

GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE
December 15, 2020

Present: Legislators Jerry King, Richard Chartrand, Ian Gilbert, Ron Burns, and Lisa Virkler.
Others present: Legislators Larry Dolhof, Greg Kulzer, Phil Hathway, Andrea Moroughan, and Tom Osborne; County Manager Ryan Piche; Treasurer Eric Virkler; County Attorney Joan McNichol; Human Resources Director Caitlyn Smith; and Information Technology Director Conner Biolsi.

Committee Chair Legislator King called the meeting at 1:03 p.m.

Legislator Burns made a motion to approve the 11/17/2020 committee meeting minutes, seconded by Legislator Chartrand and carried.

Broadband Update – Development Authority of the North Country representatives

Carl Farone, Executive Director of DANC introduced himself as well as Dave Wolf, Director of Telecommunications, and Lori Marr, Director of Communications. Carl thanked everyone for their partnership with DANC on the Broadband study and emphasized the importance of this, especially during the pandemic, to make sure everyone who doesn't have access to broadband service is identified. The goal is to assess the areas that need access and apply for grants and funding to be able to assist with getting them access. The first part of this project is to map out the areas that don't have broadband or have limited access which has been completed, the second part is to survey residents.

Dave Wolf gave an update on the inventory piece of the project, which has collected data on Fiber Optic Cabling, Coaxial Cabling, Central Office and Remote Terminal Locations, Wireline Boundaries, and Wireless Towers. This is then combined with publicly available data to put together reports and maps showing the broadband picture in Lewis County. Dave showed several maps indicating current providers, coax and fiber networks, and tower locations. There have been 542 responses to the survey that was put out to residents, 78% of those do not have access to broadband. Roughly 77% of the residents have trouble working from home and almost half had trouble with kids completing schoolwork at home. The speed test indicates that 61% of residents don't have enough Mbps to consider it highspeed internet.

Lori Marr asked that Legislators encourage residents to complete the survey to get an even larger picture of the situation. Lori thanked Casandra Buell and her office for assisting those without internet access in completing the survey.

Lewis County Dairy Resiliency Project Proposal – Robin Wendell-Zabelowicz, Cornell Cooperative Extension representative

The three key initiatives of the Lewis County Agricultural Sustainability Council are Dairy, Farm to School, and Ag Education. The Dairy successes have been creating a monthly calendar of events via Lewis County Dairy Producers and Countryside Veterinary Clinic, a solar initiative which resulted in a county -wide policy adoption, and consensus on a need for county supported

study on how to sustain and grow dairy by adding medium scale dairy processing facility. The Farm to School successes have been a FTS grant to fund a fulltime coordinator, connecting local producers with school food service, and introducing local products to Lowville Academy Central School. The Ag Education successes are a Farm Credit grant of \$10,000, ongoing cooperation with BOCES and JCC on curriculum, and Ag Careers where local agencies address school counselors.

The Dairy Team is made up of Peter Ostrum, Countryside Veterinary Clinic; Glen Beller, Beller Farms BVRN; Kate Eves, Farm Credit East; Mike Kraeger, Dairy Owner and part of Oneida-Lewis Dairy Co-op; Greg Kulzer, Legislator and GK Consulting; Joe Lawrence, Pro-Dairy and Lewis County IDA member; Robin Wendell, Cornell Cooperative Extension; Brien Tabolt, Lowville Dairy Producers Co-Op; and Mike Watson, Goldstar Feeds.

In 2017 the money generated for the sales of Ag Commodities totaled \$153,074,000 of which 95% was dairy and dairy related sales. Milk alone was 74% which equated to \$113,927,000. In 2019 there were 158 dairy farms in the county that spent \$122 million dollars to make 570 million pounds of milk from their 27,000 cows, utilizing \$370 million in land and assets to make \$124 million in income to drive \$267 million in economic impact. This means that \$122 million was spent to make \$124 million which equates to roughly \$74 per year per cow.

Milk prices were high in late 2014 at almost \$26.00/cwt but then plummeted in early 2015. Until early 2020, milk prices were slowly recovering after 5-year lows, then due to the pandemic they reached an all time low of \$13.00/cwt. In fact, without the CARES relief many local farms wouldn't have survived. Milk price has a huge ripple effect on Lewis County's economy, for each dollar in milk price it equals 8 million dollars in the local economy. The estimated \$267 million in the economy from dairy directly impacts many businesses.

