

COUNTY OF CLINTON)  
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STATE OF NEW YORK)

June 2, 2020

Stenographer's minutes of the Regular Session of the Clinton County Legislature held Wednesday, May 27, 2020 at 5:15 p.m. via teleconference, Clinton County, New York.

PRESENT: Mark Henry, Chairperson, Area 3  
Simon Conroy, Area 4  
Calvin Castine, Area 1  
Robert Hall, Area 10  
Patrick McGill, Area 8 (joined at 5:23 p.m.)  
Francis Peryea, Area 2  
Richard Potiker, Area 5  
Christopher Rosenquest, Area 9  
Rob Timmons, Area 7  
Patty Waldron, Area 6

ALSO PRESENT: Michael E. Zurlo, County Administrator  
Rodney Brown, Deputy County Administrator  
Jacqueline Kelleher, Esq., County Attorney  
Kim Kinblom, Personnel Director  
John Kanoza, Director of Public Health

The meeting was held remotely via teleconference in accordance with Governor Cuomo's Executive Order 202.1 due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, and the public has the opportunity to attend the meeting via an audio link.

Chairperson Henry called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m.

Following the pledge of allegiance to the flag, County Administrator Michael Zurlo conducted roll call.

Legislator Hall motioned to accept the minutes of the Special Meeting held Friday, May 8, 2020 and the Wednesday, May 13, 2020 Regular Session, seconded by Legislator Rosenquest. Carried (9-0-1).

The meeting format did not include public comment. Members of the public were asked to express their concerns/comments by emailing: [legislature@clintoncountygov.com](mailto:legislature@clintoncountygov.com).

Chairperson Henry moved on to Committee reports. He stated due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, all Committee meetings have been cancelled until further notice.

#### **Buildings and Grounds Committee - Legislator Peryea**

Legislator Peryea reported the Buildings and Grounds staff continues to currently disinfect all buildings (including the satellite at the Community College).

Staff has been installing plexiglass shields in areas to control social distancing. They are working with departments to achieve social distance mapping in preparation of reopening.

#### **Children and Family Services Committee - Legislator Potiker**

Legislator Potiker reported the Department of Social Services continues to provide all essential services to the residents of Clinton County. Surprisingly, the Department has not seen a significant increase in Public Assistance or Food Stamp applications in the past several weeks as more individuals are finally receiving their Unemployment Insurance Benefits.

The Commissioner has not had to recall any furloughed staff due to work demands. The Department is able to meet state/federal mandates as a result of significant waivers that have been implemented as a result of COVID-19.

#### **Economic Development and County Operations Committee - Legislator Rosenquest**

Legislator Rosenquest reported during the month of May, the County Clerk's Office has been processing regular mail, emails, E-Recordings, now E-filing, regular recordings and filings and copies. The office has taken in approximately \$191,990 in revenue.

The Information Technology Department has been supporting departmental responses to the Covid-19 Pandemic, providing technical assistance and remote work capabilities as needed. With the help of Buildings and Grounds, IT has upgraded the wireless network at the Mental Health and Addiction Services building. With the assistance of Emergency Services, a secondary Data Center has been set up at the Emergency Services facility, providing the County a multi-site solution to enhance our disaster recovery capabilities. IT has also been planning, and is in the process of rolling out an upgrade of the internal network at Emergency Services.

The Real Property Office reports that informal hearings will be completed for all the Assessors by the end of the week. Despite the volume of calls and appointments, the assessors have been able to keep up with their scheduled times with a few deviations. Overall, everything has gone smoothly.

Grievance Days started Tuesday, May 26<sup>th</sup> for most towns, while other towns will be holding Grievance Days on Wednesday, May 27<sup>th</sup>, Thursday, May 28<sup>th</sup> or Tuesday, June 2<sup>nd</sup> depending on their local law.

The Board of Elections has been preparing for the City of Plattsburgh Mayor's Democratic Primary on June 23<sup>rd</sup>. This has entailed designing the ballots and preparing them for the expected large number of absentee ballot requests. The Department worked with our voter registration vendor, NIS Data Systems, to prepare a ballot application mailer and mailing list for all of the eligible voters in the City as required by Governor Cuomo's Executive Order.

Board of Elections has also been preparing for the potential, now certain, Democratic Presidential Primary Election, also scheduled for June 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Staff, on a rotating basis, had been working from home as well as in the office, and are all now working in the office. There has been a constant influx of voter registrations, absentee ballot applications and changes to existing voter records.

