

**REGULAR MEETING**  
**October 2, 2018**

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Chairman Lawrence Dolhof.

Roll Call: All Legislators were present, except Legislator Kulzer whom had been excused.

Chairman Dolhof offered the Invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

There were 12 persons present.

Chairman Dolhof declared the September 4, 2018 meeting minutes approved by general consent.

**REPORT OF THE RULES AND LEGISLATION COMMITTEE:**

The Rules and Legislation Committee had met and recommended to waive the rules to allow action on late resolutions.

Signed by: Ronald Burns, Chairman  
Jerry King  
Randall LaChausse

Dated: October 2, 2018

Legislator LaChausse made a motion to waive the rules, seconded by Legislator Burns, and carried.

Chairman Dolhof opened the public hearing for comments on Local Law Intro. No. 4-2018 "TO AUTHORIZE OVERRIDING THE TAX LEVY LIMIT ESTABLISHED BY GENERAL MUNICIPAL LAW § 3-C (A/K/A 2% TAX CAP) FOR THE LEWIS COUNTY 2019 BUDGET."

**PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR:**

South Lewis School District Superintendent Douglas Premo summarized the proposed down-sized \$44 million capital building project to \$38 million to incorporate all elementary into the main campus, which district voters initially rejected last December. Applying capital reserve funds reduces the total to just over \$36 million. The single campus concept is proposed as more efficient, rather than to renovate the Glenfield and Port Leyden schools. Annual operational savings are projected at \$500,000. State Aid will finance two-thirds of the project with the remainder falling to local district taxpayers at a rate of \$70 per \$75 thousand dollars of assessed value. District residents are asked to vote on the down-sized project on 10/23/18.

Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Kristen Aucter presented the "I Love NY" \$40,000 tourism budget request. Longwoods International's annual audit indicates \$4 million

tourism growth from 2016 to 2017 representing the highest percentage of all Adirondack counties. Increases across all tourism sectors equated \$44 million overall, and there is \$30 million of assessed value for second homes/camps. Chairman Dolhof made a worthy comparison with the much larger Warren County having only \$70 million in second home assessed value.

Ms. Aucter reports over 5,000 social media followers, 80% of whom are aged 13-34, 15% Canadians and the remainder from other countries. Combining their website with Adirondack/Tug Hill's has resulted in 200-300 more hits monthly. They continue to fine tune the site to enhance traffic with visual appealing ads. The events page has become a community guide which Chamber members increasingly avail with customized postings. Modernized print advertising, as well development of professional 30-second Adirondack videos are meant to attract businesses and may be utilized by local businesses to recruit employees.

A professional survey will be pursued to quantify the local economic impact and to evaluate strategies for best outcomes. Chamber Treasurer Cheyenne Steria expressed her excitement for implications of social media marketing to raise overall awareness of our area.

Lewis County General Hospital CEO Gerald Cayer informed that Neurosurgeon Nicholas Qandah has started a specialty clinic practice that will eventually facilitate performance of out-patient procedures. Dr. Qandah provides residents a local option to avoid distant traveling, while positively impacting the Hospital's financial performance.

Upon entering later in the meeting, Mr. Cayer introduced Dr. Qandah who is a Michigan native. He expressed appreciation for the opportunity to offer expertise services locally, and utilization of the Hospital's ancillary supporting services. He graduated from the University of Michigan, trained at Virginia Tech and is currently employed by Upstate University. The Lowville clinic will expand from once a month as the need warrants. There were 30 patients at one clinic. Dr. Qandah invited anyone to reach out and join him for lunch.

#### PRESENTATION OF COMMUNICATIONS AND NOTICES:

Transitional Living Services Executive Director Maureen Cean's correspondence expressed appreciation for the Board's approved financial subsidy to their organization for behavioral health services provided to Lewis County residents.

#### REPORTS OF COUNTY OFFICERS AND DEPARTMENTS:

Legislators received copies of the Treasurer's September report, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Qtr. Bed Tax Report, the 9/24/18 Highway and Solid Waste Audit Reports, and minutes of the 9/19/18 Youth Bureau Advisory Board and 8/14/18 Community Services Board meetings.