The current trends in recent years are regional consolidation, local busines being bought out, decreasing tax base, and increasing demand for county-funded services. Some of the threats to local dairy industry are external forces and international markets which impact price; supply chain being vulnerable to systematic shocks like COVID and market consolidation; local dairy farmers relying heavily on one buyer; heavy competition from regional and national milk co-ops; having an annual contract with Kraft that can be lost with little notice; Kraft recently sold natural cheese business; and local businesses impacted by declining number of farms and milk prices.

As a county we need to support resiliency and growth of the local dairy industry by installing processing facility and storage capacity as well as work toward NYS & Lewis County energy sustainability goals by including use of renewable energy and promote carbon credits as incentives. The request to the Board of Legislators is to fund an in-depth opportunity analysis to identify high potential intermediary dairy ingredients/by products and to develop and present a full business case, including recommendations for Public Private Partnership (PPP) model for installation of processing and storage capacity. The initial cost of Phase 1 of this project which will identify market opportunities, build a business case and recommended model for PPP is \$59,154.00. The initial cost of Phase 2 of this project which will evaluate and identify how renewable energy may enhance project value is \$18,654.00. Depending on the results and finding of Phase 1 the scope and funding of Phase 2 could be revised.

The Lewis County Agricultural Sustainability Council is seeking funding from the county because this project at its heart is about rural community sustainability and aims to support all local dairy products, both large and small, as well as related local business by investing in the growing demand for local milk. Phase 1 which is Identifying Market Opportunities will roughly take about 6 months to complete, and will encompass quantifying the market, identifying key opportunities to supply dairy processing plants within 300 miles, and identifying intermediary dairy ingredients and by-products currently used and what will be used in the next 3 to 5 years. The deliverables will be an Opportunity Assessment, Business Case, and Recommended PPP model all of which will be presented to Legislators.

Phase 2 which will evaluate use of Renewable Energy in Processing will roughly take 3 to 6 months to complete, and will encompass looking at carbon credits as a cost advantage to potential buyers of intermediary dairy products that will offset higher commodity prices. If the business case is approved by the Legislators, the framework of a public private partnership would be developed, and implementation planning, and execution phase would begin. The Ag Sustainability Council recommends that Lewis County evaluate the opportunity of building a high capacity cold and dry storage facility as a separate but related project as it seems there is a current need for this.

Legislator King asked for copies of the presentation to be sent out to the whole Board for further review. Legislator Dolhof thought it would be prudent to give everyone time to really think this over and formulate any questions they may have and then bring it up for discussion at the January Committee meeting. Eric Virkler questioned how it was determined to go in this direction for intermediate products versus using funding to help support smaller dairy business expand like Black River Valley Naturals, Joe Lawrence responded that it came down to volume and scale. The volume that is being looked at is several truck loads of milk each day (20,000+ pounds) which would likely require a huge expansion for smaller dairy entities like Black River Valley Naturals which could take years to develop. The intermediate products can be stored and will work for large volumes, although value added products do play an important part in the dairy industry.

Legislator King questioned if the large scale of the operation would be sustainable for year round production or would it only be utilized as an alternative for dumping milk, Legislator Kulzer stated that you wouldn't want it to be sporadic and it could be for more than just local farmers by purchasing milk from other areas of the state. He further explained that you would be selling a bulk product which is easier to sell as an ingredient. Robin explained that by finding out what by-products are needed and can be sold wholesale you would be able to determine what volume you can sustain year-round. Joe Lawrence explained that you can run a facility at full capacity by buying milk from other areas but it gives you the ability to switch to local milk when there is an over production or a local emergency which helps out local dairy farmers. Legislator King thanked the Ag Sustainability Council for their time and that the legislators would review the information for further discussion in the future.

The following dockets were reviewed:

1. Resolution authorizing a renewal contract with Cummins Sales and Service for the purpose of providing maintenance services for the generators located at all 9-1-1 tower sites and county buildings for the period beginning January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021 at a total cost of \$18,674.48.
AYE 5 NAY 0

2. Resolution authorizing and approving the 2020/2021 renewal amendment to the five-year agreement between the Lewis County Building and Grounds Department and the NYS Unified Court System, for the provision of cleaning and maintenance services for the interior of the Lewis County Court Facility, for the period retroactive to April 1, 2020 through March 31, 2021, in consideration of the payment of \$125,531.00.
AYE 5 NAY 0

