

Special Meeting  
Chautauqua County Legislature  
**Meeting was Held Virtually due to Social Distancing Guidelines  
And Live Streamed on Social Media**  
Monday, August 3, 2020 4:30 p.m.  
Mayville, N.Y. 14757

Chairman Chagnon called the meeting to order at 4:32 p.m.

Clerk Tampio called the roll and announced a quorum present (Absent: Lawton, Whitford)

Legislator Odell delivered the prayer and pledge of allegiance.

1<sup>st</sup> Privilege of the Floor

Chairman Chagnon: Were there any submitted comments for the first privilege of the floor?

Clerk Tampio: We have not received any correspondence from the public.

Chairman Chagnon: Thank you.

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**RESOLUTIONS:**

**RES. NO. 168-20 Confirm Appointment – Director of Human Resources**

Chairman Chagnon: There is a correspondence from the County Attorney that we will need to understand so that we can entertain an amendment to the proposed resolution. Kathy, would you share that with us?

Clerk Tampio: Yes. This is actually a correspondence received today from Paul M. Wendel, Jr., our County Executive regarding the appointment as Director of Human Resources. “Dear Ms. Riley:

Pursuant to Section 15 of New York State Civil Service Law, I hereby appoint you as Director of Human Resources for the County of Chautauqua to fill a vacancy in the office with a remaining term commencing August 10, 2020, and ending May 31, 2023. By copy of this letter to the Clerk of the County Legislature, I respectfully request confirmation by the County Legislature at its Special Meeting on August 3, 2020.”

Chairman Chagnon: O.k., I’m sure you noticed that the resolution has a couple of blanks in it, so at this point I would entertain a motion and Steve, would you help us by suggesting what the motion should be to amend the resolution that we have before us.

Mr. Abdella: Yes. In both blanks in the resolution, which is where one would be filling in the name of Ms. Riley, we would ask for motion to amend to fill in both blanks with the name and address as follows: Jean Riley, 10142 Meadow Road, Findley Lake, New York (Town of Mina) to fill the position of Director of Human Resources.

Chairman Chagnon: O.k., so I would entertain a motion as Steve indicated. Chuck Nazzaro has his hand up, so we have a motion.

Legislator Nazzaro: I enthusiastically make the motion to amend the resolution as presented by our County Attorney to present the name of Jean Riley.

Chairman Chagnon: Thank you. I saw a hand go up from Lisa Vanstrom as a second. I have a motion and a second to amend the proposed resolution. Is there any discussion on the motion to amend? All those in favor please say aye. Opposed?

*Unanimously Carried to Amend*

Chairman Chagnon: Before we begin discussion on this resolution I have asked our current Director of Human Resources, Jessica, to review for us the recruitment process that we have gone through to bring us to this point and then I've asked our County Executive to give us his perspective on this as well. So, Jessica if you could share with the legislature the recruitment process.

Mrs. Wisniewski: Being on this call is a little bit difficult because obviously if I wasn't moving out of state this would not be occurring, but I did make a personal decision to leave and again, I'm moving to North Carolina where I'm originally from. I did give my notice to PJ back in May and we began the recruitment process at the beginning of June, actually June 4<sup>th</sup>. We started advertising for the position through various channels; online as well as newspapers. We did receive many applicants with various backgrounds including several with extensive human resources management experience and we started with a first interview with myself, Steve Abdella, County Attorney and Kitty Crow, Finance Director. We did a first round of interviews with several candidates and then we took the top candidates from the first interview and had a second interview with myself, with County Executive PJ Wendel, Chairman Chagnon, Majority Leader Jay Gould, Minority Leader Chuck Nazzaro and again, Steve Abdella the County Attorney. After having a final review with the top candidates PJ and the rest of the committee unanimously agreed to offer the position to Jean Riley.

Chairman Chagnon: Jessica, thank you for that. PJ could you share your thoughts with the resolution?

County Executive Wendel: Again, this is bittersweet. We're getting a phenomenal person and it's hard to replace somebody like Jessica, but I think we found someone that will be able to fit the bill. We're very sad to see Jessica leave, but she will be here for the remainder of this week, so if you're in the vicinity send her an email or if you're in the building get approval first and then stop in and say hello.

