

**Finance Committee Meeting  
April 10, 2024**

Attendees

Committee: Art Merrill, Wayne Marshfield, Wayland Gladstone, George Haynes, John Kosier,  
Joe Cetta, Eric Wilson, Tina Molé  
Staff: Beverly Shields, Penny Bishop

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

On a motion by Mr. Gladstone, seconded by Mr. Kosier, the minutes of the March 27 committee meeting were unanimously approved.

The April 4 Sales Tax report was reviewed. The report indicates an overall decrease in sales tax of 4.6768% compared to the same time period last year.

Treasurer's Office – Beverly Shields

Mrs. Shields reported she received a phone call regarding seven acres of county-owned property on County Route 23 in the Town of Walton. The party is interested in purchasing a portion of the parcel. Mr. Cetta asserted that DPW uses the property for equipment storage during the summer months. Mr. Haynes confirmed that years ago, the property had been subdivided and the upper portion was sold. Mrs. Shields said the party would like to make an offer on a portion of the property. Mr. Merrill asked the Treasurer to gather more information so the committee could consider the proposal.

In response to Mr. Merrill regarding an update on the status of foreclosures, Mrs. Shields said the state has not passed the 2024 Budget, but the budget should be voted on by the end of the week. Other matters such as school aid and housing issues are still being negotiated.

Clerk of the Board – Penny Bishop

Mrs. Bishop referred to an email she received from the National Association of Counties which announced full federal funding of the Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) Program. The notice indicated the funding would help counties provide essential services. Mrs. Shields stated that the county has received PILT funding in the past. She recommended sharing the information with Economic Development Director Glenn Nealis.

Mrs. Bishop asked if the county might consider appointing a Poet Laureate. This is someone who would be available to participate at various ceremonies or events in the county. Ms. Molé said we don't have very much information about such a position. Mr. Merrill acknowledged that there is a national and a state Poet Laureate. Mrs. Bishop noted counties and cities are starting to catch on. She furthered that there may be several events planned over the next few years for the semi-quincentennial in 2026. Mr. Kosier suggested a good place to start would be with an arts group such as the Roxbury Arts Group. Mr. Merrill stated that someone would need to approach the county to initiate creating the position. Mrs. Bishop will research more about rules and regulations for a poetry ambassador.

Mr. Merrill reviewed four not-prefiled resolutions: a Sheriff's BA resolution to accept K-9 Program donations of \$18,995; appointment of the 2024 Fire Advisory Board; payment of audit; and a BA for ARPA funding of \$54,900 for the County Clerk to digitize mortgage indices. Mr. Merrill noted ARPA

funds are nearly exhausted. Mr. Marshfield stated he would be distributing a report on the ARPA funds allocation at today's Board meeting that would show the available balance is less than \$15,000. Mr. Merrill indicated the remaining funds need to be allocated by the end of 2024.

Ms. Molé reported that she met with mayors from the Villages of Walton, Delhi, and Margaretville on April 9. She said the mayors would be submitting a proposal to the Finance Committee sometime in July for the county to share sales tax. Mr. Marshfield asked about the towns...if they would share in the sales tax, too? Ms. Molé stated the mayors thought the towns that had villages were all interested in getting money as well. Mr. Wilson questioned if all the villages are in tougher shape than the towns? In response, Mr. Marshfield stated that the county is the only municipality that is penalized if they go above the tax cap; villages aren't, towns aren't, but the county is. Mr. Merrill said he holds the position that the fairest way to disseminate the revenue is to every individual taxpayer in the county, so that taxpayers in the county benefit equally. That is his position. Ms. Molé said she spoke with the mayors about the many shared services provided by the county with villages and towns. Mr. Merrill stated the ARPA Committee has distributed over \$8 million to many different projects around the County, including to individual villages. Mr. Marshfield agreed, as they funded broadband projects and the ambulance service. Mr. Cetta said a major project was allocating \$1 million to support county farmers through CCE. Mr. Marshfield stated they also funded county projects that otherwise would have been pushed onto county taxpayers.

Upon a motion by Mr. Cetta, seconded by Mr. Kosier and unanimously carried, the Committee entered executive session to discuss contract negotiations.

Committee reconvened in regular session.

Ms. Molé reported she will be meeting with building security officials to increase the number of security officers at county buildings. Mr. Cetta voiced his concern about signage posted at county buildings regarding unauthorized weapons.

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

Upon a motion the meeting adjourned at 11:20 a.m.