

COUNTY OF CLINTON)
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STATE OF NEW YORK)

March 26, 2020

Stenographer's minutes of the Regular Session of the Clinton County Legislature held Wednesday, March 25, 2020 in the Legislative Chambers, 137 Margaret Street, Plattsburgh, New York.

PRESENT: Mark Henry, Chairperson, Area 3
Simon Conroy, Area 4
Mark Dame, Area 8
Calvin Castine, Area 1
Robert Hall, Area 10
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

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. All legislators were present. Also participating in the meeting (also by telephone) were Kim Kinblom, Clinton County Personnel Director and Kimberly Davis, Clinton County Treasurer.

Legislator Hall motioned to accept the minutes of the March 11, 2020 Regular Session, seconded by Legislator Rosenquest. Carried (10-0-0).

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

Committee Reports

Buildings and Grounds Committee - Legislator Peryea

Legislator Peryea reported the Buildings and Grounds Committee met Monday, March 9th.

James Cleveland, the Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds, discussed the 2020 Master Plan Project which will consist of the replacement of the Government Center roof. Mr. Cleveland is researching ways (including the use of consortium bidding) to bid this project in an effort to reduce costs.

The Buildings and Grounds Committee meeting scheduled for Monday, April 13th has been cancelled.

Mr. Zurlo stated he had a conversation with James Cleveland regarding the possibility of holding off on the 2020 Master Plan for an additional year. Further discussions will be held.

Children and Family Services Committee - Legislator Potiker

Legislator Potiker reported the Children and Family Services Committee has not met since the last Regular Session.

The meeting scheduled for Tuesday, April 7th has been cancelled.

Economic Development and County Operations Committee - Legislator Rosenquest

Legislator Rosenquest reported the Economic Development and County Operations Committee has not met since the last Regular Session.

The meeting scheduled for Tuesday, April 14th has been cancelled.

Finance Committee - Legislator Timmons

Legislator Timmons reported the Finance Committee has not met since the last Regular Session.

The Finance Committee meeting scheduled for Wednesday, April 1st has been cancelled.

Health Committee - Legislator Waldron

Legislator Waldron reported the Health Committee has not met since the last Regular Session. The Committee was polled on Resolution #218.

The meeting scheduled for Tuesday, April 7th has been cancelled.

Human Services Committee - Legislator Conroy

Legislator Conroy reported the Human Services Committee has not met since the last Regular Session.

The meeting scheduled for Wednesday, April 1st has been cancelled.

Personnel Committee - Legislator Henry

Chairperson Henry reported the Personnel Committee has not met since the last Regular Session.

The meeting scheduled for Monday, April 6th has been cancelled.

Mr. Zurlo stated the only personnel actions that will be acted upon are those necessary due to the COVID-19 situation.

Plattsburgh International Airport Committee - Legislator Hall

Legislator Hall reported the Plattsburgh International Airport Committee scheduled for 4:00 p.m. this afternoon was cancelled. The meeting scheduled for Wednesday, April 22nd has also been cancelled.

Mr. Hall asked to enter into Executive Session at the end of the meeting to discuss an issue regarding the sale or lease of real property.

Legislator Hall reported at this point in time, the Airport is operating without limitations, however Spirit and Allegiant Airlines have begun reducing flights and with the limitations on cross border traffic recently enacted, it is likely we will experience expanding cancellations. United Express has indicated they do not plan to cancel any flights to Washington, DC. He urged anyone traveling to Florida to check with their airlines first as many flights are being cancelled due to the Pandemic.

Public Safety Committee - Legislator Castine

Legislator Castine reported the Public Safety Committee met Monday, March 9th. The Committee was polled on Resolutions #221 and #222.

The meeting scheduled for Monday, April 6th has been cancelled.

Transportation Committee - Legislator Dame

Legislator Dame reported the Transportation Committee has not met since the last Regular Session.

Clinton County Public Transit cancelled all service effective Saturday, March 21st in order to support the efforts to suppress the COVID-19 spread. Services will resume again as conditions warrant.

The Committee was polled on Resolution #223.

The meeting scheduled for Monday, April 13th has been cancelled.

Liaison Reports

LC/LG Regional Planning Board – Legislator Waldron

Legislator Waldron reported the LC/LG Regional Planning Board will be meeting via teleconference to discuss relevant items.

Intercounty Legislative Committee of the Adirondacks – Legislator Waldron

Legislator Waldron stated Clinton County was to host the Thursday, April 23rd meeting. This has been cancelled.

Staff Reports

County Attorney – Jacqueline Kelleher, Esq.

Jacqueline Kelleher, the County Attorney, requested an Executive Session to discuss the sale and lease of real property.

Ms. Kelleher reported there have been very complicated paid and unpaid family leaves that have been put in place. This will affect most of the businesses in our area. Helpful information is available on the North Country Chamber of Commerce's website.

