

## REGULAR MEETING

April 2, 2019

Chairman Lawrence Dolhof called the meeting to order at 5 p.m.

Roll Call: All Legislators were present.

Chairman Dolhof offered the Invocation then led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

There were 52 persons present.

Chairman Dolhof declared the March 5, 2019 meeting minutes approved by general consent.

### REPORT OF THE FINANCE AND RULES COMMITTEE:

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

Signed by: Bryan Moser  
Ronald Burns  
Richard Chartrand  
John Lehman  
Thomas Osborne

Dated: April 2, 2019

Legislator Moser made a motion to waive the rules, seconded by Legislator Lehman, and carried.

### PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR:

A proclamation was read and presented to Court House Security Guard Josh Hardesty commending him for quick and selfless response, going above and beyond to assist a young boy who had fallen through the ice at the Rome Barge Canal. His actions may very well have saved the boy's life.

A proclamation was read and presented to Reegan Domagala who was crowned NYS Dairy Princess from a field of 22 contestants.

A proclamation was read and presented to the Harrisville Central School Boys' Varsity Basketball Team who had won the school's first-ever NYS Class D Boys' Basketball Championship on 3/17/19.

Chairman Dolhof then introduced Edward W. "Fritz" Keel, Advocate Drum Executive Director, formerly known as the Fort Drum Regional Liaison Organization (FDRLO). He thanked the Board for their annual \$5,000 contribution to Advocate Drum and memorialized their commitment to bolster the strong bond forged over the past 35 years with North Country

communities and to continue their advocacy mission to mediate issues involving soldiers and their families.

The Fort Drum Steering Council was formed as a combined military and civilian platform for the 1985 rapid expansion of housing, healthcare and education to accommodate the activation of the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division. The subsequent FDRLO continued to maintain constant engagement to enhance and protect Fort Drum from imminent Federal Base Realignment And Closure (BRAC) rounds. When a third Brigade was added in 2005, further expansion included increasing the 145 car railway to 245 to expedite troop deployments.

The FDRLO successfully rallied military and civilian partners during BRAC rounds in 2013 and 2015 rounds to defend against downsizing and the loss of up to 16,000 soldiers. They touted the unique partnership and collaboration of Fort Drum and civilian medical providers, as well as established programs by North Country educational facilities to integrate and serve the diverse military population, equally beneficial to all factions. The events illustrate that the military and civilian communities are inter-woven to the extent that unraveling either would cause detrimental and sustaining impacts region-wide.

Most recently, \$50 million was secured for the Route I-81 direct connector to the Fort Drum main gate.

Mr. Keel impressed the well documented Fort Drum economic impact, reciting last year statistics of an 18% direct and indirect increase over 2017 or a total of \$1.9 Billion and over 25,500 jobs sustained, of which \$70 million and 1,100 jobs are relative to Lewis County.

In closing, Mr. Keel proudly informed the North Country was selected as one of five communities across the nation to be recognized as a “Great American Defense Community”. The recognition will be celebrated at the 5/18/19 Armed Forces Day parade in Watertown, and, again, at the June Association of Defense Communities’ national summit in Washington, D.C.

Chairman Dolhof opened the public hearing at 5:23 p.m. for comments on the Community Development Block Grant Program application. Lewis County Planning Director Frank Pace stated that tonight’s public hearing is for the purpose of public comments on the County’s community development and housing needs, and to discuss the possible submission of one or more Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) applications for the 2019 special funding round this year. The CDBG program provides funds to local governments for housing, economic development, public facilities, public infrastructure, and planning, with the principal beneficiaries being persons of low or moderate income. The CDBG program is administered by the New York State Office of Community Renewal. The program may also aid in eliminating slums and blight and address urgent needs. This hearing will provide information and allow for participation in the possible development of a grant application; receive comment on any proposed projects; and receive technical assistance to develop alternate proposals. The hearing is being conducted in compliance with the requirements of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended.

Approximately \$10 million is available for Community Development Block Grant funding for housing activities for this special funding round and the application is due April 26, 2019. The county can apply for up to \$1,000,000 for housing projects that would include replacement of mobile homes; housing rehabilitation, homeownership assistance; and residential water and wastewater systems (such as well and septic system replacement) that primarily benefit low and moderate income persons.

At least 51% of the persons benefiting from the CDBG Program must be low and moderate-income persons according to the HUD income limits provided in the application. 70% of the NYS CDBG funds expended must benefit low and moderate income persons.

Mr. Pace affirmed that the County would apply for the maximum one million dollars.

Snow Belt Housing, Inc. Executive Director Cheryl Shenkle-O'Neill expressed their agency would like the county to consider two applications – one for homeownership assistance in an amount to be determined based on need and number of applications for approximately \$450,000 considering the money has to be spent in two years from the time of award. The program would provide down payment, closing costs and repair assistance to income eligible applicants to purchase their first home. The assistance will be in the form of a 100% deferred payment loan for up to \$40,000 per unit that would become a grant as long as they remain in their home for ten years. The home must be an existing single family home located within the county. Approximately ten households could be assisted.

