

GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE
July 19, 2021

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 to order at 1:00 p.m.

Legislator Burns made a motion to approve the June 15, 2021 committee meeting minutes, seconded by Legislator Chartrand and carried.

River Road Bridge – Highway Superintendent Timothy Hunt

Tim Hunt explained that there are two single lane wooden bridges on the River Road in the Town of Harrisburg. The first bridge (Bin #3340140) was red flagged last year and recently repaired, the second bridge (Bin #3340130) was checked out by engineers who found significant deterioration in the concrete abutment therefore causing the bridge to be closed. This bridge was built in 1960, spans 49 feet and is roughly 30 feet above the Kimberly Creek. The bottom is in fairly good condition, however the beam that sits on a metal bearing plate caused the plate to be crushed down into the top of the concrete.

A temporary solution would be to put additional steel beams down on the floor, all the way to the top, and beams to support the bridge as the concrete can no longer do that safely. This would cost roughly \$158,000.00 as just a temporary fix, lasting only a year or two and would take 4 to 6 months to complete. Complete replacement of this bridge would be \$1,000,000.00 to \$1,500,000.00 and would take between one and two years.

A third option would be to install a culvert and get rid of the bridge completely. The Town of Harrisburg would do the work of installing the culvert pipe and then take ownership from the county. Any bridge over 25 feet is automatically the responsibility of the county but if it is less than that then it would be the responsibility of the Town. The culvert pipe would have to be at least 10 feet in diameter, but it is hydraulically feasible because there isn't much water that flows down Kimberly Creek. The Town of Harrisburg would be responsible for getting all the permits necessary for the project to move forward. They are asking for \$90,000.00 to help with the cost of materials.

Legislator Dolhof questioned if the county would end up with the beams, Tim responded that the county would end up with the beams. Legislator Chartrand questioned what safety factors were looked at because we have had torrential rains on occasion. Tim explained that a full hydraulic study was not completed yet and would cost around \$15,000.00 but isn't required when you go to a culvert. A 10-foot culvert pipe would meet a 50-year storm requirement but would not meet a 100-year storm requirement.

Legislator King questioned if a 50-year storm would be sufficient, Tim responded that for a bridge you have to meet a 100-year storm requirement but on a culvert you don't. The DEC is requiring the culvert size to be 125% the size of the stream and imbedding 20% in the stream channel. Don Cook, Highway Superintendent for the Town of Pinckney stated that he felt both of those requirements were doable. Responding to Legislator Chartrand's concern of safety if there would be massive flooding, Tim explained that there is no one living down stream from the current bridge. Don went on to explain that there will be another 10-feet of dirt on top of the culvert to try and minimize the dip in the road. The road will be wider than it is now with minimal shoulders and guardrails on both sides.

Legislator Virkler questioned what the total cost of the project would be, Don responded that he wasn't entirely sure as he is still working with landowners to try and get dirt from the surrounding fields, but it would likely be around \$150,000.00. The Towns are only looking for the costs of materials from the county. Tim Hunt stated that if the county was to contract the project out it would likely be around \$500,000.00 for a multi plate pipe in that location with prevailing wage. Legislator Chartrand questioned if our Highway crew would assist with labor for the project, Tim responded that it wasn't part of the deal as they have several projects they will need to be finish before fall.

Legislator King had concerns that in order to put ownership of this bridge under the Town of Harrisburg the DEC needs to sign off on it. Don stated that he should know by the end of the week if everything is acceptable by DEC. He went on to remind the board that the other bridge is not too far behind this one. There were repairs made to it, but they are only temporary repairs. If this culvert works then it should be able to be implemented on the other one. Don explained how the culvert is made which is much stronger than years ago. County Attorney Joan McNichol questioned if this bridge would qualify for federal funding, Tim stated that it would however the deadline for submissions had already passed meaning the project would be pushed out 2-years.