County Administrator – Michael Zurlo

Mr. Zurlo reported he has been holding daily teleconferences at 11 a.m. with Clinton County Department Heads to provide them with updates on the COVID-19 Pandemic, and at 4 p.m. each day, he and Chairperson Henry have a teleconference with the Governor's office. Additionally, each evening at 7 p.m., there is a teleconference with the New York State Association of Counties (NYSAC) for County leaders.

To date, there are nine confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Clinton County. One of the confirmed cases is an inmate from the Clinton Correctional Facility. The Clinton County Health Department is working with the Department of Corrections on protocol. Six of the nine confirmed cases were in close contact with the second confirmed case. Therefore, the work that the Health Department is doing is paying off as those six individuals were already under quarantine. Ninety tests have been negative. There are 81 people in quarantine with no symptoms, and 10 people are in isolation with possible symptoms.

Mr. Zurlo reported the New York State Budget may be completed as early as Tuesday, March 31st. The budget will be grim to County governments. The budget is being negotiated by the head of the Division of Budget and the head of the fiscal staffs of both the Senate and Assembly. It will most likely allow the Governor to take certain actions if certain revenues are not achieved throughout the year. He noted on a positive note, the reauthorization of County's one percent sales tax is in the proposed budget.

Clinton County will be under a considerable amount of fiscal stress throughout the remainder of 2020 and beyond. Sales tax estimates could be short by \$2.2 million to \$6.7 million. The County will have to find ways to get through this.

In regards to the County's workforce, Governor Cuomo's Executive Order 202.4 stated all non-essential workers be working at 50 percent capacity. The County workforce is now working far below the 50 percent capacity in order to comply with social distancing standards and the Governor's PAUSE order. The Sheriff's Department, Nursing Home, Children Protective Services' employees and the Sheriff's Department are all operational. The Department of Motor Vehicles has been closed by the State. Several offices are open by appointment only.

Chairperson Henry reported the County has also established a Unified Incident Command Center through the Office of Emergency Services.

Mr. Zurlo reported Eric Day, the Director of Emergency Services, continues to place orders through the State's procurement services for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) (gloves, masks, hand sanitizer, etc.) Shipments are coming in.

Mr. Zurlo stated the Clinton County Nursing Home is not accepting visitors. All nursing homes must comply with State standards.

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

Resolutions #218 through #230 were adopted.

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

Resolutions #231 through #233 were approved.

Mr. Zurlo stated Legislator Dame had previously questioned what abilities the County had to assist in providing some sort of waiver of certain fees on property taxes. Legislators were provided with a copy of Resolution #234 titled, "Authorizing Waiver of Interest on Property Taxes – Treasurer's Office."

Kimberly Davis, the County Treasurer, stated that only the Governor has the ability to extend property tax payments.

Ms. Davis stated the Legislature is able to cancel the March interest which would, in effect, give people another month to pay their property taxes. This Resolution would cancel the one percent penalty if taxpayers didn't pay their March payment by the end of the month and would allow property owners to pay their March payment through the end of April. This only applies to taxpayers that are in the Installment Program. If property owners are not in the Installment Program, they would pay the local tax collector and any interest, fees or penalties go to the local municipality. Municipalities can consult with their town attorney to see if they can waive the interest for the municipality.

Legislator Dame asked if there was anything the Legislature could do for people that may not be able to make March or April's payments due to the poor state of the economy due to the Pandemic. Mr. Zurlo stated both he and Treasure Davis have contacted the Governor's office and discussed this issue state-wide through the New York State Association of Counties (NYSAC). The Governor has made no determinations on real property taxes at this time. Ms. Davis stated Treasurers across the State are advocating for an Executive Order from the Governor for an extension, similar to the one that was granted during the Ice Storm in 1998.

Ms. Kelleher stated the only action available under the Real Property Tax Law is what was included in Resolution #234. Localities are not allowed to extend deadlines.

Legislator Hall stated the Legislature would like to do more to help taxpayers, but at this point, it is up to Governor Cuomo.

Legislator Dame motioned Resolution #234, seconded by Legislator Hall. Carried (10-0-0).

Legislator Rosenquest motioned to enter into Executive Session at 6:14 p.m. to discuss the sale and lease of real property, seconded by Legislator Peryea. Carried (10-0-0).

Legislator Rosenquest motioned to exit Executive Session at 6:39 p.m., seconded by Legislator Dame. Carried (10-0-0).

Resolution #235 titled, "Awarding Bid for Sale of Two Properties – Treasurer's Office" was moved by Legislator Waldron and seconded by Legislator Rosenquest. Carried (10-0-0).

The Legislature briefly discussed the 2020 foreclosure process for delinquent payment of property taxes. There was a consensus to take no further action given the present circumstances, thereby cancelling the 2020 foreclosure auction and rolling foreclosure to 2021. This action will provide additional opportunities for homeowners to avoid the foreclosure process.

There being no further business to come before the Legislature, Legislator Castine motioned to adjourn the meeting at 6:43 p.m., seconded by Legislator Potiker. Carried (10-0-0).

Respectfully submitted,



Melody Lemieux
Principal Stenographer

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