

Minutes

Administrative Services Committee

July 19, 2021, 5:00 p.m., Rm #331

Livestreamed on Chautauqua County Facebook Page

Gerace Office Building, Mayville, NY

Members Present: Scudder, Davis, Starks, Vanstrom

Member Absent: Muldowney

Others: Tampio, Ames, Chagnon, Abdella, Dennison, Torres, Green, Crow, Meleen, Abram

Chairman Scudder called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Approval of Minutes (06/14/21)

MOVED by Legislator Starks, SECONDED by Legislator Vanstrom.

Unanimously Carried

Privilege of the Floor

No one chose to speak at this time.

Proposed Resolution – Amend Rules and Regulations of the Chautauqua County Legislature

Chairman Chagnon: The Clerk and I are going to tag team this one. I will start out with the explanation of the first suggested change. Wherein the rules and regulations of the Chautauqua County Legislature we're proposing to change the requirement for the minutes that they shall contain verbatim of the business conducted, to strike "verbatim of". So that would mean that if the Committee Chair wants verbatim minutes, that's their discretion. If they don't feel verbatim minutes are necessary, that's their discretion as well. Now that we have advanced into the world of modern technology and we are utilizing Facebook streaming, live streaming, we're very interested and potentially excited about the opportunity for the public to participate more in the legislative process because now we've seen an awful lot of viewing of the Facebook streaming of the Legislature meetings and now we're embarking on Facebook streaming of the committee meetings as well which will expand the public's option to participate in committee meetings. Since we will have Facebook streaming available to anyone who would like to view it after the committee meeting, the thought is, do we really need verbatim minutes to be created? It's a very onerous task to listen to the tape of the meeting and create the verbatim minutes.

Legislator Starks: Will the streaming continue indefinitely? Is that our plan?

Chairman Chagnon: That is our plan and we will be maintaining them available on-line for one year, right, after the meeting as occurred.

Clerk Tampio: At least.

Chairman Chagnon: At least, so you can see the modern technology that our technology wizard who is sitting down there at the end of the table has brought to us today so we're trying it out and seeing how it goes before the committee chairs' need to make a decision about verbatim minutes or not. This change will allow the committee chair the option of verbatim or not.

Chairman Scudder: So when you say participate, they'll be able to participate by viewing it?

Chairman Chagnon: By viewing it, right.

Chairman Scudder: We're not into dialog with our audience?

Chairman Chagnon: No. We're not zooming, we're just streaming on Facebook.

Chairman Scudder: You know where I was going with that one.

Chairman Chagnon: So the public if they are interested in something on the agenda for the committee, rather than waiting for a couple of weeks to read the minutes to see what happens, they can tune in and view it on Facebook and see what the discussion was and what the outcome was of the committee meeting.

Legislator Starks: Then that is available for a year and then the documented minutes are available for the same length of time they've always been.

Chairman Chagnon: Yes.

Legislator Starks: They will just be verbatim or not verbatim.

Chairman Chagnon: Correct, in perpetuity, right?

Clerk Tampio: We also will retain the audio recordings of the meetings so they will be available if someone from the public request it or a Legislator request it, we can send that out.

Chairman Scudder: For the audit part, do you want me to explain my jokes so if people hear it?

Clerk Tampio: But the official minutes are also maintained within our files available to all employees of the County, department heads and so on and they are on the County's website, the Legislature page.

Chairman Scudder: I think it's a great idea.

Mr. Green: Can I ask a question? I know that it's not proper.

Chairman Scudder: Why start being proper now?

Mr. Green: In perpetuity these being saved? I heard the one year –

Chairman Scudder: One year or more.

Mr. Green: How is that managed through FOIL ability?

Legislator Vanstrom: We're not mandated to broadcast these.

Mr. Green: That seems like a short time, one year. That really doesn't match up with State law.

Chairman Chagnon: The audio tapes will be continued to be maintained beyond a year.

Mr. Green: In perpetuity?

Chairman Chagnon: Right. But the Facebook streaming, right now we're considering doing that for at least a year.

Mr. Green: But even that, I guess I would question. I apologize but I would question once you have a document, you just can't supersede Public Records Law.

Chairman Chagnon: It's something to consider Norm.

Mr. Green: I apologize (*inaudible*).

Chairman Chagnon: We appreciate the thought. We'll look further into that thank you.

Mr. Green: Thank you for allowing me to speak.

