

GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE
August 18, 2020

Present: Legislators Jerry King, Ian Gilbert, Richard Chartrand, Andrea Moroughan, and Ron Burns.

Others present: Legislators Larry Dolhof, Greg Kulzer, Phil Hathway, Randy LaChausse, and Tom Osborne; County Manager Ryan Piche; Treasurer Eric Virkler; County Attorney Joan McNichol; Human Resources Director Caitlyn Smith; and media representatives.

Committee Chairman Legislator King called the meeting at 1:01 p.m.

Legislator Burns made a motion to approve the 7/21/2020 committee meeting minutes, seconded by Legislator Chartrand and carried.

Solid Waste Facility Project update – Ryan Piche, County Manager

Ryan reviewed previous discussions that happened back in June 2020 where the Committee looked at upgrading the Solid Waste Facility. Option 1 was to renovate the existing building; Option 2-A and Option 2-B were new buildings each with a different location, and these options required commercial haulers to back in and out of the building to dump their trucks. At that meeting in June the idea was brought forward to see if it would be feasible for the new building to be a drive thru eliminating the need for backing in and out which was a safety concern.

Option 2-C is a new building located away from recycling building with drive thru for commercial haulers. Option 2-D is a new building back to back with the recycling building with a drive thru for commercial haulers. This option would allow for one loader to push garbage into the open top container on one end and also push recyclables into the compactor on the other end. The layout of this option would also create a better flow of traffic and make it easier for our drivers to haul the containers once they are full.

The total price of the project with equipment included is \$2,118,000.00. Legislator King voiced his concerns about connecting both the new waste building and old recycling building. Ryan pointed out that it looks like they are one large building, but they will remain separate with only the concrete floor that will remain level across both buildings and overhead doors to allow access between the two buildings. In response to Legislator Dolhof, Ryan explained that the old waste building which was used for both commercial haulers and residential drop off will now be only for residential drop off and the boxes used in that building will be brought up and dumped into the new waste building that will only be utilized for commercial haulers.

Legislator Kulzer questioned how soon the Harrisville site will be up and running. It was then explained that due to the location, St. Lawrence county has increased their amount of hauling so the Harrisville site will essentially be full. DANC has decided to pay us to continue to haul our recyclables the way we have been. Ryan went on to discuss the scale office/breakroom building and the options of going stick built or modular. The calculation for this office/breakroom would be \$142,500.00 however Ryan feels at this point it is more important to get the overall project

moving forward as that piece can be one of the last items done. He would like to see the design phase completed and the project out to bid before the end of the year.

Legislator Moroughan made a motion to go with Solid Waste facility project design Option 2-D at a price tag, without equipment, of \$1,898,000.00, seconded by Legislator Burns and carried.

Carbon Credits – Gabriel Chapin, NYS Forest Carbon Program Manager (attached)

County Attorney Joan McNichol introduced Gabriel Chapin and explained that she first heard about this program at a recent NYSAC Conference. This program is referred to as the Working Woodlands and is for landowners who are actively managing their woodlands. Trees store carbon while growing, which equates to carbon credits that can be sold to businesses seeking to offset their carbon footprint. This is how revenue is generated by selling these carbon credits on the voluntary carbon market. The Nature Conservancy (TNC) works with landowners to create a plan on how the land should be managed over the next 40 years to ensure forest sustainability. The initial estimate for Lewis County which owns roughly 3,300 acres of forest lands would be approximately \$500,000.00 in net revenue over a 10-year period. The County would still be able to harvest timber on these lands and use them for the Recreational trail system. These lands are only allowed to be used for those purposes due to current state law, not able to be developed.

Gabriel stated that it would be beneficial for the county to group together with other local municipalities and counties to get the best return. This would allow for the best rate on carbon credits. TNC handles everything from start to finish with the program including any out of pocket costs to the landowners. The steps involved are Project Initiation/Development; Creating a Forest Management Plan including forest certification; Carbon Credit Marketing and Sales. The revenue is then generated each year by the carbon credits available to sell. There are also built in landowner protections for unforeseen circumstances like insect infestations, windstorms, ice storms, etc. The process is a slow one, taking anywhere from 24 to 36 months before any revenue is received.