Tim explained that the proposed agreement clearly states that the Town of Harrisburg needs to obtain all the required permits to proceed with ownership which is what the Town wants. This idea to change to a culvert has been discussed before. This option is a much less expensive alternative to trying to make a temporary fix or replace the bridge completely and it satisfies the Town involved.

Lewis County Law Enforcement Funeral Policy discussion

County Manager Ryan Piche explained that he and the Sheriff spoke last week about what the expectation is for when there is a death of a law enforcement employee. The policy that the Sheriff and Undersheriff put together is rather detailed and will be distributed out to all legislators for review. The policy that was created will be part of the Sheriff's standard operating procedures so adoption by resolution is unnecessary. He welcomed everyone to send any comments they may have to him for further review.

School Resource Officer discussion

Ryan reported that Human Resource Director Caitlyn Smith had sent out several emails with information on the options available to the board. The Copenhagen Central School District did request a full-time School Resource Officer for the 2021/2022 school year. The three options presented are School Resource Officer, Special Patrol Officer, or School Safety Officer. All of these positions exist in New York State and can easily be created however, the School Safety Officer would be a direct employee of the school.

Legislator Virkler felt if Copenhagen Central School wanted a School Resource Officer then they should be given one, but there should be more discussion on how much the school pays versus what the county pays especially if they want the more expensive option. Legislator Dolhof voiced his opinion that they should be offered a Special Patrol Officer explaining that position has the same abilities as the School Resource Officer, their time would be limited to school duties, and their salary would be considerably less. He went on to state that in the past the SRO position hasn't worked out for the county referencing the struggle to make them be on Recreation Patrol over the summer.

Legislator Gilbert asked for clarification that the Special Patrol Officer would only be working in the schools, not on summer Recreation Patrol except for if they would have to be pulled off from school duties for a special circumstance. Legislator Dolhof stated that was correct. Legislator Gilbert went on to point out that the School Resource Officer costs almost four times as much as a Special Patrol Officer even though the benefits of each are almost the same.

County Attorney Joan McNichol explained to the committee that the reason that the Special Patrol Officer has to be available to assist the county is because they are hired through the county, otherwise it would have to be an employee of the school. Legislator Burns stated he was on board with the Special Patrol Officer position. Legislator Chartrand questioned the difference between the Special Patrol Officer and the School Safety Officer, Legislator Dolhof explained that the Special Patrol Officer was a retired law enforcement employee, but the School Safety Officer wouldn't have to be.

Legislator Gilbert felt that Copenhagen Central School wasn't on board or interested in a School Safety Officer because there was such a big difference between that position and the School Resource Officer, but the Special Patrol Officer is much closer. Legislator Kulzer stated that a Special Patrol Officer doesn't necessarily have to be a retired Sheriff Deputy, it could be a retired Corrections, Parole, or Probation Officer. Human Resource Director Caitlyn Smith explained that it would be a retired Peace Officer which is set by New York State Civil Service. Legislator Gilbert questioned if the county could set the requirement that the individual would have to be a retired police officer, Caitlyn stated that there could be additional requirements outside of NYS Civil Service added. She then went on to remind the committee that there is an earnings cap so when an individual is asked to do additional duties outside of their school responsibilities that would have to be considered. They essentially have 180 days for the school which should max out their earnings cap.

Legislator King felt that the Special Patrol Officer working only for the school was a better idea than trying to break out their time between the school and the county. Treasurer Eric Virkler questioned if the \$35,000 cost of a Special Patrol Officer would be split between the county and

the school, Legislator King responded that if that individual was going to be working for the school, except maybe the few days the county would need them, then it would make sense to have the school pay most of the cost. Legislator Hathway questioned why in the past other schools were being charged only 55% of the cost of the School Resource Officer when they are utilizing them at least 75% of the time and that next year the contracts should be looked at closer and the amount the schools pay needs to be raised up to at least 65%, then maybe another 10% the year after. Ryan explained that the first SRO position was for South Lewis which was partially covered by a grant, the county covered the remaining portion. The second SRO was for Harrisville and to make it fair the county mirrored the split that South Lewis had in their contract. He went on to explain that the original figure of 180 days at the school and the remaining time with the county isn't accurate as the school needs more than 180 days, therefore some of the spreadsheets circulated aren't adding up with what the Sheriff had reported.