The Sealer of Weights and Measures James Richmire submitted his August activity report to be placed on file with the Clerk of the Board.

## REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES:

Legislator John Lehman, Social Services/Office For the Aging/Youth Bureau Committee Chairman, reported that of 50 DSS medical cases audited only 9 had minor coding errors. Fiscal Manager Sheila Zehr was credited for her adept financial record keeping that affected an outstanding audit report. SNAP bonus of \$50,000 was approved by the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance.

Legislator Lehman reported that Pratt Northam financed \$42,000 of the total \$103,800 received by DSS to employ 30 youths for the summer program at 18 locations.

There is room for 17 persons to attend the 10/24 and 10/25/18 Bridge-Out-of-Poverty training seminar. Also, a record number had attended the Night Out event at which Lewis County Opportunities, Inc. Executive Director Scott Mathys explained available services.

Legislator Lehman made a motion to authorize DSS Commissioner Jennifer Jones to fill an existing full-time Caseworker effective immediately, due to a resignation, at the hourly rate of \$21.45. The motion was seconded by Legislator King and carried.

Legislator Lehman made a motion to authorize OFA Director Kelly Hecker to fill a Nutrition Services Coordinator, due to the resignation of Molly Mallette who last worked on 9/21/18. The motion was seconded by Legislator Moroughan and carried.

Legislator Randall LaChausse, Taxation/Information Technology/Election Committee Chairman, reported the NYS Broadband office had approved posed changes from the initial design that allowed the contractor to draw down grant funds for additional equipment. North Country Broadband has seven tower leases and is negotiating eight others. They plan to have the Barnes Corners, Lyonsdale and Crystaldale towers live by the end of the year. In response to Legislator Lehman, he stated the company is advertising via various media outlets.

Legislator Bryan Moser, County Officers/Human Resources Committee Chairman, urged discussion to develop a standard policy for School Resource Officers (SRO) after the South Lewis and Harrisville school district agreements terminate on 6/30/2019.

Legislator King invoked his favor to have school districts finance the SRO's for the time worked at the schools, with the County allocating funds in the Sheriff's Parks and Recreation line for patrols when not engaged at the schools. To Legislator Moroughan's inquiry whether retired officers could be assigned as SRO's, Legislator King was unsure, but affirmed that wage earnings are limited for retirees. He affirmed the Sheriff is unwilling to assign an SRO at the Harrisville School until the Board approves his agenda for a road patrol deputy replacement.

County Manager Ryan Piche clarified that the posed agreement extension with South Lewis School purposefully terminates 6/30/2019, likewise as for the Harrisville School. A standard policy is recommended beyond that date, although the school year does not coincide with the County fiscal year.

Legislator Moser also posed the initiative to change from an elected County Treasurer to an appointed Director of Finance. Lewis is not a "Charter" county, and therefore, must abide by the State Statute, which does not allow an appointed Comptroller. It is plausible that an unqualified person could win the election, because there are no established qualifications. That may result hiring an additional professional to perform the primary financial functions. Contrarily, the Board may establish qualifications for a Director of Finance, interview and select a candidate similar to the hiring process for other department heads.

The immediate question is whether to set a public hearing on proposed Local Law Intro. No. 5-2018 that outlines the change. Pending the outcome of that hearing, the Board could then choose to set a special election to obtain the majority vote outcome. It is too late to get the referendum on the upcoming November ballot.

Chairman Dolhof affirmed his confidence in the current and former Treasurers, explaining that as a departure from past decades there is no one within the ranks who desires to campaign for the Treasurer role. He reiterated Legislator Moser's concern for hiring additional personnel to perform the primary Treasurer functions. In his opinion it is a question of risk for increased expenditures if an elected person is not qualified. There is justification for a public referendum to obtain the voters opinion whether to continue with an elected Treasurer or give the Board the authorization to appoint a qualified professional.

Legislator Moser dismissed rumors the Board wants the ability to have influence over the chosen candidate and possibly impact their decisions. If a special election were ultimately scheduled the date may coincide with a Village election in the spring to provide potential candidates ample time to circulate petitions, which Legislator King stated are due in July. The cost of a special election is estimated at \$20,000-\$22,000. Either way, the decision is left to the voters, said Legislator Moser.