Legislator Dolhof voiced his concern over essentially selling the development rights of these forest lands. It was explained that due to NYS Law these forestlands are very limited as to what they can be utilized for and must stay as forestlands. This program is also a 40-year program and even after those 40 years it would be expected that the land would still be forestlands. Joan clarified that these are not easements but just agreements for the carbon credits. There was consensus among the committee that the county would want to continue to use this land for recreation purposes and timber harvest. Gabriel reassured everyone that both of those activities are expected as part of this program. Gabriel addressed a concern about the amount of timber harvesting by explaining that in the Forest Management stage of the program it would be determined how much timber harvesting can be done each year as it cannot exceed the amount of timber growth. This would ensure the level of carbon credits stay at the level they were sold at.

Ryan explained that even though these forestlands cannot be developed due to NYS Law, those laws could change in the next 30 years and asked how possible development of the land at that time would be handled. Gabriel stated that the purpose of the program is to ensure that lands stay undeveloped so halfway through the 40 years if the land was developed it would require the

county to pay back all the revenue received. If something unintentional happens, like a natural disaster, there would be coverage under the protection plan. Legislator King questioned timber harvesting and how much that would be decreased due to the need to balance tree growth. Gabriel explained that through the Forest Management Plan the growth could possibly increase and trees actually grow quite a bit in one year. The NYS owned land inside the blue line was brought up and why that wasn't already in this program and Gabriel replied that those lands are not allowed to be managed, meaning no timber harvesting.

Joan McNichol asked if Lewis County moved forward on their own to get started could they join up with other groups later and do those other counties have to be contiguous. Gabriel stated the counties don't have to be contiguous, but it would be more beneficial to be part of a larger group to market and sell the carbon credits. The larger the group means any fixed costs would be spread across more entities, ultimately increasing their revenue. He went on to explain that the carbon market is what determines how much revenue the county will receive which is why the estimate is only for the first 10 years. The program goes out 40 years but the market could change over that time period. The county could receive revenue beyond the first 10 years if the market is still strong, but if it isn't then the revenue could dry up.

Legislator King questioned how far forward we could move before we must sign any agreements, Joan responded that she could look for a sample agreement and send it to all Legislators for them to review. The next step would be to have TNC come out and do a thorough evaluation of the forestlands, which would require the agreement to be signed. Recreation, Forest & Parks Director Jackie Mahoney stated that she had some concerns with the timber harvest plan, insect infestations, and the volatility of the market beyond the first 10 years. Ryan voiced his concerns with having land tied up for the next 40 years but admitted the revenue could be used to increase the recreation in Lewis County. Joan and Jackie will ask more questions and gather more specifics, especially from other counties that are already part of this program. In response to Legislator Chartrand, Jackie stated that hard woods can store more carbon than soft woods and it varies from species to species, but smaller trees store more than larger older trees.

The following dockets were reviewed:

1. Resolution authorizing modification agreement between the County of Lewis and Evans Caulking to provide additional work on retaining wall for the Old Courthouse building at a cost not to exceed \$8,500.00. *Ryan clarified that this was for the retaining wall outside of the courthouse main entrance, the re-pointing project is significantly under budget so it would make sense to add this portion on while the company is here to do the work rather than wait and have to replace the entire wall.*

YEA 5 NAY 0

2. Resolution to transfer funds in the County Road accounts in the amount of \$4,894.00 for the net difference of a trade in allowance on the purchase of 2020 equipment. *Highway Superintendent Warren Shaw clarified that this additional amount is coming from within their budget lines and was due to a bucket attachment being returned for a grapple claw attachment instead.*