Mr. Abdella: I could just make some comments. First of all, as far as the minutes of the meetings of this Legislature and its committees, all that the law actually requires is the minutes of action that you take, votes that you take. The discussion is not required to be kept. Obviously, historically, the Legislature has kept verbatim minutes of the entire discussion. Has also for many years had an audio tape. As I understand it, the audio, the digital audio recordings will be kept in perpetuity. The minutes of the meetings that you end up having in writing will be kept in perpetuity. As far as a Facebook recording that you might have of the meeting, it's not legally required that that be done, number one, not be required to be kept for any particular period of time. You would have discretion on how long that's kept. What we can consult is as far as the Records Management policy applies and that comes from State Law so we can check to make

sure that any sort of visual recording is kept for whatever period of time would be recommended under that policy.

Chairman Chagnon: Kathy, do you want to explain the second one?

Clerk Tampio: The second one, Finance Director Kitty Crow is concerned about Legislators also abiding by the County Executive's executive policy bulletin regarding travel expenses and reimbursements. Instead of revising that whole section that we currently have, this is only one piece of that section. We just added, "to within the applicable guidelines as established by the executive policy bulletin" which is also I think a wise thing to do because once in a while that executive policy bulletin will change.

Chairman Scudder: So as it stands right now, instead of doing it yearly, do you know what it states?

Clerk Tampio: As far as?

Chairman Scudder: Like mileage and stuff.

Clerk Tampio: The Finance Department would like to see it quarterly, correct?

Ms. Crow: The mileage rates are – we use the GFA rates and they are published, I think, every October so we always have those available on the Finance page.

Chairman Scudder: I don't mean the rates, I mean the filing of it. Like in December you fill it out and turn it in.

Ms. Crow: Oh your expense form?

Chairman Scudder: Yes.

Ms. Crow: The current executive policy bulletin stipulates that there must be a minimum of a quarterly reimbursement claim filed if you have something, but anything over \$50.00 can be submitted at any time. You don't have to wait to the end of the quarter but if you have any expenses during the quarter, you should at least submit that quarterly.

Legislator Vanstrom: When you say quarterly, does that mean like January, February, and March?

Ms. Crow: Yes.

Legislator Vanstrom: Because we just started coming back, so I haven't had anything to file till last time.

Ms. Crow: That's fine. If you don't have anything, you don't have to submit. When you have something to be reimbursed, we want it to get reimbursed in a timely manner so that we

don't have a backlog at the end of the year. We can make sure all the claims get in for that fiscal year and it also allows people to be paid on (*inaudible*) basis as well. They don't have to wait for - like for the employees it used to be that they had to wait for certain dollar amount to be reached or we just (*inaudible*) everyone to be paid more timely but it also helps us to keep our expenses up to date as well so we know what our costs are.

Chairman Scudder: I shouldn't ask this questions but I'll ask it. If you don't do it quarterly, don't bother submitting it?

Ms. Crow: No, we're not going to not pay anyone but we hope that –

Chairman Scudder: O.k., I got my answer, thank you.

Mrs. Dennison: The executive policy states that if it's not submitted within 30 days of the end of the quarter, we have the discretion to not pay it, I think.

Ms. Crow: I don't know if it says that. I don't think it says that.

(*Cross talk*)....

Ms. Crow: ... submitted 30 days from the last day of the quarter.

Chairman Scudder: I would never do something like that. If someone else would do that –

Chairman Chagnon: It says, unless it's Legislator Scudder (*laughter*)...

Clerk: Tampio: I think what she is saying is, there is leniency. We understand that we don't always have a lot of mileage and a lot of Legislators are used to filing once a year, at the end of the year.

Chairman Scudder: And then you guys don't have to mess around with it as much. It's just a one-time thing, otherwise you are doing it quarterly.

Ms. Crow: We have a lot to do at the end of the year.

Mrs. Dennison: (*Cross talk*)... on a quarterly basis rather than (*inaudible*)....

Chairman Scudder: Any other questions or comments? I think this was presented very well. Thank you.

Clerk Tampio: Just to reiterate what the Chairman said, a Chairman of a committee, if they desire, they can request the Clerk's office to make that meeting minutes, verbatim at any time.