Legislator King desires to move the issue forward and set a public hearing in November.

Legislator Moser reported reaching out to a few retiring accountants, none of which were interested.

In response to Legislator LaChausse, no one indicated being aware or had spoken with any potential candidate.

Legislator King made a motion to remove from the table the following resolution that had been tabled at the last regular meeting held on September 4, 2018:

**RESOLUTION NO. 324 - 2018**  
**FIXING DATE OF PUBLIC HEARING ON LOCAL LAW**  
**(INTRODUCTORY LOCAL LAW NO. 5 - 2018), COUNTY OF LEWIS**

Introduced by Legislator Lawrence L. Dolhof, Chairman of the Board of Legislators.

WHEREAS, a proposed Local Law entitled "A LOCAL LAW TO ABOLISH THE OFFICE OF ELECTIVE COUNTY TREASURER AND TO CREATE AND ASSIGN ALL THE DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THAT OFFICE TO A NEW APPOINTIVE OFFICER, THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE" was presented and introduced at a meeting of this Board of Legislators held on September 4, 2018.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, as follows:

Section 1. That a public hearing will be held on September 18, 2018, from 5:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., before the Lewis County Board of Legislators on the Second Floor Board Room at the Lewis County Courthouse, New York, 7660 North State Street, Lowville, New York to hear all persons for or against such local law.

Section 2. That at least five (5) days notice of such hearing shall be given by the Clerk of this Board by the due posting thereof upon the bulletin board of the Lewis County Court House, Lowville, New York, and by publishing such notice at least once in the official newspaper of the County.

Moved by Legislator Moser, seconded by Legislator Kulzer.

County Attorney Joan McNichol clarified procedural policy for Local Laws subject to a mandatory voter referendum. The requirement was thought to be adoption 30 days prior to placing the issue on the election ballot, hence, the reasoning to set a 9/18/18 hearing date to supposedly meet the time constraint. However, it was just recently learned the Local Law must be adopted 60 days prior to placing it on the ballot. Therefore, there is insufficient time to get the issue on the upcoming November ballot.

Alternatively, the Board may amend the resolution to set a public hearing on October 2, 2018, the date of their next regular meeting, to seek public comments. Additionally, they may discretionally set a special election date to pose the issue to the voters. The title must be decided prior to the next general election.

In response to Legislator Burns, Legislator Moser explained his support for the initiative. There is no current Treasurer Department employee interested to seek the Treasurer position. As an example, he suggested that he or any other unqualified candidate could be elected to the position. Instead, he favors changing the title to Director of Finance, which enables the Board to set minimum qualifications. He asserted, however, that none of the three Human Resources Committee members desire to usurp voters' right to elect a Treasurer.

Legislator Moser distinguished the exemplary performance of Treasurer Patricia O'Brien and clarified the initiative was in no way meant to reflect on her abilities or qualifications.

Legislator Kulzer informed the results of his research found an option of creating a Comptroller position, for which minimum qualifications could be set, while remaining an elective position.

Legislator King voiced support for the Comptroller title because it would remain the choice of the voters. However, he wanted further information and full Board discussion, citing Patty O'Brien's 30 years of experience when she ran for Treasurer, without a current parallel option.

In response to Legislator Osborne, it was clarified that the elective Comptroller would replace the elective Treasurer position.

Chairman Dolhof submits the underlying voiced issues are to establish minimum qualifications and remain an elective position. He asked the Board's pleasure to set a public hearing or refer the issue back to committee.

Atty. McNichol requested time to conduct clarifying research on the Comptroller position and report to the Board.

Accordingly, Legislator LaChausse made a motion to Table the resolution, seconded by Legislator Burns and unanimously carried.

It being October 2, 2018, Legislator King made a motion to remove the resolution from the table and set the public hearing for November 6, 2018, seconded by Legislator Moser and carried.

The resolution was moved by Legislator Moser, seconded by Legislator Lehman and unanimously adopted.

Legislator Jerry King, Ways and Means/Buildings and Grounds Committee Chairman, asserted confidence in Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds Matt O'Connor's abilities, reporting that personnel had completed about 70 work orders during the past month.