YEA 5 NAY 0

3. Resolution to appropriate trust funds in the District Attorney Accounts in the amount of \$1,635.00 for reimbursement of 2020 DA prosecution expenses. *Ryan clarified that these are forfeiture funds being put into the DA's account for expenses. Legislator Gilbert abstained.*
YEA 4 NAY 0
4. Resolution approving budget transfer from Contingency funds to the Coroner accounts in the amount of \$7,840.00 for increased activity and related expenses. *County Treasurer Eric Virkler clarified that this amount should cover additional expenses for the next few months.*
YEA 5 NAY 0
5. Resolution appropriating FY2020 NYS Homeland Security Program funds in the Emergency Management Accounts in the amount of \$52,504.00 for the purchase of various equipment and professional services. *Per Legislator Kings request Ryan will get information to the Committee on what specific items these funds will be used for.*
YEA 5 NAY 0
6. Resolution to appropriate State grant funds in the STOP-DWI accounts in the amount of \$14,972.00 for 2020 "Crackdown" expenses.
YEA 5 NAY 0
7. Resolution to appropriate funds in the Youth Program accounts in the amount of \$5,000.00 for School Resource Officer training.
YEA 5 NAY 0
8. Resolution authorizing the Chairman of the Board to execute any and all annual agreements between the County of Lewis, by and through the Planning Department and entities who lease advertising space on a Lewis County Public Transportation bus or bus stop shelter in accordance with the described space and annual rental fee schedule.
YEA 5 NAY 0
9. Resolution authorizing renewal agreement between the County of Lewis and The Flack Broadcasting Group, LLC for advertisements on the radio stations WBRV, the Moose and WLLC, the Blizzard to serve and promote public transportation services throughout Lewis County at a cost not to exceed \$2,000.00 for the term commencing January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021. *In response to Legislator Gilbert's question Planning Director Casandra Buell explained that not only does this help promote the Lewis County Public Transportation system but they let her do pro bono updates when routes open up or when COVID-19 hit and some routes were shut down.*
YEA 5 NAY 0
10. Resolution authorizing renewal agreements between the County of Lewis and Spectrum Reach for a Digital Audience Network Campaign and for cable TV commercial ads designed to serve and promote public transportation services throughout Lewis County at a cost not to exceed \$3,600.00 for Digital Audience Network campaign and \$5,102.00 for cable TV

commercial ads campaign for the term commencing January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021.

YEA 5 NAY 0

11. Resolution authorizing renewal agreement between the County of Lewis and WWNY 7 News / Fox 28 for an integrated media plan designed to promote and serve the Lewis County Public Transportation System at a cost not to exceed \$20,853.00 for the term commencing January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021.

YEA 5 NAY 0

12. Resolution authorizing an agreement between the County of Lewis and WWTI-Watertown ABC 50 for an integrated media plan designed to promote and serve the Lewis County Public Transportation System at a cost not to exceed \$9,468.00 for the term commencing January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021. *In response to Legislator Chartrand's question of the large cost of advertising, Casandra Buell stated that this is all through grant funding and part of the state approved plan.*

YEA 5 NAY 0

13. Resolution to amend the Compensation Plan with reference to the Sheriff's Department to Abolish a permanent FT Jail Nurse at a salary Grade 34 and Create a permanent FT Jail Nurse at a salary Grade 35 and to authorize a MOA between the County and CSEA with respect to the grade change and compensation. *Ryan clarified that this increase should rectify the difficulty in trying to fill this position as most hospital employees start out at a higher pay grade.*

YEA 5 NAY 0

14. Resolution authorizing a four-month Agreement with Aviat Networks to provide the Provision Support Services as set forth in its proposal dated August 14, 2020 at a cost not to exceed \$2,373.00 for the term September 15, 2020 through January 31, 2021. This is 100% funded by the 911 radio grant.

YEA 5 NAY 0

Motions:

1. Legislator Moroughan made a motion to authorize Highway Superintendent Warren Shaw to refill a Mechanic Welder position effective immediately due to resignation, seconded by Legislator Burns and carried
2. Legislator Moroughan made a motion to authorize Solid Waste Director Kip Turck to refill a MEO position and all associated backfills effective immediately due to resignation, seconded by Legislator Burns and carried.