3. Resolution authorizing renewal agreement with Birnie Bus Tours, Inc. to provide public transportation management, operation and maintenance services, effective January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021.
AYE 5 NAY 0

4. Resolution amending compensation plan of the County of Lewis with reference to the District Attorney's office to create a temporary intern position, effective January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021 with compensation not to exceed \$8,000.00. *Legislator Hathway questioned if this was in the current budget, Legislator King answered that the money given this year wasn't completely spent so this is in addition to that amount to get them through 2021. Legislator Gilbert abstained.*
AYE 4 NAY 0

5. Resolution amending compensation plan of the County of Lewis with reference to the District Attorney's office to create a temporary part-time Assistant District Attorney position, effective January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021 with compensation not to exceed \$5,000.00. *Legislator Gilbert abstained.*
AYE 4 NAY 0

6. Resolution approving grant of easement to DAIRY RNG-NY-MARKS FARM, LLC for the construction, installation, maintenance, and repair of underground manure and gas line pipes to be located in a strip of County land approximately 20 feet by 50 feet, under East Martinsburg Road, County Route 22.
AYE 5 NAY 0

7. Resolution appointing member to the Lewis County Industrial Development Agency Board of Directors effective December 18, 2020 for an indefinite term. *There was discussion on term limits and Legislator Kulzer felt that there shouldn't be indefinite terms. Legislator King suggested that they gather more information on this subject and if necessary, they can put forward a resolution in 2021 to amend or stagger term limits.*
AYE 5 NAY 0

8. Resolution appointing member to the Lewis County Planning Board effective January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2023.
AYE 5 NAY 0
9. Resolution appointing members to the Lewis County Fair Housing Task Force effective December 18, 2020 for an indefinite term. *There was discussion on term limits. Legislator King suggested addressing this appointment after more research was done and if necessary, there could be an amendment made in the future.*
AYE 5 NAY 0
10. Resolution authorizing application to the New York State Office of Community Renewal for up to \$500,000.00 in 2021 New York Main Street funding for a Downtown Stabilization project located at 7154 South State Street in the Village of Lowville.
AYE 5 NAY 0
11. Resolution authorizing application to the New York State Office of Community Renewal for up to \$20,000.00 in 2021 New York Main Street funding for a Technical Assistance project located at 5960 Main Street in Glenfield.
AYE 5 NAY 0
12. Resolution authorizing Phase 1 Hazardous Materials Assessment Survey on the Brick Block Building in the Village of Turin, and authorizes an agreement with DANC to assist in the Phase 1 project for a total cost of \$12,000 (\$5,000 to DANC and estimated \$7,000 for the Hazardous Materials Assessment Survey), payable from the Planning Department's 2020 Community Development Funds.
AYE 5 NAY 0
13. Resolution authorizing agreement between Lewis County Probation Department and Children's Home of Jefferson County for the provision of non-secure detention services for the temporary boarding and care of juveniles placed into the custody of the Probation Department by Family Court, for the term beginning January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021 at a cost of \$450 per day. Upon submission of a voucher, the State may reimburse up to 49% of the cost.
AYE 5 NAY 0
14. Resolution authorizing an agreement with McClusky Law Firm to provide conflict defender services to commence January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021 at a cost not to exceed \$71,400.
AYE 5 NAY 0
15. Resolution accepting additional permanent easement in the Town of Leyden, from landowners Gregory Grower and Sharon Grower, to be used, repaired adjusted and maintained by the County's Recreation, Forestry and Parks Department as part of the County ATV/OHV trail system.
AYE 5 NAY 0

16. Resolution to appropriate funds in the Sheriff's Department in the amount of \$6,000 to pay for the Shop with a Cop program using donated funds.

AYE 5 NAY 0

17. Resolution authorizing a membership agreement between the Lewis County Sheriff's Office with Project Lifesaver International for radio tracing and locator of at risk individuals under its startup program cost of \$5,120, payable from the 9-1-1 Public Safety Surcharge Funds.

AYE 5 NAY 0

18. Resolution authorizing agreements between the Lewis County Sheriff's Department and various providers for program services for the period from January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021.

AYE 5 NAY 0

Motions:

1. Legislator King made a motion to authorize Sheriff Carpinelli to refill two (2) part-time Correction Officer positions effective immediately, seconded by Legislator Gilbert and carried.

At 2:38 p.m. Legislator Burns made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Legislator Chartrand and carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Cassandra Moser, Clerk of the Board