Jean does come to us- we had three great candidates, I will say that. After each interview we looked at Jess and said you did not make this process easy. As she said, we all unanimously chose in the same order and that we would offer the job to Jean. So, along with that, Jean comes to us with 15 years' experience combined with (*inaudible*) and leadership development, executive management and project management. She holds a Bachelor's degree in communication and a Master's degree in Human Resource management. She's had previous positions as a Human Resources Manager and Director, worked in various environments including corporate, manufacturing, multi-state multi-site as well as union and non-union experience and an extensive background in employee relations, compensation, benefits, recruitment, safety, and security. So, like I said, there was an evaluation process (*inaudible*,) but at the end we felt that Jean had a lot of strong suits that put her over the top. We made the offer and she graciously accepted. We're excited. She will be shadowing via Zoom with Jessica if this approval goes through tonight, but I really can't say how excited I am. It's bittersweet, obviously. Jessica has been an integral part of my time as we've moved through this COVID crisis and I've warned Jean that she'll be on my speed dial. Any questions I have I will be reaching out, but really the essence is we've had a great team as we've done this process. My hats off to Pierre, Chuck, and Jay and Steve as well for sitting down at each interview and going through and it was a great process and I think we have a very outstanding candidate and I'm excited to get to work with her when she gets here on campus. Thank you.

Chairman Chagnon: Thank you. I would now like to give the opportunity if they're interested to Jay or Chuck to say any words about the recruitment process.

Legislator Gould: I'm very impressed with Jean. I hope she works for the County for many, many years. That's all I've got.

Legislator Nazzaro: I just want to thank you and PJ for including me on the interview process. I think it was well done- very fair. Like you said, and like PJ said, there were very good candidates and I would like to welcome Jean to Chautauqua County and I would also like to thank Jessica for her dedication and commitment to the 1,200 plus employees of this county and you helped us during a very difficult time here with the COVID-19 pandemic coming up with the voluntary furlough program and working with the unions. You're an asset that will be truly missed, but like PJ said, it's bittersweet in welcoming Jean. Thank you.

Chairman Chagnon: Thank you. The recruitment process was executed very, very well, as we're accustomed to with Jessica's performance. As PJ said, it was very encouraging that all of us had the same conclusion at the end of it. So, the only hard part for me was that Jessica didn't take my threats about her leaving seriously and she's still leaving, so that's just something I'll just have to live with. I am very excited for the selection that we've made and I think Jean will be a wonderful HR Director for Chautauqua County. I look forward to many good years to come in that area. So, with that I will open it up to the rest of the Legislators or anyone who would like to say anything.

Legislator Starks: I was just thinking that if we were live and in person we would have clapped already. So, I think that we should give some recognition to Jessica for all of her hard

work and to (*inaudible*) and I know it's weird to clap via Zoom, but if we were live and in person we would be doing such a thing.

*(Applause)*

Mrs. Wisniewski: Thank you, I appreciate that.

Chairman Chagnon: Anything else?

Legislator Ward: Jessica, the first time that I really had a chance to experience your unbelievable expertise was during the orientation that happened before I was actually sworn in. My jaw really dropped open at how unbelievable talented you are and how incredibly (*inaudible*) to hard headed people like me. Thank you so much for your work. You are awesome.

Mrs. Wisniewski: Thank you.

Chairman Chagnon: Anyone else? Any other comments or questions on the proposed resolution? Hearing none and seeing none, all those in favor please say aye. Opposed?

*Unanimously Adopted*

Chairman Chagnon: It's your turn Jean. Welcome.

Ms. Riley: Thank you. Well, I would just like to thank everyone for this opportunity. When my husband and I moved to Chautauqua County about 7 years ago, we fell in love with the county, the neighborhood, and the services. I really didn't think it could get any better and now it has and I'm so looking forward to the opportunity to work with everybody. I'm just extremely grateful.

Chairman Chagnon: I would just like to point out my appreciation to the Legislature and the staff for arranging this special meeting so we could have some degree of overlap between Jessica and Jean. That was the need for the emergency meeting to have the overlap that we've arranged. Thank you all for that.

Mr. Abdella: We will need to do a roll call vote on that resolution. We can do that very quickly and just run through that.

Chairman Chagnon: Thank you for being my memory. Would the Clerk please call the roll?