Chairman Scudder: I feel the only thing that needs to be recorded is the resolution in place and how it was voted on. When I review, me personally, before our meeting at the end of

the month, I usually see the resolution, if it's not a hot topic resolution, I don't read it, I check the vote and if it's not unanimous, then I consider whether I'm going to call the one no vote or two no votes just to see why they didn't go along with it but I've never read the entire minutes. I appreciate it being done but I don't read it.

Clerk Tampio: The other concern I think was, the length of the committee budget hearings. As you know, they are all day long and there is no way with our current office staff that we can complete those minutes prior to your Legislature meeting where you approve the budget after the hearings. Normally it will take a couple of months to get them done. Last year was unusual because we had staffing shortages because people were out because of COVID or working from home and we weren't able to get them done.

Chairman Scudder: By the time we get them it's after the fact.

Clerk Tampio: Right.

Chairman Scudder: It's not like – budget passed and a month later we get the minutes.

Clerk Tampio: Right, this way you can have the minutes of the official actions if the committee takes a motion or whatever. If someone really wants to watch the meeting, it will be available to be viewed.

Chairman Scudder: I like it. All in favor?

Unanimously Carried

Proposed Resolution – Authorizing Contract for 2022 Administration of Chautauqua County Self-Insurance Plan (Worker's Compensation)

Ms. Crow: This resolution and the next are the annual resolutions to set the administrative rates and then the full amount for the participants of the Worker's Comp plan. So the first resolution is for just the administrative cost. The cost of, like Dennis and other staff in the Insurance office that process the claims, those administrative costs as well as our actuarial services are set by this resolution and then those are included in the plan cost that is in the second resolution. From 21' to 22', that represents – it's a 5% increase on the County's administrative costs. There is no cost increase in actuarial services.

Chairman Scudder: Everybody get that? All in favor?

Unanimously Carried

Proposed Resolution – Authorizing 2022 Levy of Participant's Share of Chautauqua County Self-Insurance Plan (Worker's Compensation) Costs

Ms. Crow: The full plan cost proposed for the 2022 budget is actually a reduction of about \$300,000 in total. Mostly due to our downward trend in claims exposure as well as, we had

a little bit of a reduction in our excess Worker's Comp, how we're handling that so that resulted in a \$30,000 reduction. So good news. As you see, those are the amounts that would be billed to each municipality and that allocation to each plan participant is based on, in part, their claims experience over the prior 5 years as well as their valuation. I do have a schedule if anyone, after the meeting, would like to see for a particular municipality what the net change was but obviously most of them were reduced by if anyone had a particularly like bad claim in the most recent years, they might have seen a little bit of an increase and that would have been all to do with – or a change in valuations.

Chairman Scudder: The County Home, is that included in this?

Ms. Crow: That would be under the County's cost. On the resolution, it would be embedded in there if we still have any outstanding plans for former County Home employees.

Chairman Scudder: So that is under Chautauqua County?

Ms. Crow: Yes.

Chairman Scudder: Is that still ongoing?

Ms. Crow: I believe there are still some claims out there but I don't know the age of them or the projection of how or when they would –

Chairman Scudder: Or going to be settled or how much?

Ms. Crow: Yes.

Chairman Scudder: O.k., any questions, comments, or concerns? All in favor?

Unanimously Carried

Proposed Resolution – Quit Claim Deeds

Ms. Crow: Before Kim starts with her resolution, I would like to introduce her as the Director of Real Property Tax Department because her appointment has been formalized and there is a press release in the works.

Chairman Scudder: I'm excited about that because I enjoy calling and I enjoy your personality and your pleasurable responses, not that they weren't always when I called there but it's fun to know who I'm talking to. Congratulations.

Ms. Meleen: Thank you, appreciate it. So our quit claim deed is another Land Bank property. The person interested in it is a neighboring property there (*inaudible*) possibly using the lot for a garage, shed, or parking. By the looks of this, the comments, they are on one side of the lot and the parents are on the other so they're just going to have a lot and looking for

neighborhood improvement and making it look better. I guess it's been pretty run down and they are interested in using that lot.

Chairman Scudder: This will be brought in on their deed. It won't be a separate property anymore?

Ms. Meleen: Right. It will be merged into their lot.

Chairman Scudder: What's the term for that Steve?

Legislator Vanstrom: Consolidation of parcels?

Mr. Abdella: Merged.

Chairman Scudder: This is a good thing. Any questions, comments, or concerns? All in favor?