Legislator King made a motion to authorize Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds Matt O'Connor to purchase a Kubota tractor 2650 with loader, 63" snow blower and 60" mower deck from White's Farm Supply for the State Bid price of \$32,140.77. The purchase will be financed by Capital Funds. The motion was seconded by Legislator Chartrand and carried.

Legislator Thomas Osborne, Public Health/Community Services Committee Chairman, reported the Committee's recommendation to add a Public Health Specialist in 2019, instead of deferring until 2020, in light of receipt of a \$100,000 grant. This serves to maintain the County's "maintenance of effort" while optimizing State reimbursement. Director Penny Ingham has diligently evaluated and posed personnel changes since 2015 for ultimate "right sizing". The addition of the Specialist and the impending 2019 elimination of a principle account clerk will complete her recommendations equating 15-16 full-time equivalents with an appropriate mix of administrative, fiscal and program personnel.

Legislator Osborne reported the second annual "Cup of Joe" campaign sponsored by the Lewis County Suicide Prevention Coalition was held during National Suicide Prevention Week. They had partnered with five local restaurants offering patrons a free cup of coffee for

completing a short confidential survey to evoke better understanding and assist the community with focused services. Dying by suicide was reported as the fourth leading cause of death in Lewis County.

Legislator Ronald Burns, Economic Development/Recreation, Forestry & Parks Committee Chairman, reported a scheduled court hearing to release the liens on the Climax Manufacturing building that would facilitate the IDA purchase transaction.

Legislator Burns reported the IDA has deferred development of the business park property, instead exploring alternate sites in Glenfield or property located along the Number Four Road. In response to Legislator Moser, Legislator Burns reported that the Planning Board continues to impede progress on the business park development. Citing substantial financial investment to-date, Legislator Moser was disturbed that the IDA did not thoroughly analyze all issues prior to expending public monies for environmental reviews, engineering and design plans. Legislator Moser was perplexed that development has been stalled for the past three years. Legislator Burns stated that he would obtain and report expenditure figures. Chairman Dolhof relayed surprise on behalf of the IDA to learn that the Town of Lowville wanted to assume lead agency on the project and took the SEQRA review much further than necessary. Legislator Moser's statements that water and sewer capabilities were not thoroughly researched prior to purchasing the property were refuted by Chairman Dolhof. Legislator Chartrand relayed understanding that environmental reviews must encompass assessing all known and potential uses of the property. Legislator Lehman expressed his favor to look at alternate locations for a business park.

Legislator Burns urged any interested Legislator to attend the October 4, 2018 IDA Board of Directors meeting.

On behalf of Legislator Kulzer, Courts and Law Enforcement Committee member Legislator King explained proposed resolutions to transfer \$10,000 within the Sheriff's Department accounts to cover vehicle and UTV repairs due to deer collisions; and to create a deputy for road patrol as a replacement for one to be assigned as School Resource Officer at the Harrisville Central School.

Legislator Chartrand, Hospital Committee Chairman, reported that Drs. Monica Kwicklis and Sean Harney were recently welcomed as new Hospital practice providers. Dr. Harney was appointed as Chief Medical Officer.

The Board of Managers had congratulated certified nursing assistant Kimberly Smith as the August employee-of-the-month. The Auxiliary will sponsor a hypnotist on 11/8/18 and their annual Hollyberry sale on 11/17/18. Receipts from the Foundation Gala equated approximately \$40,000. Legislator Chartrand encouraged greater Legislator participation for the Gala in coming years.

Legislator Chartrand reported a Hospital year-to-date surplus of \$8,389,219 substantially attributable to IGT reconciliations. August acute admissions were the second highest in a year and a half, swing admissions were the highest in the past year, occupancy of the skilled nursing

facility is at 100% inclusive of rehabilitation beds and the highest in seven years. Surgery numbers continue to increase and are the highest in four years. The 955 emergency room visits were close to projections with the highest rate of admissions in over two years.

Legislator Andrea Moroughan, Transportation/Solid Waste Committee Chair, reported Highway crews have been doing hot mix paving, shoulder work and seeding over the water line at the JCC Education Center. The Blue Street Bridge rehabilitation continues on schedule.

