedore is working with local female veterans regarding a potential memorial monument project. Mr. Bailey reported that he submitted a budget adjustment request to NYSED to permit the remaining funding to be used for the proposed project and the request was approved. Additional information will be presented to the Legislature as the project develops.

- **ESD – 2025 County Infrastructure Grant –**

Mr. Bailey reported the County Infrastructure Grant associated with the purchase and planned use of the 153 Main Street property remains pending with Empire State Development (ESD). He further reported that a budgetary change proposal request

has been submitted, but no response has been received. Mr. Bailey explained that he plans to follow up with the ESD regarding the status of the grant.

OPIOID SETTLEMENT FUNDS:

- **2026 RFP Awards/Opioid Advisory Committee –**

Mr. Bailey reported that review of first-quarter submissions from the agencies awarded funding through the Opioid Settlement Funds (OSF) remains ongoing. Four of the five submissions have been reviewed, completed and authorized. He and the Department of Mental Hygiene continue to work with the remaining agency to ensure compliance with RFP requirements.

POSITION REQUEST

- **Fiscal Services Administrator –**

Mr. Bailey reported that he met with the Personnel Office to revise the proposed job description for a Fiscal Services Administrator. The position is intended to assist with procurement compliance, budgetary matters, auditing functions, and administrative responsibilities. Mr. Bailey anticipates presenting a resolution at the October 13, 2026 Regular Legislature Meeting to establish and fund the position, after which posting for the job would begin. He explained that development of a training plan for the new title will coincide with revisions to the Purchasing and Payment Policy, which will help determine the role and responsibilities of the position.

Legislator Ciotoli inquired as to whether the position would assist in the auditing process for the County. Mr. Bailey explained that the Fiscal Services Administrator would help in reviewing requisitions before they're converted to purchase orders to ensure applicable resolutions, contracts, procurement documentation, and approvals are complete.

Legislative Clerk Cathy Haskell explained that under the current process, requisitions are generally converted to purchase orders before reaching the auditing stage, with the invoice subsequently reviewed. The proposed position would provide an additional level of review earlier in the purchasing process before reaching her as the County Auditor.

Mr. Bailey noted that strengthening our AP controls was also recommended during the most recent County audit. He further noted that no compliance violations were identified, however, the additional review would strengthen internal controls and help ensure continued adherence to purchasing guidelines.

PURCHASING

- **Administrative and Fiscal Review Committee –**

Mr. Bailey reported the Administrative and Fiscal Review Committee will meet on October 16, 2026 for its initial review of the Purchasing and Payment Policy. The

Committee will review the existing policy, establish expectations, and determine how best to approach the revision process.

ADMINISTRATION & COMMUNICATION

- **Leaders' Meeting -**

Mr. Bailey reported that the next Leaders' Meeting is scheduled for October 27, 2026, and will be relocated to the Public Safety Building. He noted that there may not be a presenter for the meeting, and that he is instead considering incorporating training exercises and year-end reviews with Department Heads, as well as information regarding anticipated procurement changes.

MISCELLANEOUS:

- ***Tioga County Chamber of Commerce/2026 Leadership Tioga –***

Mr. Bailey reported the Ti-Ahwaga Community Players were originally scheduled to participate in the most recent leadership session on September 9, 2026, but were unavailable. The Tioga Arts Council participated instead. Executive Director of the Tioga Arts Council Christina Di Stefano provided information regarding the Arts Council and its efforts to promote the arts within the community and led attendees on a walking tour of art installations throughout the Village. Mr. Bailey reported the session was well received.

- ***Institute for Advancement (I4A) –***

Mr. Bailey reported that the next I4A session, "Stepping Into Supervision", is scheduled for October 21, 2026.

- ***NYSAC Legislative Conference –***

Mr. Bailey reported he will be out of office from September 28-30, 2026, as he will be attending the NYSAC Legislative Conference in Syracuse.

- ***Tioga County Chamber of Commerce Spotlight –***

Mr. Bailey reported the Tioga County Chamber of Commerce recently featured the Child Advocacy Center as part of its community spotlight initiative. A press release was made including a photograph and promotional information regarding the services the Center provides within the community.

Approval of Worksession Minutes: On motion of Legislator Ciotoli, seconded by Legislator Aronstam, the September 10, 2026 minutes were unanimously approved.

Action Items: Currently, there are no action items.

Other:

- **ILS Fourth Family Defense Grant –**

County Attorney Peter DeWind reported that ILS recently advised the County of a potential grant opportunity. He noted the additional funding is granted on a first-come, first-serve basis and that similar funding has been exhausted quickly in previous rounds. Mr. DeWind explained that the County currently has approximately \$750,000 appropriated under the Fourth Family Defense Grant, with the potential for an additional \$100,000 in funding. He requested Legislative authorization to begin the application process immediately and subsequently present a resolution at the October 13, 2026 Regular Legislature Meeting.

Chair Monell requested a straw poll vote. All Legislators in attendance were in support of proceeding with the application and presenting the resolution at the October 13, 2026 Legislature meeting.

- **Shurfine Food Mart Fire – Village of Spencer –**

Legislator Bunce reported that he attended a meeting hosted by the Tioga County Food Alliance in the Village of Spencer regarding local food accessibility following the loss of the community's local grocery store. He noted that the recent fire at the Shurfine Food Mart has left residents without easy access to food. Legislator Bunce further reported that a representative from the Tioga County Public Health Department was also in attendance, as community members discussed potential options for residents, including volunteer efforts to assist individuals who need transportation to obtain groceries. He noted that approximately 30-40 individuals attended the meeting. No specific solution was determined, and another meeting is anticipated in October.

Chair Monell inquired as to whether there are plans to rebuild the grocery store. Legislator Bunce responded that there has been conflicting information circulating regarding whether the owners intend to rebuild.

- **48-50 Lake St. Property –**

Legislator Ciotoli provided an update regarding the building project at the Tioga Trails property located at 48-50 Lake St. in Owego. He reported that funding continues to be pursued for various components of the project. Legislator Ciotoli further reported that a roof assessment and asbestos testing have been completed, and bids are being sought for façade work. He reported updates are provided monthly among the Land Bank, IDA and ED&P. Legislative Clerk Haskell noted that a related resolution is anticipated for the October 13, 2026 Regular Legislature Meeting.

Legislator Ciotoli reported that applicable scopes of work and contracts continue to be reviewed with County Attorney DeWind. He further noted that visible work to the façade and roof should generate additional public interest as the project progresses.

Executive Session: None.

Meeting adjourned at 10:37 a.m.

Next Worksession is scheduled for Thursday, October 8, 2026 at 1:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Breige Graven

Deputy Legislative Clerk