

GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
JULY 21, 2020

GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: O'Brien, Hicks, Shaw, Ferguson, Losaw

GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT: Rozell, Haff

SUPERVISORS: Hall, Henke, Ward, Campbell, Hogan, Griffith

Debra Prehoda, Clerk of the Board

Roger Wickes, County Attorney

Al Nolette, County Treasurer

Chris DeBolt, County Administrator

AGENDA AS PRESENTED IN COMMITTEE NOTICE:

- 1) Call to Order
- 2) Accept Minutes – June 22, 2020
- 3) Department Requests/Reports
  - A. County Attorney – Discuss Coordinator to Safety Officer
  - B. County Clerk – New Records Retention & Disposition Schedule
- 4) Other Business
- 5) Adjournment

Chairman O'Brien called the meeting to order at 10:00 A.M. via teleconference.

A motion to approve the minutes of the June 22, 2020 meeting was moved by Mr. Ferguson, seconded by Mr. Hicks and adopted.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS REQUESTS:

COUNTY ATTORNEY – Roger Wickes, County Attorney, addressed the following items with the committee:

- Cyber Security Officer is working from home. He will report official stats next month.
- Coordinator to the Safety Officer – Chris DeBolt, County Administrator, stated there was discussion at the last Personnel Committee regarding the request to move forward with filling the Coordinator to the Safety Officer position and it was referred back to the Government Operations Committee for discussion. This position was approved in the adopted budget with a start date of July 1<sup>st</sup>. Roger Wickes, County Attorney, stated this is more than a secretarial position and this position will develop training programs. The current COVID situation has exasperated the need for this position. A test would need to be ordered for this position and someone would be hired provisionally. This position was budgeted for half a year. Mr. Shaw questioned the County's financial situation and therefore should this position be filled. He mentioned how one county just laid off ninety employees. The cost for this position was included in the 2020 budget and in 2021 would be charged back to the Workers Compensation Fund. Mr. Campbell, Budget Officer, stated we should know more about our financial situation in the next few weeks. He stated we will do whatever we can to stay within the tax cap. A motion to move forward with filling this position and forward to the Personnel Committee for consideration was moved by Mr. Hicks, seconded by Messrs. Ferguson and Losaw and adopted.

COUNTY CLERK – Stephanie Lemery, County Clerk, addressed the following items with the committee:

- New Records Retention & Disposition Schedule - The NYS Archives have consolidated the current retention and disposition schedules and as of August 1, 2020 the new schedule is effective. Counties and local municipalities have until December 31, 2020 to adopt the new schedule. A motion to move forward with a resolution to adopt the new Records Retention & Disposition Schedule was moved by Mr. Ferguson, seconded by Mr. Losaw and adopted.
- DMV Update – The new appointment schedule is going well. The customers seem to like it, having a designated time. She is thankful for the Sheriff's support for having a Deputy at the door to monitor situations and are taking the brunt of the aggravation, not the staff. Three windows are open and

would like to have five slots open but need them to be made compliant with social distancing requirements. Averaging about 100 people per day in office plus the drop boxes, mail and dealers coming in. They are a few days behind on the work in the drop off box. Cortland County has a drive thru option with a window for their DMV and they have offered to have us come out and view their procedure.

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

**COUNTY ADMINISTRATION** – Chris DeBolt, County Administrator, addressed the following items with the committee:

- **Board of Elections** – No official determination from the State on how the November Presidential election will be conducted. It is likely to be held like the June primary – mailing an absentee ballot to every registered voter both active and inactive in the county and that would roughly be 37,000 applications. Board of Elections can contract with a vendor, NTS, for this initial mail out at a cost of about \$37,000. The receipt of the applications is the issue. Once returned, open and review applications and then mail back ballots. In the June primary, 24.98% of the applications were returned completed and 20% of the applications resulted in an actual ballot. Expect for the November Presidential election, 37,000 applications and expect 22,200 returned and ballots mailed out with 18,200 ballots completed and returned. They do not believe they can keep up. Requesting equipment that will help them meet the workload: folder \$1,945, letter opener \$1,584, time stamp clock \$949, and the biggest issue when they get the completed ballot back to count and enumerate - State Board of Elections approved high speed scanner and ballot counter which can do 4000 per hour at cost of \$46,000 but are looking into cost saving measures. Request is to authorize the purchase of the full machine at \$46,000 and the other items for a total of \$50,568. They have \$40,000 left in an emergency federal grant. The equipment requested minus the \$40,000 in grant funding leaves \$11,000 in direct county cost to outfit them with equipment for the November general election. The \$40,000 could be used for the postage. The election postage cost could be +\$100,000. Constitutionally, the Governor cannot move us to all mail in ballots. A reason for an absentee ballot is illness and through Executive Order COVID or concern about contracting COVID were reasons to vote absentee. All of the poll sites will have to be operational and the typical cost is about \$36,000 and this year need to decontaminate the day before and after the election and will contract for those services and also need 20 – 30 plexiglass barriers. The breakage from the beginning of the year will probably cover the \$11,000 shortage on the equipment. A motion to move purchase of equipment to the Finance Committee for consideration was moved by Mr. Hicks, seconded by Mr. Ferguson and adopted.
- **Cyber Grant for Security** – The Board of Elections has been asked to be part of a pilot program for any point detection and response identifiers. Basically, the State monitoring system would install software on our internet connect devices in the Board of Elections and provide us free monitoring. The voting machines are not connected to the internet. The monitoring software would be installed on our network with a specific focus. No direct cost to us for software and would be in place and working prior to election time. Teri McNall, IT CIO stated the software will go on the workstations and servers they use and it is a great opportunity for additional security. Next year can then make the decision as to whether or not we want to continue with this software. A motion to approve the Board of Elections participation in the pilot program – cyber security grant was moved by Mr. Losaw, seconded by Mr. Ferguson and adopted.
- **Technology** – He is more than a little frustrated with FEMA at the moment. The Administrator together with the Deputy Public Safety Director started putting together the first application for FEMA reimbursement. They were initially told anything needed to operate under COVID would be covered. Then last week were told that the IT expenses, laptops, conference phones and stuff would not be covered. Only eligible expenses were directly resulting from the control and stopping the spread of

