

GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE
February 16, 2021

Present: Legislators Jerry King, Richard Chartrand, Ian Gilbert, and Lisa Virkler. Legislator Ron Burns joined the meeting at 1:33 p.m.

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 1:08 p.m.

Legislator Virkler made a motion to approve the 1/19/2021 committee meeting minutes, seconded by Legislator Chartrand and carried.

Highway Department update – Highway Superintendent Timothy Hunt

Tim Hunt began by stating that he and Ryan had met with all of the highway staff when he first arrived to discuss their view on things as well as remedies or ideas on improving things going forward. He grouped several of their comments together based on topics that were prevalent in the discussions. Observations that were made from Tim were that the employees are hardworking; care very much about the community and job; complete a lot of work; overall roads systems are in good shape; and not looking to break what works and therefore will be using a slow approach to things that need to be addressed. The topics that the comments were grouped in are Communication; Accountability; Leadership/Teamwork; Planning; Safety/Training; and Technology.

Tim explained that what he heard under Communication was there needed to be better communication; there has been a lack of a formal communication channel; micromanagement is a problem as many employees feel like they have three different bosses; too many bosses; need to get everyone on the same page; and employees haven't been involved in any decision making, for example equipment purchases. His suggestions for improvement are to enforce the chain of command structure; hold monthly meetings with all employees to get and give feedback; look into email & cell phones; monthly supervisor meetings; and start a Lewis County Highway Facebook page to increase communication with the public. The Facebook page has been up and running with over 1,000 likes.

Under the topic of Accountability Tim heard that everyone needs more accountability; the construction crew pulls most of the weight and other crews don't pull enough of the weight; there is tension between crews; building and grounds maintenance by the highway crew is poor; storage room is a mess; pre trip inspections for trucks are a mess because the sheets are not being processed; potential overtime abuse; employees are not being required to take a lunch which is causing friction as well as labor law issues. His suggestions for improvement are to develop "Key Performance Indicators" for all supervisors and managers; hold all managers and supervisors accountable for performance based on KPI's; Have HR hold training on proper labor

practices; clearly define areas of responsibility; and create a formal tracking of customer requests and resolutions.

Under the topic of Leadership & Teamwork Tim heard work and overtime needs to be spread fairly; leader must have employees back; need a clear chain of command; doesn't feel like a team, many crews divided; tension between construction crew and mechanic crew; bridge crew is treated as 2nd class citizens; don't like separate crews; too much micromangement, lack of empowerment; everyone should be part of the team; lack of consistency; and employees haven't been involved in equipment purchases. His suggestions for improvement are to develop a mission statement in which every action is measured against; improve accountability, planning and communication; involve employees in capital expenditures that involve them like garage, trucks, equipment, and road maintenance plans.

Under the topic of Technology Tim heard that there are no emails for employees or cell phones; there is no sentry check for road checkers; technology is not being used; no access to emergency radio frequency on county radios; and little buy in for the systems that the county uses. His suggestions for improvement are to fully utilize and integrate the tools that the county has like GIS, Pub Works, Munis, and BDIS; Share and involve employees in data; look into who should have emails and develop email lists; look into programming and training on county radios; potentially budget for smart phones for employees so they can utilize them for pictures, texting, calling, apps, data collection, and time sheets.

Tim explained that the next step was looking at all the assets that need to be managed: Labor; Equipment; Roads; Bridges; Culverts; Signs; Trees; and Guardrails. He shared several spreadsheets that he created to track the data on each of these assets. The data on these can be used to plan for future projects. His philosophy going forward is to keep good roads at the lowest possible cost by using labor, equipment, and materials to provide the service needed. The current overview of the budget is a total amount of \$6.3 million which is broken down roughly into \$797,563 for equipment; \$2,050,722 for labor; and \$3,451,427 for materials. Ideally to improve the roads system even more you would have to shrink labor and equipment.