Since the start of the COVID-19 Pandemic, Central Stores has continued to be open daily from Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m. Once the Governor initiated a reduction in staffing mandate, the three staff members were working on a daily rotating basis. This remained in effect until the County furlough process. Since April 27<sup>th</sup>, two staff members were furloughed and the one remaining staff member works every weekday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The Purchasing Agent anticipates resuming normal business operating hours and duties once the furloughed employees are returned to full-time work status.

### **Finance Committee - Legislator Timmons**

Legislator Timmons reported the Treasurer's Office has been communicating with Mr. Zurlo twice a week with cash and fund balances.

The Dannemora properties have been transferred to the new owners.

The Department is currently working with the auditors remotely.

Shelly Toohill retired in May and Jerry Deyo and Anne Cross will retire in June, bringing the total number of retirements this year to five employees, with two additional employees moving to new positions within the office.

The County received the \$4.5 million reimbursement for the Airport in May.

### **Health Committee - Legislator Waldron**

John Kanoza, the Director of Public Health, and his team continue to lead the response to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Legislator Waldron requested Mr. Kanoza to provide an update and statistics on the latest developments of the pandemic in Clinton County. Mr. Kanoza reported there have been no new cases since May 23<sup>rd</sup>. There are eight active cases in the County, and things are looking better. CVPH continues testing, and Nursing Homes are testing their workers twice a week. Mr. Kanoza is working with local schools on graduation plans and SUNY Plattsburgh on getting dorms ready for the fall. Mr. Kanoza complimented the Fair Board for deciding to cancel the 2020 County Fair.

### **Human Services Committee - Legislator Conroy**

Legislator Conroy reported the Home Delivered Meals Program has been one of the most important services during the COVID-19 crisis. Many older adults in our region are taking this situation very seriously, and as such, are trying to stay home as much as possible, making access to food a critical support. So far, operations have continued uninterrupted. Food costs have been rising, and the food service manager at Nutrition has been warned by ALL of his vendors to expect shortages of certain food items in the very near future.

The Program is now delivering approximately 3,000 meals per week to over 550 clients. As a point of reference, in January, there were only 413 home-delivered meals clients. The increase is due to a combination of things: clients that were previously attending congregate meal sites, clients that have difficulty accessing food while following the stay-at-home directive, and new home-delivered meal clients that are being served for other reasons.

The Office for the Aging will be using stimulus funding received to support these services, as well as flexibility to use other federal funding, like the congregate meals funding, to provide the additional meals.

The Veterans Service Agency is staffed with the Director, Veterans Counselor, Senior Veterans Service Aide, and Typist. The New York State Division of Veterans Services also has one Veterans Counselor co-located within the Agency office space.

During the isolation/social distancing phase, the Director had all office phone calls forwarded to his cell phone. He would then maintain contact with all staff and messaged those who needed to work with the clients. The Department averaged 17 phone calls each day during this period.

Effective April 27, 2020, the Senior Veterans Service Aide and the Typist were approved to furlough and currently remain on furlough.

The DAV Van transportation system (transporting veterans to medical appointments) was suspended from March 30<sup>th</sup> through May 15<sup>th</sup> due to recommendations by the VA Medical Center in Albany. The DAV Van has resumed transporting veterans, effective May 18, 2020.

### **Personnel Committee - Legislator Henry**

Legislator Henry reported there are a total of 222 furlough requests and currently, the County has 159 employees on furloughs until approximately July 31<sup>st</sup>. The Personnel Department continues to monitor the cost savings for the vacant positions. Kim Kinblom, the Personnel Director, is considering postponing the next round of Civil Service Exams on June 13 due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Ms. Kinblom is working with Departments in collaboration with the Health Department and Buildings and Grounds on the Clinton County Re-opening guidelines to ensure safety of employees and the public. The Department continues to be a resource for other local municipalities on Civil Service laws and rules for employee reductions, furloughs and/or layoffs.

The Personnel Committee was polled on Resolution #352 under Waive Rule 13.2. This resolution will approve the creation of two temporary, part-time Election Specialist positions in the Board of Elections to assist in the processing of absentee ballots for the June 23<sup>rd</sup> Presidential Primary and City of Plattsburgh Primary Elections. Funding for these two positions will be covered under the Coronavirus Aide, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES) Grant Program and will not result in any cost to Clinton County.

### **Plattsburgh International Airport Committee - Legislator Hall**

Legislator Hall reported on Friday, May 22<sup>nd</sup>, Spirit Airlines was granted permission from the United States Department of Transportation to suspend service at Plattsburgh International Airport until September 30<sup>th</sup>. On Sunday, May 24<sup>th</sup>, Allegiant filed a revised schedule that cancels service from Plattsburgh to Ft. Lauderdale, Florida for the month of July, and possibly August. The County was advised July's schedule for Sky West may restore flights back from one to two flights per day.