Legislator King asked the committee to start thinking about the Radio Project again as they will need be receiving recommendations from the Sheriff's Department for standard operating procedures.

At 2:29 p.m. Legislator Gilbert made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Legislator Chartrand and carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Cassandra Moser, Clerk of the Board

Forest Carbon Offset Project Opportunity for Lewis County

3,300 acres +/-
Lewis County, NY

At the request of Lewis County staff, The Nature Conservancy has conducted a preliminary assessment of the potential for an Improved Forest Management carbon offset project on county forestlands through the Conservancy's Working Woodlands Program. This program provides an opportunity for landowners to generate revenue from their forestland by selling carbon offset credits to corporations who are voluntarily trying to reduce their carbon footprint.

Potential Carbon Value for Lewis County Properties

- Based on a total project area of ~3,300 acres, we conservatively estimate that the project could provide Lewis County approximately **\$500,000 in net revenue over 10 years** based on similar projects we have assessed.
- If Lewis County is interested in exploring this opportunity, a **more detailed quantitative feasibility and financial assessment would be conducted** to determine the viability and potential revenue of a carbon project on the properties.
- This could potentially be a small stand-alone carbon project but, if Lewis County is interested in pursuing a project, we feel that **the best option would be to group multiple counties together into a single project to maximize efficiency and revenue.**

Benefits & Requirements of TNC's Forest Carbon Program

- **Projected 10-year revenue stream just for maintaining your forest**, with no out-of-pocket costs to the landowner. Additional revenue could be generated after 10 years if markets remain favorable.
- **Landowner can continue to manage their property** for sustainable timber production, outdoor recreation and trails and other ownership goals. We provide updated forest management plans and sustainable forest certification as needed.
- **40-year project period** where the landowner is responsible for maintaining minimum forest carbon stocking levels on the property.
- **Landowner agrees to long-term protection of the property** from development or other changes in land use in a way that is flexible to meet their individual needs.
- **Landowner is protected against natural events**, such as insect/disease outbreaks, through built-in insurance on carbon credits that have already been sold.
- **On-site project monitoring and verification** is required every five years for the project duration. The Nature Conservancy ensures that these costs are covered over the life of the project, regardless of long-term revenues.

Working Woodlands

Helping Landowners Conserve Their Forests While Generating New Revenues



The Nature Conservancy has a new program called Working Woodlands, which offers forest landowners with 2,000+ acres opportunities to ensure sustainable forest management while generating revenue from improved timber management and from the growing carbon market.

The Nature Conservancy provides 3 key services for landowners in the program (without cost). Landowners can participate in this highly flexible program by choosing any or all of these three services.

1. Carbon Credit Revenue - The Nature Conservancy connects



the property to high-quality carbon markets, generating new income for the landowner.

2. Forest Certification - The Nature Conservancy develops a forest management plan and enrolls the property in a forest certification program that ensures forest sustainability. In some cases, this enables access to higher-



priced premium wood markets for timber harvested from the property.

3. Working Forest Conservation Easement (Agreement) - The Nature Conservancy applies a



working forest conservation easement to the property, ensuring long-term conservation.

How Does the Carbon Market Work? Trees capture carbon from the carbon dioxide in the air as they produce oxygen. An acre of mature forest can capture more than a metric ton of carbon every



year. Because scientists and economists can quantify the carbon-capturing power of forests, wooded properties enrolled in carbon markets can sell carbon credits to businesses and individuals seeking to offset their carbon dioxide emissions.

Partnership with The Nature Conservancy. The Conservancy provides a landowner with turn-key services to enroll their property in the Working Woodlands program. In return for a minority share



of carbon revenue, the Conservancy will cover all project development costs and will market the carbon to the best buyer. The landowner retains all timber revenues.

The Conservancy has a successful track record with Working Woodlands, with more than 40,000 acres enrolled in the program nationally as of 2017. While every Working Woodlands project is different, forest carbon values of \$10 to \$60 per acre per year are possible.