Unanimously Carried

Other

Proposed Resolution – Authorize Early Voting Expansion Grant Award from the New York State Board of Elections

Mr. Abram: We have two resolutions. This is grant money coming from the State, 100%, no matching funds for local. It's \$123,000 and some change and \$21,000 and some change, both are geared to help us with expenses that will be occurring this year. The one grant, the \$21,000 is for early voting expenditures as they are expanding early voting opportunities. There's \$21,000 to use to offset any additional costs that we would be facing based on anything that is going to happen with signage or any additional costs for any of the sites. So that money is earmarked for the early voting. The \$123,000 is for equipment and that would be for either software, or hardware, or machines, or printers, something of that nature basically offset the cost of doing business here in New York State for voting.

Legislator Starks: These amounts, were they allocations based on something because of our experience or area or are they just arbitrarily -

Mr. Abram: No, I would like to get a better answer for you but I will do my best. There is \$20 million is in one pot and \$2 million was in the other and there was some matrix that they didn't share with us on how they were going to deviate the money to the various -

Legislator Starks: So they allocated it based on their own criteria?

Mr. Abram: Population of registered voters, whatever. We had no idea for weeks and months on end of what this would actually look like at the end. We just knew the grand totals

were \$20 million and \$2 million and how they would be split was anybody's guess. When they brought these two totals forward, I have to say we were surprised in how high it was.

Chairman Scudder: You were pleased.

Mr. Abram: Very pleased. I would have never dreamt \$123,000 and \$20,000. Two equations there with the population and whatever else they were using for their method, this number is very high and seems very generous.

Legislator Davis: It will cover the anticipated need there?

Mr. Abram: Yes, well obviously we're always given new standards to reach for especially with early voting and there is additional costs that go into early voting that people wouldn't recognize like when you go remote, you got your ballots, either you have to run them all the way back to Mayville which isn't a very effective way of doing business, we buy a fire proof safe and we put it right next to the machine so at the end of the night, it goes into a fire proof safe, because if something happened to that building, there is no way to recreate what had actually happened in days of early voting. With the safe sitting there and being under double lock and key and all the methods that are necessary to make sure that we could still put that election back together again. So that's \$1,500 right off the box, real quick is an item that you could pin point and say, of the \$21,606, \$1,500 right off the bat is necessary for the remote voting versus the, obviously the poll sites where we take the ballots in at the end of the night and bring them back here to Mayville.

Chairman Scudder: Is that for the entire County, the \$1,500?

Mr. Abram: That's for one safe at one of the four locations. That was an additional cost this year that we have already incurred. Like I said, there will be additional cost for signage, there will be an additional cost for transport, there will be additional cost for staffing. The \$21,000 will offset those costs.

Chairman Scudder: If you come in under \$21,000, are you allowed to keep the \$21,606?

Mr. Abram: There would be no way because the cost of doing early voting would be much higher than \$21,000. This would be just to offset some of the current costs. Labor costs will (*inaudible*) there is like an 80 hour a week per poll worker (*inaudible*) voting and you multiply that by say, even \$15.00 per hour rate, you can see very quickly that labor is a very expensive part of early voting and \$21,000 will only help offset any additional hours or additional facilities that you are providing for your voters.

Chairman Scudder: As far as that \$123,461, will that allow us to realize some – I mean, are some of these things that we had to do anyways and we'll be able to save going forward? You know what I'm saying?

Mr. Abram: Yes. The idea of the \$123,461 is that we're in a current five year \$119,000 per year capital grant program. Not a grant but we're trying to update the 2007 purchases of

those machines, phase them out, phase in the newer units. Our thought would be this would then help catapult us even close to our goal, quicker to our goal and expand our goal of making sure that we can use the latest and greatest technology to get to our goal quicker and more efficient and the \$123,000 hopefully can be earmarked for 11 machines and that's 11 machines that we didn't have in the past. The problem, like I discussed at the capital budget review, the machines that we currently have are - the supply line is becoming almost obsolete so you are looking for (*inaudible*) for a unit that's - they don't exist. So we're having some sort of crisis. In a general sense they are phasing out the old in a way that we have no choice other than do things like this to get us up to speed and have the most efficient units we can. That would be a goal, yes.

Legislator Davis: I probably should know the answer to this but I don't necessarily. Do you anticipate this early voting requirement and the added expense that is associated with it will continue in perpetuity since we've had that word used today already?

