



**MINUTES**  
**GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE**  
**Thursday, January 14, 2021 – 5:30PM**  
**Live Stream Link - [https://youtu.be/Q8X\\_tapLu2Q](https://youtu.be/Q8X_tapLu2Q)**

**CALL TO ORDER:** By Hon. Ryan Foley, Chair called the meeting to order at 5:33PM

**MEMBERS:** Legislators, Tricia Kerr, Heidi Nightengale, Hans Pecher, (Vice Chair) Chris Petrus, Mark Strong and Tucker Whitman

**OTHERS:** Legislator Elane Daly, Ben Vitale, Paul Pinckney, Michael Didio, Tim Lattimore, County Attorney Chris Palermo, County Clerk Sue Dwyer, IT Interim Director Paul Bornemann, Director of Community Services Ray Bizzari, Treasurer Jim Orman, Deputy Treasurer Mary Beth Leeson, Budget Director Lynn Marinelli, Confidential Secretary to County Attorney Lacey Bailey, Chief Assistant County Attorney Rich Graham, Commissioner Board of Election Katie Lacey, Assistant County Attorney Brittany Massi, and Deputy Clerk of Legislature Amanda Morgan

**MINUTES TO APPROVE:** December 3, 2020, **Motion by Whitman, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Petrus, all in favor.**

**APPOINTMENTS:** None

**DEPARTMENT UPDATES FOR COMMITTEE:**

**Cherl Heary and Katie Lacey (Board of Elections) –**

One impact of the 2020 election was the new State requirement that political parties had to reach a vote threshold of 130,000 votes on their line to retain full party status. As a result the Independence, Women's Equality, SAM and Libertarian Parties no longer have designated ballot lines. We were required to notify 3,500 Cayuga County voters registered in those parties and give them the opportunity of change parties in order to vote in Primary Elections. We are still receiving replies to that mailing.

We could not certify our November elections results until December 8<sup>th</sup> as 376 challenged ballots remained unopened in our Offices because of legal actions in the State Senate 50<sup>th</sup> race and the Covid shutdown in Onondaga County. (Thankfully the 22<sup>nd</sup> Congressional does not impact our County!!)

We have a couple of polling place issues to resolve before the February deadline to designate any changed polling locations. We will most likely relocate the Sterling poll site from the Town Hall to the Fairhaven Fire Department because of space needs. In Auburn we should try to locate a poll site in the 12<sup>th</sup> Legislative District. Auburn High has always been a problematic location and the 2020 use of the pavilion was fine for a National Election but for the local City/County races this year it would be more appropriate to have an in-city poll site. Suggestions are welcome.

**Sheila Smith (Clerk of the Legislature) –**

- Reorganization meeting scheduled for Tuesday, January 5<sup>th</sup>, as soon as we know committee appointments new signature pages will be sent to all Department Heads and those that deal with Resolutions.
- 2019 Journal of Proceedings is at the printers, information for 2020 is being sent.
- 2021 county vehicle updates have been processed and forwarded to Eastern Shore.
- Health Care and General Liability Renewals have been completed and forwarded to Eastern Shore.

**Christopher Palermo (County Attorney) – no updates**

**Susan Dwyer (County Clerk) –**

- Michael McNeill of the Records Retention Center continues to take the lead on our DREAMS Project; weekly meetings, contacting NYS Archives for status on 2021 grant opportunities, gathering vendor information, building our team, etc.
- Annual Purge: The Records Retention Center will begin to receive boxes of shredding from many departments this month. This the annual purge of documents that no longer need to be stored and they can be destroyed.
- Canvassing for an Index & Recording Clerk

- The Clerk's Recording Office and the DMV have half- staff working from home, and half- staff working in the office. This pro-active schedule allows us a back- up plan which would avoid an office closure if one staff person tests positive for COVID.
- Completed the 2021 Pandemic Plan for all 4 departments.
- Preparing for two big changes- Mandatory E-Filing of Supreme Court Civil cases, and commencement of Supreme Court Criminal case being filed in our office.
- In addition to the increased real estate and court papers, the Recording Office staff has many annual end of the year duties: removing lots of paper – some of which gets destroyed, and some are permanent so they need to be processed and sent to the Records Center, and checking our indexing.
- DMV continues to take appointments and process dealer work and transactions from the public in the drop off bin at the front door of the COB. It is going well, and the dealer work is endless.
- Our County Historian's Office has been very busy with research requests from the U S and beyond. We believe during this time when people are home more, that they are taking an interest in genealogy and researching the history of their properties. Some requests are from authors who are working on books, etc.
- The County Historian continues to participate virtually in many meetings, many of them in partnership with organizations such as libraries, etc focusing on projects that were started pre-Covid.
- The Historian's staff is also looking forward to the day (hopefully in Spring) that they get to move back into their office and not be stuffed into the storage space.