Tim explained that he is working on creating an equipment replacement plan which reduces equipment expenses; reduces labor costs related to repairs; and increases the amount for road works by \$350,000. His goal is to minimize equipment cost by focusing on the life cycle which is capital cost plus repair cost divided by the life span; maximizing resale value; and minimizing repair costs. He shared charts that showed the life cycle and how this philosophy works. The benefits of doing this are to hedge against inflation; leverage depreciation; create cost predictability; help predict and control cost of use; and minimize repair costs. The first step is to right size the fleet, Tim explained the breakdown on how this was accomplished. There are currently 68 pieces of equipment and 18 can be disposed of leaving 50 pieces of equipment as the right size fleet. Of this 50 there are 18 that are in the Enterprise Lease program, 20 in a rotating plan, and 12 that are bought and held until no longer useable. Tim concluded his presentation by sharing spreadsheets that showed the details of this fleet planning process.

Legislator Virkler commended Tim on a very well put together presentation. Legislator Hathway agreed. Ryan pointed out that each year there is roughly \$200,000 budgeted into the

Highway Fleet and he feels that with the information Tim just provided it would be around that figure to put his plan in place which would effectively give the county a much newer and cost-effective fleet. Ryan voiced his appreciation for all the work that Tim has put into this and hopes to utilize him in the rest of the county's Enterprise Program.

Ag Sustainability Council project Q&A – Robin Wendell-Zabielowicz

Robin began her question-and-answer session by highlighting that the Ag Sustainability Council is requesting funding from the county for a study to be done on opportunities in the area for dairy processing to support local dairy farmers and allow growth for dairy in our county. Ryan pointed out that the Ag Sustainability Council was established by the Board of Legislators about a year and a half ago when milk prices were incredibly low and things for the agricultural community were not going well. The purpose of this Council was to study and look into ways that we could ensure the future of agriculture in Lewis County. They have been meeting on a monthly basis and what Robin presented at the December 2020 Legislative Committee meeting was what the Council recommends. The Council is just looking for direction from the Legislators as to whether they want to proceed with the recommendation or if they have another direction, they would like to go in.

Legislator Gilbert questioned if they have investigated other areas of the state that are suffering and what they are doing to help their agricultural industry. Robin responded by stating that one thing that was brought up in December and investigated was a Public Private partnership and what that might look like. There are simple partnerships which are just for tax incentives and breaks versus a complex example in Europe which is funded by the European Union to foster the growth of rural dairy through various aspects. Robin gave the example of Great Lakes Cheese in Cuba, Ny and how they are partnering with the NYS IDA for investment in new cheese production. Robin recommends that the partnership can be developed as the project goes along rather than have it be defined this early. Ryan pointed out in response to Legislator Gilbert's question that he is not aware of any other counties that are in the business of owning any type of dairy assets. Robin opined that Lewis County has been ahead of the curve in many areas including solar and feels this could be another opportunity where the county leads the way for other counties.

Ryan clarified that the end goal isn't to have the county owning a dairy asset, but instead be involved in ways to subsidize and support this effort. Legislator Virkler voiced her opinion that the study is a great idea. Legislator King inquired on the cost of the study; Robin stated that it was a total of \$77,000.00 for both Phases. Phase 1 is estimated at \$59,000.00 and Phase 2 is estimated at \$18,000.00. Legislator King questioned what would happen with Phase 2 if Phase 1 came back with not enough opportunity or feasibility for this type of project. Robin stated that in a scenario like that then there would be no reason or need to go onto to Phase 2. She also clarified that depending on what information is discovered through the study in Phase 1 could potentially change the scope of Phase 2. There was further discussion on the study and getting the best information out of it.

Legislator Dolhof has concerns about the county co-owning a project or a private business. His hope would be to put the emphasis on an industry that would add value to the dairy industry and

would end of being a privately owned, standalone enterprise. Robin stated that the Public Private partnership isn't defined yet and would take a considerable amount of private buy-in to make it work. Legislator Dolhof recalled a similar study years ago along the same lines that ended up with several privately owned dairy farms collectively buying Mercer's to produce ice-cream.