Legislator Kulzer questioned if the position is a New York State Civil Service position how is it possible for the county to alter that, Caitlyn replied that it wouldn't be changing the title just adding additional requirements, citing another county had done that to make sure they recruited a retired police officer.

Legislator Chartrand recalled that the schools were willing to pay more money, Legislator Dolhof stated that the schools never came back with any increased amounts. Legislator Chartrand voiced his concern that he didn't like doing business that way and wanted clearer communications. Ryan pointed out that the contracts with both South Lewis and Harrisville have already been approved by the full board for the 2021/2022 school year. Legislator King felt that next year it should be a 75% cost to the schools to be more in line with the actual percentage being worked at the schools.

Legislator Virkler thought it might be appropriate to start conversations with the schools now for the 2022/2023 school year because if they are being required to pay more, they may decide to go with a Special Patrol Officer or a School Safety Officer instead. There was further discussion on the percentage that should be charged to the schools. Ryan recapped that he is to go back to Copenhagen Central School and let them know if they want a School Resource Officer they would have to pay 75% of the total cost, or they could choose a Special Patrol Officer and although they are paying 100% it is still much less than the SRO. Legislator Gilbert felt that the big decision is whether or not the county wants to add another part-time Recreation Patrol Officer and he doesn't feel there is a need, so he recommends just offering Copenhagen Central School the Special Patrol Officer.

There was further discussion on the recreation patrol issues and not having enough officers out there. The current budget is \$60,000 for recreation patrol. Legislator Kulzer cited that the SROs are on recreation patrol per the agreement. Ryan questioned if Copenhagen should be offered the option of the Special Patrol Officer and if they are not interested then offer them the SRO as long as they pay 75% of the cost and then next year change the current contracts with the other two schools to 75% too. Legislator Gilbert felt strongly that the Special Patrol Officer should be the only position offered and if after a year it doesn't seem to work then an SRO could be offered at a much higher cost to the school. There was further discussion on the schools needs and the original intent of the county offering this assistance to the schools.

Legislator Burns made a motion to put together a Special Patrol Officer proposal for Copenhagen Central School District to review, seconded by Legislator Gilbert and carried. Legislator Chartrand was opposed. Ryan reminded the committee that the board needs to have a final decision by the August board meeting.

Junkyard Review Board discussion

Ryan reported that the Junkyard Review Board has met a couple times and is unable to move anything forward because they don't have a quorum. There are currently three vacant board member positions out of seven. There has been discussion on making changes to the Junkyard Local Law as well as the way the board operates. Joan McNichol, Ward Dailey, Legislator King, and Ryan Piche met to discuss changes. The first item was to appoint three more members to the board as this should make it easier to have a quorum at each meeting. Ryan felt that most of the time the Junkyard Review board does a great job mitigating issues however it is the repeat offenders that pose continual problems which are the issues they get stuck on.

The second change would be to hold meeting once a month over the spring, summer, and fall when the weather is nicer for taking photos or giving people time to make compliance adjustments versus in the winter when the weather is bad. The third change is after a resolution is adopted that orders a property clean-up there will be a court order issued for further enforcement of the clean-up order. The fourth change is that fencing will be required prior to a junkyard permit is issued. Legislator Burns questioned if there was a standard to what the fencing can be, Ryan stated it was in the Local Law.

The fifth change would be to increase the fees and penalties for junkyards so only people who are serious about having and maintaining a junkyard apply. The sixth change is to create a list of preferred vendors so that when the board does act to issue a clean up order a vendor can be contacted quickly to ensure the property is being cleaned up as long as it under the \$20,000 threshold of the county procurement policy.