NOTE: For a detailed monthly update of the activities, revenue, etc of the 4 departments, go to the official **Cayuga County website**; choose *Departments*, Choose *County Clerk* and scroll down to **REPORTS**

### **Paul Bornemann (Information Technology) –**

#### ○ **IT Staff**

- After more than 8 years working with the County, Bryan Lamb resigned in December to take a position with a near by school district. Bryan was about to become the contracted IT Director for the county starting January 2021. Bryan's last day is January 8<sup>th</sup>.
- Based on the approved SOW with Entre for 2021 there are two open IT positions (IT Lead and IT Director) Entre is positioned to fill with viable candidates, pending final interviews and appropriate background/drug testing.
- Entre Consultant Paul Bornemann will continue to provide department leadership and transition based on the counties needs

#### ○ **Communications with Department Heads / Management**

- IT is developing meeting schedule to improve regular communications with department leadership
  - Assigned IT staff as department liaisons in 2020 – but rollout / communications of this was disrupted by move to remote-workforce and deployment efforts.
  - Regular meetings to plan out future department needs allowing IT to be more proactive

#### ○ **Active projects**

- Tyler Munis upgrade – open items continue to be resolved with Tyler after escalation to their leadership. The training environment is scheduled to be upgraded at the end of January.
- Toshiba deployment – Toshiba and county IT staff removed 53 off-lease devices and deployed 49 new leased multifunction devices. Cost is expected to be about the same as projected due to changes in the mix of color vs monochrome (b&w) devices.
  - IT and Toshiba will be working with departments to train staff and optimize how PaperCut and Xmedius Faxing functions
- Mental Health Building improvements - provide dedicated internet service and replace aging network hardware with new devices supporting 10x throughput to accommodate increased reliance on Telehealth services.

- Updating county fail-over systems between county office building and public safety building
- **Planned Projects for 2021**
  - BOE cyber security project – funding by NYS BOE.
  - Network Infrastructure upgrades for County office Building, Public Safety Building and Vitale building. Replace site switches and core network switches. Increase connections from 1gb to 10gb between sites.
  - Annual Munis upgrades
  - 911 Phone System upgrade
  - Sheriff Vehicle Systems/Cellular Services

**Discussion on IT:**

Foley says Kerr and himself established an IT department head survey asking for department head feedback and what their interactions were like with IT, what they do well, and what they could work on. He says Orman reached out other counties to see who contracts out their IT services and Marinelli has some information she would like to share as well.

Orman says from his point of view during this pandemic we have been introduced to a new phone system and copiers without much training. He says that we cannot operate without those tools. The IT department is helpful and will answer question when asked though. He says Bornemann has been very helpful, but does not think it is fair to him to be here two days a week and expect him to coordinate IT efforts with every single department in the county. He is not sure how much training Bornemann has received as far as budgeting, interaction with legislators and department heads, and even with union/disciplinary policies and the implications with that. He says there have been several Entre employees who were very good, but as soon as they reach a certain level they move on from the county. He reached out to 57 counties and received about 20 responses and none of them contract out IT services. He looked into the cost of it and it appears we will spend about \$850,000.00 in IT labor costs and about \$194,000.00 at our county, so that leaves us with about \$650,000.00 when the latest invoice comes through. He says the brunt of the Munis training has fallen on his office to Mary Beth Leeson along with other things. He thinks we need to reevaluate where we are and look at a full time county employee as the head of IT.

Marinelli says it has been about 2 years now since we had a full time IT Director. We had to quickly transition to Entre and then we discussed getting the position, but when we were ready the pandemic hit and it was not the right time to change it up. We were hopeful that maybe a current IT employee of Entre's would be considered at some point, but that is no longer even a consideration at this point. She thinks at this point the legislature needs to move forward and hire a full time county employee. She says none of us knows if we should stay with Entre, go with an RFP, and we are supposed to determine best service for best price. She says we will never know unless we have a county employee who is able to evaluate that process. She says another thing to consider is that we pay by the hour for Entre employees no matter how much they are working. If we have a county IT Director it would be non-bargaining and it would be salary. She likes the idea of having a consistent director who knows the history of our systems. She hopes the legislature will give the permission to put a resolution forward next month to get approval to do the IT Director search. Then by the middle of the year hopefully go out for RFP for the contractor and evaluate responses and determine to stay with who we have or not. She says we are probably spending about \$100,000.00 with Entre compared to 2019 because of the response of the pandemic and them working more hours.

