

**GOVERNMENT OPERATION COMMITTEE**  
**June 5, 2023**

Committee members: Ed Bronson, Bonnie Percy, Rick Willson (absent), Dick Harper, Carlie Chilson, Mark Morris (Zoom)

Others present: Terry Button, Leslie Church, Dan Banach, Doug Paddock, Tim Cutler, Pat Killen (2:39 p.m.), Nonie Flynn, Emilee Miller, Jessica Mullins, Rob Schwarting, Bob Brechko (Zoom), Colby Petersen, Jen Clancy, Kerry Brennan, Tim Groth

Ed and Carlie will do the audit this month.

Minutes of the May meeting were approved as submitted.

Legislative Zoom Attendees: 1 Other Zoom Attendees:

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Joy Schank thanked the Legislature for declaring a state of emergency. She has spoken with numerous people who are also grateful, and want the state of emergency to continue until there is no threat. Millions have illegally crossed open borders, and there is no end in sight. As a nation, they are trillions of dollars in debt, and their tax dollars are being hijacked to house clothes, feed, and provide medical care to illegal immigrants. Yates County does not have the money to take care of them. In fact, Yates County must now come up with money to pay for Medicaid because the Governor is, withholding their money from them. She knows most have empathy for the illegal immigrants. Those trying to legally gain entrance into their country, and more importantly, how about empathy for the residents of Yates County? They are having a tough time, many of them feeding their families and are being swamped with medical bills. Their plan for housing illegal immigrants should be a resounding no, their backup plan a resounding no, if they end up on their doorstep turn the bus around. Yates County must continue to have a backbone and protect its residents while their nation's borders are wide open.

James Smith, president of Cornell Cooperative Extension Board, thanked the Legislature for the opportunity to speak in front of the Government Ops Committee and give an update on Cornell Cooperative Extension. He welcomed Jen Clancy as the new Executive Director. Jen has the knowledge and experience to lead the organization forward through this phase. Times of change provide the opportunity to reassess the organization and its work. They are very fortunate to have someone with such in-depth knowledge and of the organization and the staff, the depth and breadth of Cornell Extension and who knows the local community and their needs. They will be doing a needs assessment of the different programs. Starting with the Ag. program and natural resources, these 2 areas of critical importance to the community and where they can leverage, the vast knowledge and expertise within the extension at large to their benefit. It's their goal to assess the organization based on the needs of the community, to realign where necessary and as appropriate, and identify where and how added resources could greatly benefit constituents. The past several weeks have been challenging, as they have worked hard to get their host in order. The next phase will also be challenging, as they seek to take a good, hard look at the organization, he would like to ask for the Legislature's support and understanding as they move forward.

**Elections: Robert Brechko and Robert Schwarting**

Rob Schwarting reported that the Legislature is scheduled to adjourn and as of 5/26 no bills affecting the BOE are scheduled for a floor vote in either house.

Rob reported that agencies have begun to predict a presidential election cycle in 2024 that is fraught with harassing FOIL requests, scheduling conflicts between the Presidential Primary, Easter, and state/federal petition submission, and a highly contentious presidential primary. Cyber Security enhancements and the BOE's independence/codependence of various servers and files are creating firewall problems for I.T. to fix. The BOE computers have been running very slowly and access to various vendors has been difficult. All of their vendors are reeling from the changes resulting from new Election Law and revised SBOE procedures. The State has provided fiscal relief by taking over the mandated translation of absentee ballot applications, ballots and voting instructions for the visually impaired voters. \$1,250+ savings this year. The BOE received notice that the Keuka Park FD pole site may be converted to an emergency medical facility (ambulance) and that voting may have to be consolidated in the Branchport FD facility.

Rob reported that they received notice of the 2023 grant extensions: Cyber Sec -\$13,129; TIER-\$30,487; Absentee Postage-\$21,666. The first two have commitments, while the Postage grant will require some inventive expenditures, as we were unable to expend the grant in 22-23.

Rob reviewed the May Objectives achieved and the June Objectives proposed.