The second application would be for a mobile home replacement program that could provide up to \$100,000 per unit to replace a dilapidated mobile home. The household must own the land and the home must be on a permanent foundation. The well and septic replacement could be included if needed. We would expect to complete approximately four to five mobile home replacements in an amount up to \$550,000. Snow Belt would administer the grants as a sub-recipient of the county. We request that anyone interested in either program call our office at (315) 376-2639, ext 1. Interested persons are asked to complete a short survey so they can be placed on a waiting list for assistance. There are currently 27 home ownership applicants and 14 mobile home applicants.

In response to Legislator Burns, Ms. O'Neill stated that persons could also contact Snow Belt Housing through their website at [www.snowbelt.org/](http://www.snowbelt.org/), or visit their office.

The remaining funds from the existing homeownership grant could assist one more applicant. However, there are no funds available for mobile home replacement. The recently approved housing rehabilitation \$718,200 CDBG grant does not include mobile home replacement.

#### PRESENTATION OF COMMUNICATIONS AND NOTICES:

NYS Assembly Minority Leader Brian Kolb acknowledged receipt and applauded the Board's initiatives to oppose State Legislation with respect to firearms; and the Governor's amendment to shift State AIM funding for towns and villages onto Counties.

Real Property Tax Director Candy Akin and County Treasurer Patricia O'Brien have approved a corrected tax roll application for Lance Clemons.

The Board acknowledged receipt of resolutions enacted by the Allegany County Legislature opposing State Legislation that would prohibit firearms as prizes in any game of chance; the Clinton County Legislature and the Town of Arietta in Hamilton County in support of snowmobiling and increasing snowmobile trail miles in the Adirondacks; the Madison County Legislature urging the Governor and the State Legislature to address the lack of cellular phone coverage for all New York residents and visitors; the Schoharie County Legislature urging the State to fund all costs associated with implementing voting reforms; the Cattaraugus and Madison County Legislatures opposing the Executive State Budget shifting the cost of Aid and Incentives to Municipalities onto Counties; and the Seneca County Legislature opposing State Legislation that would expand the scope and definition of public work activities to require contractors to pay prevailing wages and benefits for any projects that receive State money or tax breaks from IDA's.

#### REPORTS OF COUNTY OFFICERS AND DEPARTMENTS:

Legislators have received copies of the Treasurer's March report and the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Bed Tax report, the March Highway and Solid Waste Department audit reports; minutes of the 3/20/19 Youth Bureau Advisory Board meeting; as well as the 2018 Annual Report of the Soil and Water Conservation District.

#### REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES:

Legislator Bryan Moser, Finance and Rules Committee Chairman, made a motion to approve the General Liability Insurance renewal package with Eastern Shore Associates through NYMIR for the period from 4/5/2019 to 4/6/2020 for a total premium of \$204,671.07, seconded by Legislator Burns and carried.

Legislator Moser made a motion to authorize County Atty. Joan McNichol to refill the Assistant County Attorney position effective immediately, seconded by Legislator King and carried. A late resolution has been presented to appoint the selected candidate.

Legislator Moser reported Mr. Piche had presented financial balances to the committee in the absence of Patricia O'Brien; as well as the changes to the Health Insurance Plan. Human Resources Director Chris Boulio illustrated his voluminous paper records attendant to his request to purchase electronic software for record keeping efficiencies.

Legislator Jerry King, General Services Committee Chairman, made a motion to award bids for hot asphalt mix to Barrett Paving, Hanson and Paverite; and to Gorman and Midland for paver-placed surface treatment, based on the type of job or project location, in accordance with the tabulation of all bids prepared by the Highway Superintendent and placed on file with the Clerk of the Board, for the period 4/1/2019 to 3/31/2020. The motion was seconded by Legislator Moser and carried.

Legislator King made a motion to authorize Highway Superintendent Warren Shaw to fill two (2) Full-time MEO positions, effective immediately, seconded by Legislator Moroughan and carried.

Legislator King reported ongoing review of submitted proposals for the highway fuel system upgrade project.

Legislator Gregory Kulzer, Health and Human Services Committee Chairman, made a motion to authorize refilling a Full-time Keyboard Specialist shared by Community Services and Human Resources Departments, effective immediately. The motion was seconded by Legislator Osborne and carried.

Legislator Kulzer made a motion to authorize Social Services Commissioner Jennifer Jones to refill one Social Services Program Examiner, contingent permanent, due to promotion, effective April 1, 2019; and one Community Services Worker, contingent permanent due to promotion, effective immediately. The motion was seconded by Legislator Lehman and carried.

Legislator Richard Chartrand, Hospital Board of Managers' representative announced that Lowville Academy & Central School graduate Kelly Birchenough would commence OBGYN healthcare services at the facility effective 7/1/2019.

The Board of Managers had held a moment of silence in memory of the untimely passing of two hospital employees Nancy Foster and Barbara Simek. Legislator Chartrand asked persons to keep their families in their prayers.

Legislator Chartrand announced Certified Nursing Assistant Brenda Alfano as the employee-of-the-month; and Registered Nurse Tracy Goldthrite as the 2018 Employee of the Year, who was presented a congratulatory plaque by the Board of Managers.

