

**FINANCE AND RULES COMMITTEE**  
**November 15, 2022**

Present: Phil Hathway, Vice-Chair; Jeffrey Nellenback; and Josh Leviker. Tom Osborne and Jessica Moser were excused.

Others present: Legislators Larry Dolhof, Lisa Virkler, Andrea Moroughan, Richard Chartrand; and Ian Gilbert; County Manager Ryan Piche; County Attorney Joan McNichol; and Human Resource Director Caitlyn Smith.

Committee Vice-Chair Phil Hathway called the meeting to order at 3:14 p.m.

Legislator Nellenback moved to approve the October 18, 2022 committee meeting minutes as recorded, seconded by Legislator Leviker and carried.

**Old Glenfield School Marketing Plan and Child Care Program update – Casandra Buell, Planning Director and Cheyenne Steria, IDA Finance & Incentives Director**

Casandra Buell began by explaining the history and timeline of the project. In February 2019, discussions and strategy began with Tug Hill Commission and Planning Department; July 2019 the county applied for CDBG funding to conduct a Reuse Study, which unfortunately was not awarded; January 2020, the group reconvened and developed a different strategy; October 2020 the South Lewis Central School District released a community survey for uses of the buildings (both Glenfield and Port Leyden); January 2021, the Planning Department & Community Development applied for NYMS Technical Assistance grant to complete reuse study on Glenfield Elementary building; March 2021, NYMS funds were awarded; May 2021, South Lewis Central School District posted an RFP for both buildings; May 2021, the MRB Group was hired by Lewis County to complete the reuse study and market analysis on Glenfield Elementary building; September 2021, Reuse study & market analysis was completed; Fall 2021, South Lewis Central School District sells the Glenfield Elementary building to LasComp Institute of I.T.; Spring 2022, Lewis County purchases Glenfield Elementary building from LasComp.

The stakeholders in the Glenfield Reuse Study were the Tug Hill Commission, Lewis County Planning, Lewis County IDA, South Lewis Central School District Superintendent & Business administrator, South Lewis Central School Board members, Town of Martinsburg Officials, and Village of Port Leyden Officials. The goal was to prepare for the decommissioning of Port Leyden and Glenfield Elementary School in September 2021. The Market Analysis and Reuse study results were that hospitality was the best use for these buildings. The property was best suited for “Economy” boutique hotel, similar to Tailwater Lodge. Flagged hotels or hotels owned or branded by a national hotel chain are just not financially feasible in Lewis County which is why it would need to be a niche focused higher end hotel. The primary target market would be outdoor enthusiasts that enjoy fishing, boating, hunting, ATV riding, and Snowmobile riding.

Other additional studies that were done that back-up the findings of the reuse study are the Lewis County Housing Needs Assessment that was completed in April 2022. It showed demand for large lot single family homes and mobile homes will decrease significantly by 2040; there will be an increase in demand for small lot single family homes and townhouse style developments; there will be an increase in renter-occupied households; and there is a need to create smaller, multi-unit housing developments. A KinderCare Feasibility Study is in progress and a possible location would be the new wing in the Glenfield Elementary building. They are looking at center size, tuition rates, and the talent pool in this area. There could be subsidy programs and structures to ensure sustainability, also different funding mechanisms for the project.

Cheyenne Steria explained that a partnership with Lewis County Government and Lewis County Development Corporation (LCDC) to market the property through a Request for Expressions of Interest Process would be the next step. The timeline for this would be to launch RFEI documents by December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022; accept letters of interest by January 31, 2023; have a committee review and score projects based on scoring matrix; then have the committee go back and choose the top 3 projects for more information, such as a business plan, financials, experience, etc.; and select a developer by May 2023. Some of the reasons to partner with the LCDC are that they can market for Economic Development by creating their own outreach and scoring process, the outcome doesn't have to be based on the highest bidder, their knowledge of various financing and incentive programs to help the buyer succeed is vast, and lastly Economic Development doesn't just abandon a property once it sells. They also have creative ways to bring in funds to support economic development/grant programs. They have various partners and avenues to market through Naturally Lewis and have many key partnerships that help build communities.

After the sale of the Glenfield Elementary building to the LCDC for a minimal fee the LCDC then contracts with the IDA for administration, which means the buyers will have access to the same professional who administer the IDA, Naturally Lewis, and the Chamber of Commerce. If any LCDC or IDA financing or incentives are involved, the property can be recovered in the case of default. A portion of the sale price will be used to cover LCDC expenses related to the sale process, but the majority will be allocated to programs dedicated to reuse of other vacant properties in Lewis County.

Legislator Hathway questioned what the lot size is, Legislator Dolhof stated it was roughly 6.9 acres. Legislator Dolhof voiced his concerns that if the property is transferred to the LCDC or IDA now they won't be able to cover the utility costs for up to a year if the process takes that long so how would those costs get covered? There was further discussion. Joan McNichol, County Attorney, stated that the county could lease the property to them with the right to market it and continue to pay for the utilities ourselves. Ryan Piche, County Manager cautioned that the county needs to keep possession of it until there is a viable entity ready to purchase

so it isn't vacant. Joan McNichol stated that she would work up an MOU between the County and LCDC explaining that the county will continue to own the property but upon finding a viable entity ready to purchase will turn the property over to the LCDC.

Legislator Hathway moved to allow the LCDC and/or IDA to begin marketing the property as soon as possible and to have Joan McNichol work up an MOU outlining the terms, seconded by Legislator Leviker and carried.