### **Soil & Water: Colby Petersen**

Jamie Earl, the Executive Director for the Farm Service Agency for Steuben and Yates counties reported that May 18<sup>th</sup>, there was a freeze, what they call it when it's below a certain temperature for so many hours. He reached out to Cornell Corporate Extension to kind of get an estimate on the type of damage and how much damage was around the County. He met with them and they kind of looked at a few of the vineyards, got an idea of what was affected, the areas of severity and things like that. He made documentation, took pictures and started the process of going for a disaster designation on a Federal level. They had a Zoom call with all the growers to kind of give an idea what to do and basically, it's just documentation and pictures. They might not know the severity of the production loss until this fall, once everything goes to harvest. Time will tell if they have an emergency relief plan.

Colby reported that district staff have conducted 150 Watershed Inspections to date. They anticipate completing 450 inspections in 2023. Letters for past dues will be sent within the next two weeks. Improvements to the KWIC database are ongoing, staff has conducted 23 soils evaluations and reviewed 23 designs for new and replacement septic systems. District staff helped coordinate a training event for the Onsite Training Network (OTN).

Colby reported that district staff have completed inventory and assessment on all 174 Benton Town culverts and map preparation is underway and a final product should be finished by 7/1.

Colby reported that staff has applied 37 loads of hydroseed to 21 sites, but with the lack of rain in the forecast, they plan to hold off seeding unless the owner has a reliable watering source.

Colby reported that from the Finger Lakes Cover Cropping Grant, they have received MOUs from the ten other participating districts and the contract has been approved by NYS. They are ready to voucher for the upfront funds, approximately \$265k. The District is planning on applying to the Agricultural Non-Point Source Abatement and Control Program Round 29, they currently have 17 projects in the Seneca Lake Watershed totaling around \$650k. The District is also applying to the Climate Resilient Farming (CRF) Program Round 7, they currently have 12 erosion control projects in the Keuka Lake Watershed totaling around \$300k.

### **Cornell Cooperative Extension: Jennifer Clancey**

Jen reported that they put out their farm update was going out monthly in May to a total of 67 subscribers and their gardening matters quarterly publication went out to 56 subscribers.

Jen reported that in regards to the frost damage Hans Walter Peterson did gather a group of growers and industry specialists to gather everybody and share resources. At that time he was estimating between 40 to 50% damage to area vineyards. Just like what was mentioned, they're not going to know what that total damage is until harvest and just reiterating that they need to document everything. If those disaster funds do come through, they are going to need all of the documentation they can get.

Jen reported that an event organized with the Cornell Vegetable program, Farm Bureau, and Cornell Cooperative Extension, is bringing a group up from New York City to their areas for potential Asian vegetable growers. They're going to tour some of their greenhouses, there is a huge market right now for Asian vegetables in New York City.

Jen reported that Lexi Davis, Natural Resource Educator, has been working with New York State prism presenting on starry stonework control efforts on Keuka Lake. Lexi also works with their master forest owners program, and did an annual training with them on invasive and how to manage invasive, including garlic, mustard, honeysuckle, and multiflora rose. Her big project this month has been the riparian buffer planting that is, in conjunction with the Finger Lakes Museum, and the Branchport/Keuka Lake Fire Department. They received a grant through Cornell to purchase 50 trees and 150 native sedges, rushes and grasses to plant along the Sugar Creek area as part of a Stream Lake Restoration project.

Jen reported that their team took part in Celebrate Yates. They were assigned to the Yates History Center and they spent the afternoon clearing brush, trimming shrubs, cleaning out their garden beds, and preparation for the bicentennial tree planting.

Jen reported that they received some funds via the Rochester Area Community Foundation last year, and that project wrapped up this month. They did a paper sculpture project and a clay gnome workshop with the art studio on Main Street.

Jen reported that their geocaching project on the outlet trail now has 5 registered caches. They have a group of about 12 youth that are working to create more caches on the outlet trail as the ones that were previously there have either been removed or abandoned. So right now, they've started at the ball field, and worked their way to Fox Run.