Legislator Moroughan reported that Solid Waste Director Pete Wood is exploring a State Bid process with Sourcewell Cooperative Purchasing offering a 35% discount for a new backhoe. Also, the estimated tractor trailer damage repairs are \$23,000

The Development Authority of the North Country (DANC) was pleased to report 205 households participated in the Hazardous Waste Day. Mr. Wood reports continual increase for solid waste and recyclable volumes.

Legislator Moroughan encouraged Legislators to show support for farmers by attending the 10/12/18 tour of the Grace-Way Farm.

#### COUNTY MANAGER REPORT:

Mr. Piche informed that he and Patricia O'Brien have compiled a preliminary 2019 draft budget and supporting documentation that will be forwarded to Legislators by 10/5/18 for review prior to the 10/11/18 budget workshop as a Committee-of-the-Whole Board. This is an opportunity for Legislators to voice their recommendations so that the Tentative Budget to be presented to the Clerk of the Board on 11/6/18 will reflect their expectations.

Citizens are encouraged to contact North Country Broadband/Mohawk Networks to assert their interest to procure their services. The company will focus on the areas with the most interest.

Mr. Piche has also worked very closely with C&S engineer consultants and the contractors on the JCC Educational Center building project.

Legislator Chartrand relayed stopping a North Country Broadband truck and obtained literature that was void of any phone contact numbers, while recommending expenditures for print and radio advertising. Mr. Piche stated the company has invested in TV and social media advertising, therefore, recommending issuing a press release to encourage persons to pre-register. The company intends to fulfill their commitments by the end of next year pursuant to the State grant agreement.

#### COUNTY TREASURER REPORT:

Treasurer Patricia O'Brien recited the balances of the Special Legislative Contingency Fund - \$70,637.08; Contingency Fund-\$231,791.23; Capital Data Processing Fund- \$73,905.37 and Capital Equipment Fund - \$302,844.20, of which \$158,431.24 is the Highway portion. She



reported sales tax revenue of \$7,549,271.96 through 8/31/2018 is above projections. The 7/31/18 Internal Service Fund balance remains at \$3,828,366.54 awaiting the report of August figures.

In response to Legislator Chartrand, Mrs. O'Brien confirmed not having a list of planned Capital Equipment account expenditures, reporting that resolutions are composed to appropriate funds upon notification. Legislator Moser stated that Highway Superintendent has an equipment list to be financed by their portion of the capital funds. Legislator Chartrand recommends review of the capital funds by the Ways and Means Committee to ascertain outstanding equipment commitments and/or surplus.

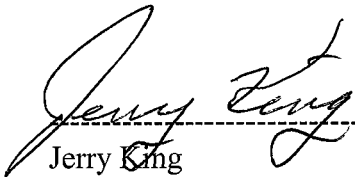
It being 6:16 p.m. Chairman Dolhof closed the public hearing for comments on the proposed Local Law.

REPORT OF THE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE:

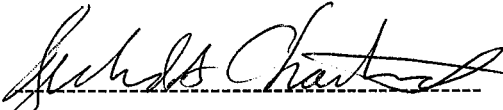
**REPORT OF  
WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE  
ON THE EXAMINATION OF CLAIMS**

To: The Honorable County Legislators

The Ways and Means Committee reports that they have examined the claims presented for payment in the total amount of \$ 1,329,982.33 and recommend that they be audited and allowed for the amounts claimed.

  
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Jerry King Chair

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Gregory Kulzer Committee

  
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Richard Chartrand Committee

Dated: October 2, 2018

Approved on motion by Legislator Burns, seconded by  
Legislator LaChausse, and carried.

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Moved by Legislator Moser, seconded by Legislator Lehman and unanimously adopted.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Legislator King made a motion to schedule a special meeting for Thursday, October 11, 2018 at 5:00 p.m. for the purpose to ratify the Hospital union contract and other business deemed necessary. The motion was seconded by Legislator Osborne and carried.

There being no other business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned on motion by Legislator Chartrand at 6:39 p.m., seconded by Legislator Burns and carried.