

**Finance Committee Meeting  
July 23, 2025**

Attendees

Committee: Art Merrill, Wayne Marshfield, Wayland Gladstone, Joe Cetta, Eric Wilson, Tina Molé  
John Kosier, George Haynes  
Guest Thomas Smith, EFPR  
Staff: Randi Moxham, Shelly Johnson-Bennett, Steve Hood, Penny Bishop, Maria Kelso

Mr. Merrill called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m.

On a motion by Mr. Marshfield, seconded by Mr. Gladstone, the July 9 committee meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

Mr. Merrill introduced Thomas Smith from EFPR to present the draft 2024 Financial Report.

Mr. Smith stated they are planning to issue clean opinions on the County's financial reports. That is the highest level of opinion that can be given on financial statements. This means that the financial statements are fairly stated, and the numbers are supported and backed up. His firm will be issuing clean opinions on the financial statements, the single audit, which is the federal compliance audit, the New York State Department of Transportation Compliance audit, and the Landfill Agreed-Upon Procedures. He thanked Fiscal Manager Carli Pinner and her team for providing all of the information. He added that as part of government audit standards, which the County falls under, they were required to issue an additional report at the back of the financial statements where if they had noted any type of weaknesses in internal controls or any violation of laws or regulations, they would report it there. They felt there was nothing that needed to be reported because they did not find any weaknesses or violation of laws.

Mr. Smith reported they looked at two areas for the single audit compliance, the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and Medicaid. ARPA funds were new about three years ago and towns also received that funding. They found no noncompliance with either fund and he noted funds were spent properly and all the laws were followed.

He announced that from a numerical standpoint, the governmental funds had a decrease in fund balance of \$2M for FY 2024. That is really because the capital projects fund had about a \$3M deficit. That fund balance had built up over the past few years, so it is good to see that money is starting to be spent down. In reply to Mr. Merrill, Mr. Smith said this is a good thing because it was right in line with the County plan. He reported that in the general fund, there is an increase in fund balance of approximately \$300,000. This shows the general fund essentially broke even on a budget that is approximately \$85M. He stated that to have \$300,000 remaining from that budget amount is incredible.

He reviewed the variance of fund balances from the previous year and noted the unassigned fund balance increased by approximately \$1.7M, which as a percentage of an \$85M budget

really is not significant. He believes the County is in a very healthy financial position by managing those excess funds in a correct way. He can see that by setting excess funds in capital projects that the money is going where it is intended.

In reply to Mr. Marshfield, Mr. Smith explained the Government Accounting Standard Board (GASB) standard for municipalities having to pay a portion of liability from the NYS Retirement System. He said that the amount will change whenever the State's liability changes, depending on if the State is overfunded or underfunded. In the past, this amount has shown as an asset on the books.

In answer to Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Smith agreed the fund balance is healthy, but the State takes into consideration the trend, and with the fund balance decreasing by \$4.3M last year and this year was basically break even, he would not be concerned. He said the most important factor is that large increases in fund balance are being addressed. Mr. Merrill stated that this has been a goal of the Finance Committee. He reported that we do have DPW projects coming up and unassigned funds will be used to create accounts for those projects.

Regarding the overall fund balance, Mr. Smith highlighted that the federal government paid the County \$8.4M in ARPA funds three years ago, and there is only approximately \$750,000 of unspent funds at this point, which is included in the unassigned fund balance.

Mr. Smith agreed with Mr. Marshfield that the County spent approximately \$2M more than what was taken in, then he explained that the capital fund actually spent \$3M more which means that all the other funds in the aggregate had a surplus of \$1M.

Mr. Marshfield noted that this year it seems that every month, they need to put \$1M into something they did not anticipate. Mr. Smith expressed it is good to have the fund balance to address those needs. Mr. Merrill added that next year, the County would be able to pay off the balance of the cell tower project. They plan to use a large part of the fund balance to pay off the debt and that will make the County totally debt free.

Mr. Kosier thanked Mr. Smith for his past recommendations and said the committee has implemented most of them, which has been a great help. He asked Mr. Smith to please let them know if he had any more recommendations.

Mr. Cetta questioned what the target amount is that the State recommends to have in fund balance. Mr. Smith replied that the State does not give a statutory number and would never put one in writing. However, in the past the State has recommended three months of spending be set aside and he has heard up to four to five months. For instance, an \$80M budget should have \$20M to \$25M in fund balance.

In reply to Mr. Wilson asking about other investment vehicles paying higher rates, Mr. Smith stated the place he sees the highest rate of return is with NYSCLASS. It is a highly utilized place for municipalities in New York State to invest. He stated that NYS law really limits what

municipalities can invest in. He said he would obtain contact information and share with the Clerk for distribution to the committee.

Mr. Merrill thanked Mr. Smith for his presentation and for giving them a lot of good guidance. Mr. Smith thanked the committee members for their time.

The Sales Tax report for the July 14 payment was reviewed. The report indicates an increase of 13.5095% relative to last year.