COVID-19 and were done under our authority. He stated to FEMA that we incurred these additional IT expenses because we were under an executive order by the Governor to reduce staff by at least 50% and the only way we could do that and continue to provide mandated services for the public was investing in remote technology, i.e., laptops and were told that was an eligible expense for the Governor and we would have to petition the Governor to have him put our cost in his FEMA application. They retooled our argument and the basis for the equipment need is that the Chairman of Board issued an executive order the day we reduced operations and that did not reference the Governor's executive order and it made it through. He stated they will do their best to get the cost recouped. The IT CIO has worked with Deputy Public Safety Director on a proposal to invest in technology for help with the remote meetings in the classroom and the mobile cart at a total cost of \$8,200. The technology includes: two cameras posted in the room to cover the entire meeting, monitor to be mounted on the wall, two HDMI receiver kits, computer in classroom, ten zoom meeting business licenses at \$1700 annually and \$400 for conference phone in classroom. Little optimism that this will be covered by FEMA. There is a good chance virtual meeting will go on for a while and there is an Executive Order mandating streaming meetings to the public and he does not see that going away. Suggesting to send budget amendment to Finance to amend IT budget for these purchases with funding out of contingency, \$120,398 current balance. The zoom licenses include transcription. A motion to move technology purchases to Finance for consideration was moved by Mr. Hicks, seconded by Mr. Ferguson and adopted.

- Dredging Project at Huletts – Matt Jones, Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds addressed a dredging project at Huletts. An adjacent home owner to our beach has a proposed dredging project at Huletts and had requested to use our property and some help with hauling the material out. The project included a retaining wall and the owners were going to leave it in place at the completion of the project but as the permit process has progressed, the retaining wall has evaporated. This project now has no long term benefit to us. He recommends continuing to allow them to proceed and use our property but not lend any manpower to the project; county forces hauling stone from Peckham to job site and to load and haul material. Also, the debris cannot go to private property. A motion to allow permit applicant to utilize our property to conduct the project but the County would not be providing any manpower or equipment to help to facilitate the project was moved by Mr. Hicks, seconded by Messrs. Losaw and Shaw and adopted.
- Workforce and School – The County Administrator stated the schools are looking at some type of hybrid model; divide the class into two groups with one group in the classroom Monday and Tuesday and other group home working remotely and then transition the other group to school on Wednesday and Thursday and the first group home and Friday everyone remote. This is a serious issue if parents do not have broadband at home and child care. It speaks to the importance of the continued ability to allow employees to work remotely when appropriate and efficient. This is a potentially large issue for us. Unsure at this time how the schools are planning to open and conduct classes. The Board would need to put parameters in place for remote work and then have department heads implement.
- Phones for working remotely. One option is to forward desk phone to home phone and for every call it would tie up two of our phone trunks. Unbelievable call volume in DMV and tying up lines is not good. IP phone could work remotely but would require significant upfront cost. A soft phone – software that runs on a laptop, if someone within the building dials it will ring at home and also outside calls to the county number would ring on the computer. You can also make phone calls out and it will show the county number. The cost is \$16,800; 50 licenses and everything installed. The IT CIO stated it can also work on a cell phone. The soft phone allows great flexibility and is just like you are sitting at the county. This is just the purchase of the software. Once we own the software no additional cost, just licensing cost. Adding on licenses, \$8,000 for 50 licenses. The additional costs are virtual server licenses and installation by vendor. A motion to move soft phone request to the Finance Committee was moved by Mr. Ferguson and seconded by Mr. Losaw. Discussion. Mr. Shaw asked if this was

out of the IT budget or contingency. The Administrator stated contingency. The motion to move soft phone request to the Finance Committee was moved by Mr. Ferguson, seconded by Mr. Losaw and adopted.

A motion to adjourn was moved by Mr. Ferguson, seconded by Mr. Losaw and adopted.

The meeting adjourned at 11:16A.M.

*Debra Prehoda, Clerk*  
*Washington County Board of Supervisors*