### **IT: Tim Groth**

Tim reported that in the month of April, the I.T. Help Desk took in 246 calls.

Tim reviewed program updates, highlighting; Laserfiche Contract Form, Help Desk Software and VoIP Phone System Replacement POC's, New Anti-Virus and Managed Threat Response, Registration of an .GOV Domain for the Sheriff's Office, and the Communication Tower Upgrade Project.

### **County Clerk: Molly Linehan**

Molly reviewed the following Statistical Report:

DMV transactions totaled 2046 for April 2023 with \$16,702.71 in fees collected for retention and sales tax collected totaling \$111,712.45. COPRS Internet fees collected year to date total is \$808.74, transactions processed on the internet in April totaled 847 in the amount of \$47,904.00

with a year to date total of \$195,471.75. This leaves \$0.00 remaining of the threshold to meet before shared revenue.

County Clerk transactions totaled 2742 and fees collected were \$301,074.05.

Total fees collected County Clerk April 2022 were \$375,455.62.

Total fees collected DMV for retention April 2022 were \$15,300.67.

Molly reviewed the DMV updates.

Molly reviewed the Clerk updates.

Molly reviewed the financial reports.

**Personnel: Kerry Brennan**

Kerry reported that the collection for June is outdoor toys/activities (bubbles, sidewalk chalk, sandbox toys, etc., etc.).

Kerry reported that in regards to the Health Insurance Consortium, employee educational meetings were scheduled for May 31 and June 7.

Kerry reviewed the Vacancy Report.

**Historic Markers: Doug Paddock**

Doug reported that the eight (8) refurbished historic markers were completed by Polmanteer's and the Highway Department will reinstall. The new Universal Friend marker (Hewett Road) has been received and will be reinstalled. The remaining new marker (Vine Valley) is still in process at the vendor, Catskill Castings in Bloomville, NY.

Doug informed the Committee that he does not think he needs to report on this going forward.

**County Administrator: Nonie Flynn**

Nonie reported that in regards to CO82 Union Negotiations, the next meeting with the Communications unit is scheduled for June 8th.

Nonie reported that because CSEA employees will have June 19th off as part of their union negotiations, some of the offices may be closed. The building will still be open and non-union department heads and employees will still be working. The offices that will be closed are Clerk's, DMV, DSS, Highway, IT, Probation and Public Health.

Nonie reported that she entered the photo of their broadband groundbreaking into the NYSAC Photo Contest as part of their theme Counties in Action. Their photo was one of five photos that was chosen for the summer edition of the NYSAC News and to be featured in their annual calendar.

Nonie reported that they have formed a State of Emergency Declaration Committee with department heads from the offices of District Attorney, Emergency Services, Finance, Public Health, Sheriff, Social Services, Leslie, Emilee and herself. Doug Sinclair developed our incident response plan in preparation for the possibility of asylum seekers being sent to Yates County from NYC.

**Legislative Operations:**

Leslie reviewed the suggestions in the employee suggestion box.

Leslie provided an update regarding the State of Emergency Declaration and State of Emergency Orders.

**Legislative Operations: Emilee Miller**

Emilee reviewed the following resolution that would be needed. After discussion the Committee would like to find out more before approving.

- Standard Workday Resolution

Emilee reported that the Chronicle Express will no longer accept checks as payment beginning July 30<sup>th</sup>, the County will have to pay via credit card.

Emilee presented a “Notify Me” demonstration showing how the public can subscribe to this notification system to receive meeting notices, alerts, etc.

Mrs. Percy moved to enter into executive session on the basis of:

1. The Employment History of a Particular Individual, attendees being members of the Committee, other legislators present, the County Administrator, the Temporary County Administrator Assistant, and the Personnel Officer;
2. Matters leading to the Appointment or Removal of a Particular Person or Corporation, attendees being members of the Committee, other legislators present, the County Administrator, the Temporary County Administrator Assistant, the County Attorney and the Personnel Officer;
3. To confer with legal counsel regarding attorney/client matters.

Seconded by Mr. Harper.

VOTE: Unanimous

Meeting adjourned at 5:28 p.m.