Airport staff continues to do an excellent job keeping the terminal clean. There was a sprinkler head that broke in the TSA area, and this has been repaired. They are having trouble with the air conditioning unit, and a company has been called in to repair it.

Resolution #341 has been withdrawn.

### **Public Safety Committee - Legislator Castine**

Legislator Castine reported the Probation Department has continued operations throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic. From the original Governor's Order for 50 percent staff reduction, daily staffing was reduced through some flexible schedules, minimal work from home and use of the County Emergency Leave. After furloughs went into effect on or about April 27<sup>th</sup>, the remaining staff that did not furlough returned to work.

The New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services, Office of Probation and Correctional Alternatives relaxed some of our face-to-face supervision rules; however increased collateral and electronic contacts, meaning we have to make double the contacts. Officers have been using a new product provided by our software developer called "CE Check-in" in addition to telephonic contacts and some Zoom sessions. Courts have been hearing violation of probation matters through Skype sessions organized by the County Court Clerk. The Department is still under order to perform Article 10 Drug Testing through Clinton County Family Court, so they've had some clients coming into the office daily for testing.

The Public Defender's Office continues to conduct all client meetings by phone and/or ZOOM, and all Court appearances have been handled in the same manner.

The office continues to review files, have discussions with clients and file motions or other filings as needed throughout this COVID-19 Pandemic. It appears that courts will slowly start to re-open, and they can start returning to some form of normal operation.

### **Transportation Committee - Legislator McGill**

Legislator McGill reported highway crews are nearly finished with cleanup from the winter season, which includes sweeping roads and washing bridges. For the past two weeks, a crew has been assigned to address potholes around the County. That work is complete for now. Traffic crews are repairing signs and guiderails, as well as painting/taping some intersections. A shoulder/drainage improvement project on the Military Turnpike is progressing well and will be complete in about one week. After June 1<sup>st</sup>, we will begin roadside mowing work, additional pavement repair work on various roads and culvert replacements on roads scheduled to be paved this year. Asphalt milling operations are tentatively scheduled to begin mid-June. Paving projects will begin after milling is complete. Anticipated paving will start in mid-July.

Luck Brothers, Inc. is progressing well on the two bridge projects. On Thursday May 28<sup>th</sup>, the girder beams will be removed on the Tappin Road. Following that, the demolition of the existing abutments will take place. A temporary waterline is currently being installed on Goddeau Road for the Harney Bridge Road Project. Railing and deck removal on Harney Bridge should take place next week.

## **LIAISON REPORTS**

### **Chamber of Commerce – Legislator Rosenquest**

Legislator Rosenquest reported all Legislators received copies of the updated Marketing Plan.

### **Clinton Community College – Legislator Rosenquest**

Legislator Rosenquest reported the Board of Trustees met Tuesday, May 26<sup>th</sup>. The College is discussing in-person or on-line classes for the fall. They will continue to work with SUNY.

### **Cooperative Extension – Legislator Timmons**

Legislator Timmons reported Cooperative Extension met last week. Hand sanitizer is being distributed from New York State. They are working on activities for this summer which would fall within the COVID-19 guidelines.

### **Intercounty Legislative Committee of the Adirondacks – Legislator Waldron**

Legislator Waldron reported a ZOOM meeting would be held on Thursday, May 28<sup>th</sup>.

### **Soil and Water – Legislators Peryea and Timmons**

Legislator Timmons reported Soil and Water met via ZOOM last week. A couple more grants have been completed. Soil and Water continues to assist farms with rentals, seeding, etc. Hydroseeding equipment is being repaired.

### **Workforce Development Board – Legislator Rosenquest**

Legislator Rosenquest reported there was another small “hiccup” with funding which was handled fairly quickly. The Workforce Development Board is seeking grants for Opioid Displacement Services.

## **STAFF REPORTS**

### **County Attorney – Jacqueline Kelleher, Esq.**

Ms. Kelleher did not have a report.

### **County Administrator – Michael Zurlo**

Mr. Zurlo updated the Legislature on state aid. At first, it was thought there could be a reduction in state aid anywhere between 20 to 50 percent. It is the New York State Association of Counties’ (NYSAC) position that they are hopeful the cut is on the lower end of the spectrum.

Mr. Zurlo reported Clinton County could move to Phase II on Thursday, May 28<sup>th</sup> at 11:59 p.m. The State has indicated there will be specific guidance on Phase II businesses and what they would have to do to open in Phase II. Clinton County’s metrics remain very solid.

Governor Cuomo met with President Donald Trump earlier in the day to request an infrastructure package to stimulate the economy and request for federal aid to state and local governments. Absent federal aid, all municipal governments will be placed in a very precarious situation.