In reply to Mr. Marshfield about the rain cover at the landfill, Mr. Haynes said the top of that mountain is everything excavated from Cell 1 so Cell 1 could be lined. The material will stay there and Cell 1 will be lined so it can be expanded out. Mr. Cetta added that the liner will save a lot of leachate cost as well.

Mr. Gladstone announced they received the map for the 4-H Camp property. Planning Commissioner Shelly Johnson-Bennett reported the survey has been resolved and they will be purchasing 10.4 acres to attach to Lennox Forest, 4.8 acres to attach to the 4-H Camp, and about 2.67 acres from Dents to meet the Ostrom property line. Mr. Dent conveyed that Surveyor Braun said there was no feasible acreage to out-parcel on the Lennox side for him to retain, so he agreed to sell the full side to the County to expand Lennox. They have received all the deed descriptions from Mr. Braun as well so this is set to go to the Delhi Planning Board next week. Because there are three boundary line adjustments which could be approved in one night, they would then be set to prepare the deeds. Mrs. Johnson-Bennett stated that in all fairness, neither the Dent family nor the 4-H Camp realized they were on the Dent property until Mrs. Dent passed away and the family tried to settle the estate. That's when the encroachment was realized. Ms. Molé stated that the signed documents and check payment are all ready for Planning Deputy Commissioner Kent Manuel to take to the Planning Board meeting next week. Mr. Gladstone acknowledged Mr. Manuel for all he has done and for taking the lead through this process.

Mr. Cetta made a motion to enter executive session to discuss a potential contract. The motion was seconded by Mr. Wilson and unanimously carried.

The committee reconvened in regular session.

Mr. Gladstone made a motion to contract with AEM from Albany, New York, to install a hub weather station on the DPW administration building in Delhi and nine additional smaller weather stations throughout the county to collect data to be used by the National Weather Service (NWS). The motion was seconded by Mr. Wilson and unanimously carried. Mrs. Johnson-Bennett will prepare a budget amendment resolution to transfer \$62,449 which will pay for the equipment and setup fee and for one year of software and maintenance. The resolution will be a not-prefiled resolution for the afternoon Board of Supervisor's meeting. She thanked the committee for their support.

Mr. Marshfield questioned Elections Commissioner Maria Kelso about an equipment purchase request for a generator installed at the Davenport Town Hall and asked if all towns are eligible for a generator. Ms. Kelso explained that because last year was a very contentious year for elections, she

had to call all the voting sites to see who did not have generator backup. She said she had put emergency supplies together in preparation for a power outage should a blackout occur. Since Delaware County is rural with 55 districts, they could start purchasing generators for towns. Because the CTCL Grant was at the end of life and the funds had to be spent ASAP, they bought a lot of things including a new ballot box that mounts on the wall, and the Town of Davenport was chosen because she knew of a generator that had been purchased by somebody else but was never installed by them, and the generator was available for purchase. She had asked the Davenport Supervisor if it was possible to install a generator in a matter of days so this purchase could be made last minute which worked out. In reply to Mr. Merrill, Ms. Kelso said that her office decided together on which town would get the generator and Davenport was able to accommodate the installation within a few days. In response to Mr. Cetta, she said she would provide the Committee with her record of which towns have backup generators. In answer to Mr. Merrill, she confirmed that other towns would have the same opportunity if the Board of Elections receives additional grant funds.

In reply to Ms. Molé regarding the Even Year bill, Ms. Kelso said the bill is still in court. She opined that if the bill passes, the ballots will be so long that voters will become discouraged after looking at the first couple of lines.

Mr. Merrill said once the committee gets into budget season and finds out where they stand with finances, they will schedule a meeting with village mayors to continue discussion of sales tax. Large amounts of budget transfers have been made including \$1M for daycare, prescription costs, and for psychiatric care. He stated that we don't know what all these federal cuts are going to leave in another six months, or how many more cuts will be made. This is just starting to trickle down. Ms. Molé stated that the Personnel Officer received 177 requests for salary upgrades. The Clerk said the prescription transfer would not be done until the end of the year when the full amount due is calculated.

#### Clerk of the Board – Penny Bishop

The Clerk announced that Joanne McEntee was promoted to take Carli Pinner's position as Accounting Supervisor Grade B. She has hired Elizabeth Defalco as Assistant Clerk of the Board, who will start August 4. The Clerk said she would like to get the reserve fund set up for capital improvements on County-owned buildings. Mr. Haynes said that the rough estimate given by Buildings Superintendent Pete Montgomery was from \$3M to \$5M.

Ms. Molé announced that we are extremely short on attorneys for the next few weeks. Mr. Ermeti offered to do whatever he could to help out.

The audit is the only not-prefiled resolution pending receipt of a resolution from Planning for the weather stations.

Travel, equipment, and fill vacancy requests were approved as presented.

The meeting adjourned at 12:05 p.m.