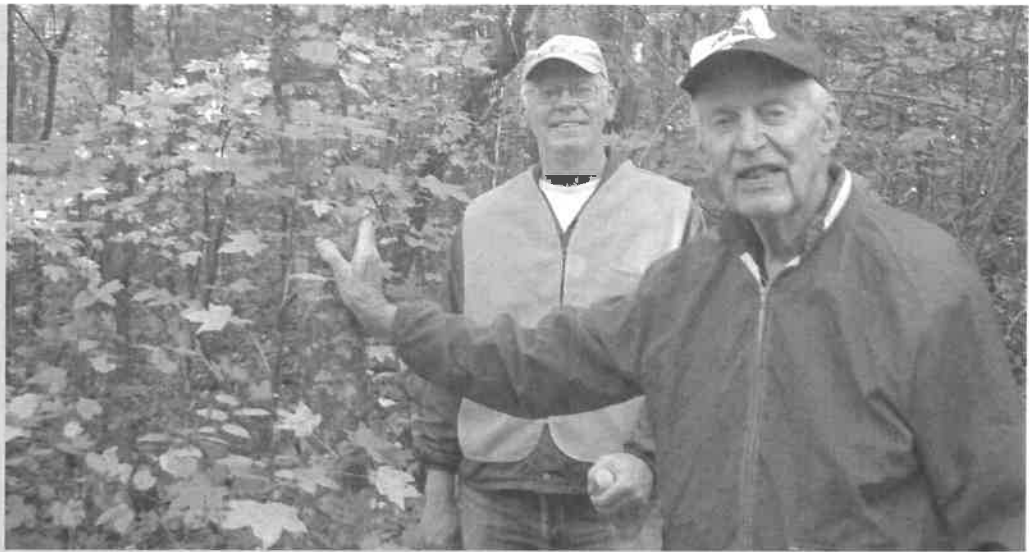


One Family's Experience

John Shafer was 106 years old and co-owned a gorgeous piece of forested property in White County. The land had been in the family lumber business since the 1940s.

Over the years, Mr. Shafer always took care to harvest trees sustainably on the property. "We are interested in the long-term management of this forest," said Shafer.

In 2016, Mr. Shafer, his daughter and her husband enrolled their property in The Nature Conservancy's Working Woodlands program. "We were looking to keep the property undeveloped and intact," Shafer said. But the family also needed



John Shafer (in red) with his son-in-law. Photo courtesy of Rebecca Tuuk.

the property to continue to produce income.

Working Woodlands ensures Mr. Shafer's forest will be preserved in perpetuity while his family can continue to generate income

from timber and carbon credits.

"This agreement protects our land forever," said his daughter, Rebecca Tuuk. "I highly recommend Working Woodlands to forest owners."

Advantages of Working with The Nature Conservancy

- **Experience** – The Nature Conservancy has enrolled over 200,000 acres of carbon projects worldwide and has been involved with Forest Stewardship Council certification for over a decade.

- **Track Record** – The Nature Conservancy has preserved more than 119 million acres of special places worldwide, including more than 300,000 acres in Tennessee.



- **Access to Experts** – The Conservancy brings highly skilled partners to every project, such as premium carbon buyers, carbon project managers and other conservation experts.

- **Reputation** – When you partner with The Nature Conservancy, you are associating with the largest

conservation organization in the world—a highly trusted, 65-year-old nonprofit with a stellar performance record and an impeccable reputation.

- **Accountability** – The Nature Conservancy is highly rated by charity watchdog organizations, including the Better Business Bureau Wise Giving Alliance and Charity Navigator, and has been named

one of the World's Most Ethical Companies four years in a row (since 2013).



What Are the Benefits for Landowners?

- **Flexibility** in tailoring a program that matches your individual needs.

- **No outlay of money** required from landowner.

- **Forest & carbon inventory.**

- 10-year certified **forest management plan.**

- 100% of all certified **wood and wood biomass revenues stay with owner.**

- **Additional income** from the sale of high-quality carbon credits.

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The Nature
Conservancy 