The last change would be to create a part-time position in the Code Enforcement Department for someone to just handle junkyards and property maintenance issues. The other Code Enforcement Officers are already incredibly busy with building permits and their other duties. Some of these changes will come back to the board in the form of an amended Local Law. There was discussion on decreasing the number of Junkyard Review Board member from seven to five to make it easier to reach a quorum. Legislator King voiced concerns that one of the fencing materials can be a hedge row, but someone probably wouldn't have that in place prior to getting a junkyard permit issued, Joan responded that the local law does allow time for the hedge row to grow as long as it has been planted.

It was also discussed to only give a 90-day grace period without further extensions to avoid prolonging issues. Ryan explained that the local law does have timelines already stated but Legislator King felt that they need to be tightened. County Attorney Joan McNichol stated that she would work on a draft and circulate it to the committee members for review. There was

further discussion on the number of Junkyard Review Board members and ultimately it was decided to advertise but without a specific limit on the number of positions available.

The following dockets were reviewed:

1. Resolution amending the Compensation Plan of the County of Lewis with reference to the District Attorney to abolish one (1) Full-Time Assistant District Attorney position, Grade III.
Legislator Gilbert abstained.
AYE 4 NAY 0
2. Resolution authorizing agreement between the Lewis County Highway Department and the 10 Mile Road Association to transfer ownership of approximately 23 used, scrap steel beams, “as is” in consideration of public snowmobile use and access to this private road as part of the Lewis County snowmobile trail system, as a connector between Brantingham and Stillwater Road, for a period of seventy-five (75) years.
AYE 5 NAY 0
3. Resolution approving and authorizing an agreement with the Town of Harrisburg for the transfer of title and ownership of the River Road Bridge, in the Town of Harrisburg (Bridge Bin #3340130) to the Town of Harrisburg, together with the sum of \$90,000.00 to the Town toward the material costs associated with the removal of the bridge and replacement of same with appropriate culverts and other required materials, provided that the Town complies with and receives all necessary permits and approvals from the NYS DEC.
AYE 5 NAY 0
4. Resolution to transfer funds in the County Road accounts to facilitate an additional maintenance project utilizing funds allocated to the construction material account in the amount of \$40,000.00.
AYE 5 NAY 0
5. Resolution to accept NYS grant awards in the amount of \$188,201.00 for a NYS Main Street project in the Village of Lowville and approve the budget appropriations in the Planning Department accounts.
AYE 5 NAY 0
6. Resolution authorizing the Lewis County Planning and Community Development Department to submit the application for 2021 National Telecommunications and Information Administration Broadband Infrastructure Program funding in an amount not to exceed \$10,000,000.00, with the ten (10) percent cash local share match paid from County stimulus funds.
AYE 5 NAY 0
7. Resolution to set date of public hearing to be held on Tuesday, September 7, 2021 from 5:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. at the West Leyden Fire Department, located at 1046 State Route 26, West Leyden, New York to receive public comment on proposed addition of 7.5 miles of multi-use trails to the Lewis County OHV Trail System pertaining to Lewis County owned forestry properties.
AYE 5 NAY 0

8. Resolution regarding SEQRA review to add 7.5 miles of new trail to the Lewis County OHV Trail System and declaring no significant environmental impact.

AYE 5 NAY 0

The following motions were made:

1. Legislator Virkler made a motion to authorize Clerk of the Board Cassandra Moser to place an advertisement in the Watertown Daily Times to fill vacancies on the Junkyard Review Board, seconded by Legislator Chartrand and carried.

At 2:38 p.m. Legislator Gilbert made a motion to enter executive session to discuss a potential liability issue with fire sirens and asked 911 Coordinator Cheryl Lalonde to join, seconded by Legislator Burns and carried.

At 2:53 p.m. Legislator Chartrand made a motion to enter regular session, seconded by Legislator Burns and carried.

There being no other business to come before the committee Legislator Burns made a motion to adjourn at 2:54 p.m., seconded by Legislator Gilbert and carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Cassandra Moser, Clerk of the Board