Legislator King voiced his opinion that the study needs to be done but after that it needs to be a project that is privately owned with people who want to invest in their own future. Legislator Kulzer clarified that he is part of this Council and no one had the idea that the county would co-own this business but more of the idea that the county could provide tax incentives or breaks through the IDA. Joan McNichol suggested that the Committee only look at Phase 1 right now because depending on the information that comes back from the study would determine the scope of Phase 2. In response to Legislator Chartrand's question Robin responded that it would involve all sizes of local dairy farms. Ryan responded that the discussions with the Council have been around having a place for milk to go when supply is high, but demand is lower, basically a mechanism to help balance things out.

Legislator Dolhof questioned whether or not there was an RFP done or how exactly the \$59,000 amount for Phase 1 was derived at. Robin explained that she put together an RFP for the State Dairy Promotion Order as part of a research grant opportunity, however it was turned down because it didn't fit the scope or direction they were looking for. The pricing was based on recommended consulting agencies and the scope of work being asked for. There are many farmers who support this effort. Legislator Chartrand would look to Legislator Kulzer for his recommendation as he has the most knowledge in this area. Legislator Kulzer pointed out that the Council is comprised of many individuals involved in the dairy industry some of whom are farmers.

Legislator King made a motion to create a resolution to approve funding for Phase 1 of the Ag Sustainability Council project up to \$59,000.00, seconded by Legislator Virkler and carried.

Capital Project updates (PSB HVAC; Solid Waste Transfer Station; Highway Fuel Pumps)
– Building & Grounds Supervisor Matt O'Connor; Solid Waste Director Kip Turck; and Highway Superintendent Timothy Hunt

Matt O'Connor began by giving a brief update on the PSB HVAC system. The design of the boilers is moving along. The air handling units are still being developed. The goal is to get the boiler out to bid in the next month or so and then have them replaced in the spring. The air handler will go out to bid for summer work, so the full project is completed by fall of 2021. The boilers are currently cast iron, but the plan is to move forward with condensing boilers for better efficiency. The project does need approval by NYS Corrections which should be approved shortly. The estimate from the engineers for the boilers is about \$290,000, not sure the estimated cost on air handlers. The goal is to use the same company for boiler maintenance on all our facilities to make it easier for trouble shooting and repairs. Ryan suggested that when we do the RFP we can create it in a way that makes it very specific to what we want as far as equipment goes.

Kip Turck stated that the bids went out for the new facility project/upgrade with the bid opening tomorrow. The bid opening for the scale house portion of the project will be March 17th. There were several companies that attended the walk through so there could be quite a few bids coming in. Ryan asked Legislator King for the approval to put forward a resolution to award the bids at the March Board meeting as long as the bid tabulation sheet could be put out to the committee members after the bid opening and that Barton & Loguidice gives their recommendation before the end of the week, Legislator King agreed.

Tim Hunt stated that the fuel system is complete with about 10 items left on the punch list, mainly reports. There was problem with the fuel system which causes the nozzle to kick off when filling up. The vendor inspected it and thought it was due to the cold temperatures and the fuel was gelling up but that does not seem to be the case as it is continuing to happen. They will continue to trouble shoot the issue until it is resolved. Legislator King questioned the extent of the disruption, Tim clarified that you can still fill up your tank it just takes longer. Legislator Kulzer questioned if the vendor has been paid in full, Ryan believes that the last payment has not been made. Legislator Kulzer strongly suggests not paying them until this is fixed.

Legislator Chartrand explained that he has a similar problem at various gas stations in town when fueling up his diesel tractor. Tim explained that there is a sensor in the nozzle that prevents fumes from backing up, but even with replacing nozzles it still seems to be occurring.