Mr. Abram: Yes, I believe not only will the current conditions be here but I think additional requirements for us to provide voting services to the residents of Chautauqua County. Additional weekend hours I think is on the agenda so if we are only doing 5 hours, will probably be doing more like 8 mandatory on both Saturdays and Sundays prior to each of the primary and general elections. I believe the bar will continue to rise on the early voting requirements for all boards across New York State and hopefully this type of funding is available but this isn't a long term funding solution. This just started -

Legislator Davis: That is where I was going with that. If this is going to continue, how long do the grants continue or do they go away at some point? That becomes a concern.

Mr. Abram: You guys have dealt with New York State often and -

Chairman Scudder: Typically New York State makes the rules and then we figure out how to fund the rules that they have given us.

Mr. Abram: Yes. This is sort of like a nice little -

Legislator Vanstrom: Greeting card.

Mr. Abram: Hey, yea.

Chairman Scudder: Although, we've gotten a couple of those so I guess we can't -

Mr. Abram: Yes, we've been fortunate. There has been some opportunities for us to enhance the voting and not have it hit the local share. I'm not saying that will happen in the future, I feel it probably won't but in the general sense, because we phase in these new requirements that are law, at this point, we'll be able to offset them with things like this but down the road, it's anyone's guess.

Mrs. Dennison: I should have asked this of the Board of Elections earlier so I apologize but the early voting grant, sounds like you are confident that most of that could be spent on contractual costs and you don't need to spend any on equipment?

Mr. Abram: That's correct.

Mrs. Dennison: I just wanted to make sure.

Mr. Abram: That's the way we understood it and it's in some of the notes I took that we could use it for any additional costs as far as what we would – it's a very wide swatch into our early voting requirements associated with expenditures of early voting, poll site rental, fire proof safe, supplies, all these items here as far as the operations of the expanded early voting.

Mrs. Dennison: Because any piece of equipment that you would buy that cost more than \$1,000 per piece would be in a different classification.

Mr. Abram: We more than likely – I don't see any purchases of anything that would come close to a \$1,000. We may have a \$700 printer on demand item. As you expand more you want more people to come in and get their own personal ballot printed for them right there on the spot. I can see us potentially having a couple more available because again the technology, the printer, toner, and everything, you have to make sure that everything is somewhat - I can see that type of purchase but I don't see anything over \$1,000 other than maybe the safe which obviously is \$1,500.

Mrs. Dennison: Well it sounds like too, like you say, all the elections inspector wages, for example, are all contractual costs. So it's likely that you are going to find \$21,000 worth of items that are going to go into contractual.

Mr. Abram: It's highly likely.

Chairman Scudder: So you are talking about the \$21,000, not the \$123,000?

Mrs. Dennison: The \$21,000 because the amendments all going into contractual costs and so when Commissioner Abram stated talking about equipment – the voting machine is already from the \$123,000 and that's appropriate but the smaller one, like I say, it is written to be only expenses are contractual like not including equipment over \$1,000.

Chairman Scudder: Good. Did you have to apply for this or did they offer it?

Mr. Abram: No they offered it. At the very end they make you jump through a hoop or two but in general – no, but they actually offered it to us in a way like, oh, we have this money and we're like, when and how and it took forever to kind of get to the point of where we are tonight. But in general, it's been months since we knew this was on the horizon, I mean literally, maybe 6 or 8 months where we had heard this Christmas come early kind of thing. Like I said, we'll pursue any other grants or any other opportunities but this one here will definitely allow us to move our projects and move our program quicker to where we need to be.

Chairman Scudder: Sounds good. It's nice when they make the rules and they pay the bill. Any other questions or comment? All in favor?

Unanimously Carried

Proposed Resolution – Authorize Technology Innovations and Election Resource Grant
Award from the New York State Board of Elections

Chairman Scudder: Any further discussion, comments or questions on this resolution? All in favor?

Unanimously Carried

Chairman Scudder: Does anybody have any other?

Legislator Starks: No other "other".

Chairman Chagnon: To the Deputy Clerk, how many people have viewed this meeting on Facebook?

Deputy Clerk Ames: I just checked Public Facilities and 115 people had already clicked on the video as I posted it at the end of the meeting.

MOVED by Legislator Davis, SECONDED by Legislator Starks to adjourn.

Unanimously Carried (5:35 p.m.)

Respectfully submitted and transcribed,
Kathy Tampio, Clerk/Olivia Ames, Deputy Clerk/Lori J. Foster, Sr. Stenographer