**RES. NO. 168-20 – R/C Vote: 17 Yes; 2 Absent – UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED**

**RES. NO. 169-20 Extend 2020 Tax Foreclosure Redemption Date**

Chairman Chagnon: Steve Abdella, if you would be so kind as to give us an explanation of this?

Mr. Abdella: Yes, Mr. Chairman. There's a number of factors involved in presenting this resolution to you. As you may recall, with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic the legislature initially did extend the redemption date for the 2020 tax foreclosure to June and then after that, it extended to August 7<sup>th</sup>. This resolution proposes to extend it a full year to April 15, 2021, which hopefully would have it coincide with the 2021 tax foreclosure that would commence in January. There are several reasons for making this request to you. First and foremost, at this point the current administrative orders of the New York Justice system are requiring that any foreclosure, including tax foreclosure- in order to proceed to a judgement it must have a settlement with the court and a foreclosed owner before proceeding to judgement, which in the case of the County's tax foreclosure would be several hundred such conferences, which to be honest would be logistically impossible to complete. Beyond that, the State Legislature- for as long as the pandemic continues, has put limits on the ability to evict on residential properties and those are continuing limitations, which in the case of our foreclosures many of our properties still are occupied by either the foreclosed owners or (*inaudible.*) There is concern about our auction moving forward with occupants of those properties who will not be able to be evicted by the new owner and the concern that that could put a chill on our auction. Besides that, the pandemic itself and the requirements regarding social distancing makes it difficult to hold an in-person auction and it wasn't clear whether there would be a venue willing to host such an auction. There could be a number of limitations on who could attend. So, for all of those reasons it's my recommendation that the auction be moved and the redemption date be moved to April of 2021 to coincide with the 2021 auction. It's not an ideal situation but I will point out that it's not too long ago that our normal foreclosure cycle was a three year cycle as opposed to a two year cycle. So, we think it's better to have a two year cycle, but it is certainly by no means unprecedented. For many years- for decades it was actually a three year cycle, so this would put us on a three year cycle for the 2020 properties and hopefully we can pick this up next spring and proceed at that time.

Chairman Chagnon: Thank you for that explanation. Are there any questions or comments from the legislators?

Legislator Nazzaro: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Mr. Abdella. I do believe this is the right thing to do and I am very supportive of this. It should help the property tax owner for the reasons Mr. Abdella gave. I just want to point out- I know the legislators are aware of it, but I want to make sure the property owners are aware of this. The 5% penalty that is assessed under the New York Real Property Tax Law will still be imposed as well as the 1% interest per month, so it does give- we are moving the tax foreclosure redemption date, but the interest will continue to accrue. I just want to make that known to the taxpayers. Thank you.

Chairman Chagnon: Thank you. Other questions or comments?

Legislator Niebel: As much as I'd like to see a tax auction this year, I did speak to the County Attorney this morning. Apparently we would have to have a tax hearing in court on each foreclosure property prior to any tax auction. The logistics of doing so is practically impossible this year, so reluctantly I will be voting for this resolution.

Chairman Chagnon: thank you. Any other questions or comments on the proposed resolution? Any other questions or comments on the resolution? Will the Clerk please call the roll?

**RES. NO. 169-20 – R/C Vote: 17 Yes; 2 Absent – UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED**

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**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

County Executive Wendel: I just wanted to make sure- it has hit the media, but there was an accident this afternoon at our landfill that landed in a tragedy of a local contractor. I wasn't sure what was going to hit the papers or the media, but it has already hit. The Sheriff's team is investigating it at this time. That's all the information we have right now, but more news will follow from the Sheriff's Department. Unfortunately, it was a local contractor and our thoughts and prayers are with his family. I just wanted the Legislature to be aware.

Chairman Chagnon: Thank you. Are there any other announcements from any legislators?

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**PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR**

Chairman Chagnon: Kathy, are there any communications received for the second privilege of the floor?

Clerk Tampio: There are no communications.

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MOVED by Legislator Gould, SECONDED by Legislator Bankoski and duly carried the meeting was adjourned. (5:00 p.m.)

Respectfully submitted and transcribed,  
Kathy K. Tampio, Clerk of the Legislature/ Olivia L. Ames, Deputy Clerk/Secretary to the Legislature