The following dockets were reviewed:

1. Resolution authorizing agreements between Lewis County General Hospital Occupational Medicine and the Lewis County Highway Department, Solid Waste Department, Recreation, Forestry and Parks Department and Buildings and Grounds Department for the purpose of random employee drug and alcohol testing.
AYE 5 NAY 0
2. Resolution to transfer funds in the Buildings and Grounds accounts in the amount of \$10,699.00 for the purchase of a lawnmower.
AYE 5 NAY 0
3. Resolution amending Compensation Plan of the County of Lewis with reference to the District Attorney Office to abolish one (1) FT Keyboard Specialist position, Grade 9 and create one (1) FT Administrative Assistant position, Grade 15. *District Attorney Leanne Moser explained that she should have the funding in her 2021 budget because of the vacancy that has been there for four months. The position is being changed to be more in line with the needs of the office that are being required of the person. Legislator Gilbert abstained.*
AYE 4 NAY 0
4. Resolution authorizing agreement between the New York State Department of Transportation and Lewis County for the Right of Way Incidentals Phase of Bridge Replacement Project (PIN 775389) known as CR 43 over Moose Creek and to appropriate \$2,100.00 to cover the Local Share cost of participation.
AYE 5 NAY 0

5. Resolution to appropriate funds in the Highway accounts in the amount of \$23,700.00 to reflect the approved Marchiselli program funds.
AYE 5 NAY 0
6. Resolution to transfer funds in the County Machinery accounts in the amount of \$5,900.00 for the purchase of a 3.0 cubic yard sander. *Ryan explained that this will be replacing a piece of equipment which will in turn allow the county to get rid of one pick-up truck.*
AYE 5 NAY 0
7. Resolution authorizing agreement between the County of Lewis and C&S Companies to provide professional architectural and engineering concept and design development services for the Lewis County 2022 Facilities Improvement Project, commencing March 1, 2021 at a cost of \$114,460.00. *Legislator Kulzer voiced his opinion that we should have investigated other firms. Legislator Virkler also felt that there should have been other companies given the opportunity. There was further discussion about having consensus from the committee to move forward with C&S. Joan clarified that professional services do not need to be sent out for an RFP. Legislator Dolhof pointed out that a concern was that BC&A who did the original study would low ball the bid. Legislator Chartrand voiced his concern for consistency going forward. Legislator Virkler opposed.*
AYE 4 NAY 1
8. Resolution authorizing additional payment and amended agreement between the County of Lewis and the Town of Watson to contribute an additional \$1,500.00 toward the total \$6,000.00 fee charged by DANC for their services in developing the Town's Comprehensive Plan.
AYE 5 NAY 0
9. Resolution authorizing the filing of two (2) separate Consolidated Funding Applications (CDBG Grants) for 1) CDBG grant for small business loans/grants in an amount not to exceed \$200,000.00 and 2) CDBG Community Planning funding for a countywide Housing Needs Assessment and Market Analysis in an amount not to exceed \$50,000.00.
AYE 5 NAY 0
10. Resolution authorizing inclusion of certain agriculturally viable land into a certified agricultural district and negative declaration determination.
AYE 5 NAY 0
11. Resolution to set a virtual public hearing to be held on April 6, 2021 at 5:00 p.m. to solicit the views of County of Lewis citizens regarding a NYS CDBG Housing application for 2020 funds in an amount not to exceed \$1,000,000.00 with Snowbelt Housing as the subrecipient.
AYE 5 NAY 0
12. Resolution to set a virtual public hearing to be held on April 6, 2021 at 5:00 p.m. to solicit the view of County of Lewis citizens regarding the proposed Lewis County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan.
AYE 5 NAY 0