Kerr highlights some of the feedback from the survey of department heads on the IT Department. Overall experience with IT was generally very positive and people had high praise for Bornemann and his staff. The areas of excellence were customer service, for the most part department heads saw IT staff as knowledgeable, professional, supportive, and generally responsive. There were general themes that emerged for improvement. She says almost everyone commented on the capacity issues with our IT staff and the lack of sufficient capacity to get the work done. There were concerns about response times, day to day operations, and utilizing staff to their fullest potential within the IT Department, onboarding challenges for new staff coming on especially supervisors to having quick access to software they need to hit the ground running and desire to have more IT training right up front related to Munis and website updates. There were some comments that there is delay in response to tickets due to staffing insufficiency, but a suggestion to maybe follow up to the tickets that there may be a delay. The future needs of departments are staff training, the staff are not fully utilizing software that we are paying for, and a lot of IT planning going on across our departments that departments are looking at ways to solve problems with technology that require ongoing IT support and involvement. The day to day we need tickets to be responded to and IT staff to be able to do that. The 8x8 had mixed reviews some loved and some thought it was the worst thing ever. The most common comments were the voicemail is difficult to access and there was not much training on it and it has glitches especially during meetings. She believes that this is a big enough function of the county that we should be looking at someone in house to head the IT department.

Whitman says IT has been an issue for a long and we have had this hybrid makeup ever since he has been on the legislature. He says the structure does not seem to be working and the legislature's hands are tied and have no control. He says if we contracted it all out and no county employees we could have control and hold the contractor accountable or find a new one if they were not satisfying us. He says if we had all county employees we could have more control by writing people up, hire better people, shift

people around, and create the structure we need, and hire or fire people at will. He thinks we should go to all county employee structure starting with an IT Director. He says to let the IT Director structure how they feel it should be structured and he would think once we have that figured out we could start to phase out the Entre employees. The county website he thinks we missed the boat because we had someone who was really good at it. He thinks we should have moved them to IT and run the website and social media. He thinks department heads have enough going on and they should not be having to update their own websites. He says we have struggled with the IT budget, but thinks we will have to come to terms that the budget will increase over the next few years. He says all of the IT stuff is growing and he does not think it will go away and we need to start planning for it.

Foley the committee if anyone is opposed to Lynn, Lisa, and himself moving forward with what the cost and specs of a new IT Director and no one is opposed.

**Jessica Strassle (Veterans) – Deputy Lindsey Wilkinson:**

- Syracuse VA Medical Center will soon be receiving the COVID-19 vaccine, and in accordance with CDC prioritization guidelines.
- Cayuga County Vet van is transporting patients to Syracuse Tuesday (North) and Wednesday (South).
- NYS Division of Veterans Services hosted virtual training on a variety of topics, and we will continue to participate.
- 6 markers, burial benefits and presidential citations were processed through our office for deceased veterans and their families.
- Our office initiated 12 new claims for pensions or compensation. We are still operating by appointment only at this time.
- Average phone calls in a workday is 25-30 to schedule an appointment to make an office visit, as we continue to operate by appointment only.
- Jessica Strassle may be extended at the 174<sup>th</sup> air National Guard base in Syracuse New York until vaccines are distributed. Angelo Ervolina and John Barbagallo (Part time Veterans Service Reps) has made this transition flawless during this time.

**Discussion:**

Foley says Chairwoman McNabb-Coleman has asked Government Operations to discuss her 6<sup>th</sup> floor employees, which includes the newly created operations manager and administrative assistant that were budgeted for in the 2021 budget. He says she ultimately has the final say in who is hired, but the jobs need specs and salaries set. He says for next month he would like to work with Lisa to bring forward specs and some salary ranges for us to look over and make our recommendations to get the wheel rolling.

**RESOLUTIONS: None**

**Motion by Whitman to adjourn at 7:06PM, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Nightengale, all in favor.**