### **County Website update – Conner Biolsi, Information Technology Director**

Conner Biolsi began by stating that the new website will be [www.lewiscountyny.gov](http://www.lewiscountyny.gov) and it will incorporate all of the new branding items. He has been meeting with each department to go over what their needs are. Some departments, like Planning, are big enough to have their own website so the top ribbon will help sort out the larger departments. He continues to look at how things look and are portrayed to make the best and easiest user experience. In the past, under Human Resources and Civil Service, you had to manually print out an application, with the new website you will be able to apply right online. The hope is to launch the new website by the end of quarter one of 2023. Legislator Hathway questioned who will maintain the website, Conner responded mostly his staff.

### **Updating Standing Rules discussion**

Cassandra Moser, Clerk of the Board explained that one of the changes would be to update the language in the Standing Rules so it is easier to read and comprehend; add definitions of words in beginning; include a section on decorum that is clearly defined; indicate that Roberts Rules or Order is the structure followed; add a continuity of government section; and outline the definition of Ad Hoc Committee versus Special Committee.

A few operational changes being recommended are to have one resolution at the beginning or end of the year to allow renewals of all contracts as long as the increase is 5% or less and then track these renewals on a spreadsheet so they can be reported to the Board each month; to increase the amount of contracts that the chairperson is allowed to sign without requiring a resolution from \$5,000 up to \$25,000 as the current process works well, and they would continue to be tracked and reported to the Board each month; no longer require a motion to send out an RFP as this holds up the process, and the Board has to authorize awarding the bid by resolution anyway, these items would be communicated to the Board via bid opening dates; no longer require motions to apply for a grant, instead have the County Manager sign off on it at the pre-agenda level, and a report will be given to the Board with the information pertaining to the grants prior to the application deadline; and lastly try and work to combine bid opening dates with any various public hearings so that it would only happen once or twice a month instead of multiple times throughout the month.

The Committee seemed in agreement with the proposed recommendations.

Legislator Hathway reported that Lewis County led the entire state , not counting New York City, with the highest sales tax increase at 16.8%. Legislator Chartrand voiced his recent conversation with the Historical Society that as it stands right now the budget only has their allocation at \$35,000, not the \$50,000 that they requested and if nothing is done the next meeting will be to adopt the budget as is. Ryan Piche explained that the process right now is a letter gets sent out to the organizations that were funded the previous year asking them to submit their request for the upcoming year or it will be assumed that they are satisfied with the amount they were given. There is no requirement for any other documents.

Ryan stated that there can be a resolution prepared to amend the budget on November 22<sup>nd</sup> if that is what the legislators want. There was further discussion about requiring each entity to submit their previous years tax return if they don't have a budget or even a balance sheet to show rough estimates. Legislator Hathway voiced his opinion that the Historical Society seems to be asking for quite a significant increase in funding and if we increase them on a percentage base then we should increase everyone. Legislator Chartrand voiced his concern that although he isn't sure how the amounts are decided upon, there should be more consistency going forward. Legislator Dolhof was adamant that there needs to be some type of financial data submitted. Ryan explained that he inherited the process from the prior County Manager and has just kept using it but agreed that maybe there was a better process out there. There was further discussion about increasing each category of organization by a certain percentage. The process will be looked at prior to sending out letter next year.

The following dockets were reviewed:

1. Amending compensation plan with refence to Information Technology Department by Rescinding Resolution No. 152-2022, which re-establishes one (1) full-time Computer Systems Assistant position.

AYE   3        NAY   0  

2. Authorizing agreement between the County of Lewis and Ring Central, Inc. for new county phone system and equipment at an annual fee of \$55,500.00, plus a fee of \$100 per Yealink T54W Prime Business Phone; and a one-time fee of \$21,850.00 for professional services in deployment, design and remote training services. The agreement also provides for the County to receive a one-time credit in the amount of \$23,256.52 against the first year's recurring annual services fee.

AYE   3        NAY   0  

3. Approving and adopting the Lewis County Fair Housing Plan.

AYE   3        NAY   0

4. Setting a second public hearing for Lewis County McNeil Apartments Repair Program under NYS CDBG Project #636CVHR50-22 to be held on December 22, 2022 at 10:00 a.m.  
AYE   3              NAY   0
  
5. Setting a public hearing for input with reference to Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding for community development, public infrastructure, housing, public facilities, small business, and economic development needs under program year 2023 applications, in amounts not to exceed \$1,500,000 to be held on January 3, 2023 at 5:00 p.m.  
AYE   3              NAY   0
  
6. Authorizing agreements between Lewis County Treasurer and various providers for auditing services.  
AYE   3              NAY   0
  
7. Authorizing County Treasurer to make necessary budget transfers to close the books for the 2022 fiscal year.  
AYE   3              NAY   0

The following motions were made:

1. Legislator Hathway moved to authorize Purchasing Director, Brian Hanno to create and send out an RFP for annual online property tax auction professional services, seconded Legislator Leviker and carried.
  
2. Legislator Hathway moved to cancel the December 2022 Legislative Committee meetings, seconded by Legislator Leviker and carried.

At 4:32 p.m. Legislator Nellenback moved to enter attorney client privilege session for update on negotiations, seconded by Legislator Leviker and carried.

At 4:47 p.m. Legislator Nellenback moved to enter regular session, seconded by Legislator Leviker and carried.

With no other business to come before the committee Legislator Hathway moved to adjourn the meeting at 4:48 p.m., seconded by Legislator Nellenback and carried.

Respectfully submitted,  
Cassandra Moser, Clerk of the Board