Mr. Zurlo reported the County Treasurer provided information on sales tax. The first half of March was pre-COVID numbers, and the latter half was post-COVID numbers. The County was in excess of \$1.3 million ahead in projections. We are now \$900,000 ahead of projections.

Mr. Zurlo reported this was Deputy County Administrator Rodney Brown's last Regular Session as he will be retiring from County employment. Mr. Zurlo stated during his 26 years serving in the public sector, he would be hard pressed to find a more dedicated civil servant and honorable gentleman than Mr. Brown. Mr. Zurlo stated he has always appreciated Mr. Brown's counsel over the years. He has done so many things for Clinton County. It has been a great privilege to have worked with Rodney.

Mr. Zurlo reported Legislator Hall had mentioned Airport Director Chris Kreig will be joining the Legislature in Executive Session to discuss a couple of lease negotiations.

Legislator Rosenquest stated he would be remiss if he didn't reflect the same sentiments that Mr. Zurlo made regarding Mr. Brown. He will be sorely missed.

Legislator Rosenquest noticed that the Government Center parking lot had been re-stripped recently. Mr. Zurlo noted the County had realized those parking spots needed to be changed. The County was required to move those spaces so we are in full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Mr. Brown stated the handicapped spots needed to be closest to the rear entrance of the Government Center. The County was required to have three spaces. The total number of public parking spots remain the same, and the total number of reserved spots remain the same. Legislator Rosenquest stated he has received much positive feedback on these changes.

Rodney Brown thanked Mr. Zurlo for his kind comments. He stated it has been a privilege and an honor to have worked for the County over the past thirty years.

Chairperson Henry stated he first had the opportunity to work with Mr. Brown when he served as Town Supervisor for the Town of Chazy. He has done a great job, and we are all lucky to have had him serve the County.

Legislator Hall thanked Mr. Brown. He stated when he first became Chairperson of the Plattsburgh International Airport Committee, he was told if he had any questions about the Airport to talk to Mr. Brown. He has always given Legislator Hall great advice. He will miss him very much and wished him the best in his retirement.

Legislator Timmons thanked Mr. Brown for all he has done for the County and for the vast knowledge he has. He thanked him for all he has done for the conversion of Plattsburgh Air Force Base/Plattsburgh International Airport.

Legislator Waldron thanked Mr. Brown for his guidance and advice he has given to all Legislators. She stated she has very much enjoyed working with Mr. Brown on so many issues. She thanked him for his years of service to Clinton County and wished him well.

Legislator Potiker stated although he was fairly new to the County Legislature, he did have interaction with Mr. Brown when he served in his capacity as Supervisor for the Town of Schuyler Falls. On behalf of the constituents in Area 5, he thanked Mr. Brown for his years of service and wished him well in the next chapter of his life.



## Chairperson's Report – Mark Henry

Chairperson Henry reported the Clinton County Path Forward group continues to meet once a week. He stated the County's metrics are very low, and he is very hopeful we can transition into Phase II.

Standing Committee meetings can start being held in the Legislative Chambers; however, Regular Sessions and Finance Committee meetings will continue via Webex.

Chairperson Henry spoke to Andrea Dumas, the Mayor of Malone and a Franklin County Legislator, regarding the Truck to Trunk Program. Glacier Packing received a USDA Grant for Franklin County. Glacier Packing was in discussion with JCEO. A Truck to Trunk Program will also be held in Clinton County at the SUNY Plattsburgh Field House on May 31<sup>st</sup> from 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. People can pick up milk, dairy products and produce in the parking lot.

There being no further business, Chairperson Henry moved on to resolutions. The following resolutions were approved unless otherwise noted.

Resolutions #325 through #340 were approved.

Resolution #341 titled, "Authorizing Lease Agreement with Exelon Power Labs, LLC – Plattsburgh International Airport" was withdrawn.

Resolutions #342 through #350 were approved.

Legislator Rosenquest motioned to Waive Rule 13.2, seconded by Legislator Timmons. Carried (10-0-0).

Resolutions #351 through #353 were approved.

Legislator Peryea motioned to enter into Executive Session at 6:31 p.m. to discuss the lease of real property, seconded by Legislator Potiker. Carried (10-0-0).

Legislator Waldron motioned to exit Executive Session at 7:12 p.m., seconded by Legislator Peryea. Carried (10-0-0).

There being no further business to come before the Legislature, Legislator Castine motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:13 p.m., seconded by Legislator Timmons. Carried (10-0-0).

Respectfully submitted,



Melody Lemieux  
Principal Stenographer