The Board of Managers plans to restructure their committee system to lessen obligations and reschedule meetings to be held prior to the monthly third Tuesday Legislative committee meetings, to facilitate timely position requests. There will be a request to create four (4) full-time Unit Helper position cards and four (4) part-time Unit Helper position cards. The minimum wage jobs will replace some of the 28 Certified Nursing Assistant position cards, which largely remain unfilled year-to-year. Legislator Chartrand informed the average Hospital employee age is 42.

Legislator Chartrand reported the recommendation to pay up to \$200 for employee annual gym memberships utilizing surplus Health Insurance Plan funds; as well as a two percent premium increase for employee participants of the PPO plan, while other premiums would remain static.

Centralized appointment scheduling will be implemented initially for the Harrisville and Copenhagen Health Clinics, and later for the Beaver Falls clinic, in an effort to shorten patient wait times.

Legislator Chartrand informed that SUNY Upstate will be offering mobile mammography services in our area, alternately encouraging continued utilization of the Hospital's State-of-the-art equipment.

In response to Legislator Lehman, Hospital CEO Gerald Cayer reported the nurse hiring process takes 6-12 weeks including drug screening and background checks.

#### COUNTY MANAGER REPORT:

Ryan Piche reported adoption of the State Budget highlighting the following:

- removal of the sales tax exemption for gas and electric service companies, estimating an additional \$75,000 for Lewis County
- implement on-line purchasing sales tax, estimating additional \$264,000 for Lewis County. However, the State will retain about \$186,000 or 70% of the new revenue source for continued Aid Incentives to Municipalities (AIM) payments to Towns and Villages in Lewis County
- State appropriations will cover the County cost to operate and administer early voting requirements; and additional monies to purchase required electronic poll books and equipment. Early voting is scheduled for 9 days prior to Election Day at the Town of Lowville Bostwick Street community room. Employers must assure that employees wishing to vote have at least four hours before or after their work shift to do so.
- Bail reform effective 1/1/2020 requiring arresting officers to issue an appearance ticket and release individuals without bail unless being charged with a felony, a misdemeanor crime of domestic violence, or had a felony conviction within 5 years prior. Law enforcement and prosecutors must provide defense attorneys discovery materials more timely to enhance speedy trials.
- recreational marijuana was not legalized
- the 2% Tax Cap was made permanent
- provision to allow County Offices For the Aging to create private-pay programs to allow participation regardless of income. State appropriation of \$15 million will address waiting lists for EISEP home services for the elderly. Lewis County has a waiting list of 60 persons.
- expanded the Agriculture workforce retention credit of \$500 per employee to include Christmas tree farms, of which Lewis County is the second largest producer in New York.
- \$33 million for local agricultural programs
- \$100 million for expenses related to "Raise The Age" that will encompass housing 17 year old inmates separate from the general population in 2019
- \$173 million for Early Intervention Programs
- tax credit incentives for employers hiring persons who have completed drug rehabilitation programs
- \$10 million for the medical marijuana program
- zero State allocations for extreme weather reimbursements. Lewis County anticipated \$241,000 for extreme weather labor and equipment expense reimbursement in 2019, that would have financed 2.5 miles of road rehabilitation
- State budget omitted proposals for prevailing wage changes for municipal economic development projects

COUNTY TREASURER REPORT:

Treasurer Patricia O'Brien recited the balances of the Special Legislative Contingency Fund - \$99,942.00; Contingency Fund-\$200,000.00; Capital Data Processing Fund- \$73,360.81 and Capital Equipment Fund - \$592,533.18, of which \$113,623.71 is the Highway portion. First quarter sales tax receipts totaled \$1,101,701.79.

Ms. O'Brien reported the Internal Service Fund balance of \$4,664,094.96 effective 12/31/2018, and did not have any updated figures.

REPORT OF THE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE:





## OTHER BUSINESS:

Chairman Dolhof closed the hearing for the CDBG application at 6:07 p.m. when no one wished to comment.

Clerk of the Board Teresa Clark read proclamations executed by the Chairman declaring April as "Child Abuse Prevention Month" and "Fair Housing Month".

Legislator King made a motion at 6:11 p.m. to enter executive session to discuss job performance and salary of specific personnel, seconded by Legislator Moser and carried. The session began at 6:18 p.m. after a short recess. At 6:44 p.m. Legislator King made a motion to re-enter regular session, seconded by Legislator Moser and carried.

Legislator King alluded to drawings for the potential new building construction, recognizing the site must first be chosen. At his request, Ryan Piche would locate and provide Legislators with the building architectural drawings that were bid in 2013.

Mr. Piche anticipates that Bernier, Carr & Associates will provide their layout analysis for each of the proposed building locations within 2-3 weeks. A follow-up to the February work session of the whole Board will be scheduled for further discussion. Mr. Piche will present building projects from other counties in New York to promote differing perspectives. There is measurable evidence of economic impact and how resulting tax revenue from additional development could offset construction expense.

There being no other business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned on motion by Legislator Chartrand at 6:54 p.m., seconded by Legislator Moser and carried.