13. Resolution to transfer funds in the Sheriff's Office accounts in the amount of \$22,000.00 for the purchase of capital equipment approved in the 2021 Capital Budget. *Legislator Burns opposed.*
AYE 4 NAY 1
14. Resolution to appropriate 2020-2021 State Snowmobile Trail program funds in the Snowmobile Trails account in the amount of \$291,732.00.
AYE 5 NAY 0
15. Resolution renewing intergovernmental agreement between Lewis County Solid Waste Department and the Oneida Herkimer Solid Waste Management Authority for processing and marketing recyclables for the period beginning January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2022 at the rate of \$77.29/ton for 2021 and increased by 2% beginning January 1, 2022.
AYE 5 NAY 0
16. Resolution establishing the Lewis County Board of Legislators as Lead Agency for the proposed Lowville Transfer Station renovation/addition project and determines that the project will not have a significant adverse impact on the environment.
AYE 5 NAY 0
17. Resolution authorizing contract between the County of Lewis and New York State Office of Indigent Legal Services (Grant Distribution #11)
AYE 5 NAY 0

The following motions were made:

1. Legislator King made a motion to authorize Highway Superintendent Timothy Hunt to send out an RFP/Bid Request for Hot Asphalt and Bulk Oil, seconded by Legislator Burns and carried.
2. Legislator King made a motion to award bids for sand, gravel, crushed stone and concrete based on 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 4/1/2021 to 3/31/2022, seconded by Legislator Chartrand and carried.
3. Legislator King made a motion to authorize Sheriff Michael Carpinelli to re-fill one (1) full-time Corrections Officer position due to retirement and any associated backfills, effective immediately, seconded by Legislator Chartrand and carried.
4. Legislator King made a motion to award the low bid for crushing of stone to Bartell Sand & Gravel in the amount of \$4.75 per cubic yard for the period of 4/1/2021 to 3/31/2022, seconded by Legislator Virkler and carried.

Legislator King had a brief discussion on writing a letter to the owners of the DMV building to see if the building could be purchased so all departments have a home. Joan stated that

Legislator Virkler should recuse herself from this discussion. Legislator Gilbert suggested that this be done in executive session due to possible contract negotiations. Legislator Dolhof thought it would be more appropriate to have this discussion at the end.

Legislator Hathway proposed an idea that Legislator Dolhof has brought up before to commit funds to the Community Development Fund to assist with studies on certain properties in the county that need to be cleaned up, like the brick block building in Turin or the Old South Lewis School. Every district likely has a building that could be cleaned up and could use funding for the studies necessary. The additional sales tax revenue could be used to put money into this fund. Legislator Hathway suggests committing up to \$25,000 for each district to allow for a study to be done to move forward with clean up on a certain property, and another \$50,000 for grant writing services to assist with the next steps of clean up. The total needed would be \$300,000, which could be managed by the Planning Department.

Joan asked Legislator Hathway to clarify if the study would be an environmental assessment, Legislator Hathway responded that it could be that or any other study warranted, like a future use study. Legislator Dolhof gave some of the background on this idea, which originally stemmed from Wind Farm projects and using the money received from those PILOT agreements to share across the board with all Towns, not just those in which the Wind Farm project was located. The LCDC was the entity that would manage the funding and application process. Legislator Dolhof thought the funding should be used for a variety of things and the applications should be broad.

Legislator Hathway felt the funding should be spread equally among the Towns and felt that the Planning Department would be great at managing this. Legislator Dolhof explained that the LCDC was used because they were non-partisan because they were not the same entity that was giving the money. Legislator Hathway & Legislator Kulzer both felt strongly that the Planning Department could and should handle this. Legislator King asked that Planning put together a plan and proposal for next months meeting. Eric voiced his opinion that Planning would be good to come forward with the applications and their recommendation, but Towns should have some skin in the game by submitting a well thought out application. There was further discussion about if the LCDC should be used or the Planning Department. Ryan stated that he would meet with the Planning Department and come back next month with a more fleshed out idea.

At 3:12 p.m. Legislator Chartrand made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Legislator Virkler and carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Cassandra Moser, Clerk of the Board