

Legislative Committee

August 7, 2024

11:05 a.m.

Attendees

Committee: Allen Hinkley, Art Merrill, Lisa Driscoll, Eric Wilson, Tina Molé
Absent: Timothy Kelso
Staff: Joe Ermeti, Shawn Smith, Schuyler Kinneman, Maria Kelso, Penny Bishop, Amy Merklen
Guest: Anthony Miller, Advent Traffic Diversion Program

Mr. Hinkley called the meeting to order at 11:05 a.m.

The June 5 committee meeting minutes had been approved via email and had been posted to the County website in July.

District Attorney Shawn Smith introduced Anthony Miller of Advent eLearning to give an overview of their Traffic Diversion Program.

Mr. Miller stated that Broome and Cayuga were the first Counties in New York to implement their traffic diversion program. There are currently 21 counties in the state that use them for traffic diversion and reduction. There are 7 other counties that are in the process to use them as well. Counting traffic diversion programs set up through the DA's office, they will be working with about 80% of the counties in the state. Outside New York State, they work with approximately 460 other jurisdictions nationwide working with many different courts, prosecutors' offices and probation offices with the end goal to reduce workloads, increase efficiencies, reduce recidivism and bring additional funding into agencies that don't get that funding back from their states. The program they set up with the DA's Office will help reduce their workload and increase efficiency and help educate drivers on better driving practices and help reduce recidivism of repeat speeders in the county. Moreover, the program will help bring additional funding into the county. Other counties that use the program are seeing a great deal of revenue come into their county that the state never gave them, and they are getting more money to their town and village courts as well. Advent eLearning provides the entire workflow and platform functionality from the application to remit fulfillment, education, tracking, reporting and monitoring. They are PCI compliant. Security and transparency is very important with what they offer, so agencies will have access to time-date stamped records with their system. On the backend, the system can be used to make plea offers as well. The DA's Office would be fully involved in the process. Advent provides the platform that helps streamline and deliver a program that fits the specific needs of this county, which could be completely different than the surrounding counties. He noted that so far, everyone who uses Advent eLearning in the state has had nothing but success come from utilizing the various programs.

Mr. Miller explained that currently for traffic reduction offers in New York State, there is a \$5 fee that town and village courts receive and there is a \$93 surcharge that would go to the state. The county would never see the \$93 surcharge. What this program offers is a traffic diversion where there would not be a \$93 surcharge that would go to the state and that money would stay with the town and village courts and the county.

Mr. Smith reported that in Tioga County, some towns were a little hesitant of using the program, but eventually all the towns got onboard. He noted there is no requirement for any town to use the traffic diversion program; it's completely voluntary. Revenues derived from the program will be sent to the County and the county would split the money with the town and village courts according to an established schedule to make the courts whole. Mr. Miller confirmed that last month, \$109,000 was sent to a county that has similar demographics to Delaware County. He stated that there are a lot of benefits from this money staying within the community.

In reply to Mr. Hinkley, Mr. Miller stated there is no cost to the county to use the program. Advent gets paid from the cost of their education. There are several driver improvement programs, and the cost of the traffic safety program is \$40. Revenue above \$40 goes directly to the county. Charges vary by county; some are \$200 or \$250. Broome charges up to \$600. He noted that many of the charges are less than the cost of a ticket.

Mr. Miller explained the process of traffic diversion on the platform which begins when an offender is referred to the program to learn about what options are available to possibly reduce or dismiss the ticket. Information would be available on the DA's website and a hyperlink would take them to Advent to register for an application for the diversion process. Mr. Smith furthered that offenders would still have the option to show up in court, and if an ADA was available, a plea bargain may be offered. Otherwise, a not guilty plea could be offered to the judge and a new court date could be set. The mail is another option where offenders would send in their ticket to request a plea bargain. The DA's office currently handles approximately 6,000 to 7,000 tickets this way each year. He believes that utilizing this traffic diversion program would streamline the entire process and decrease the workload. He stated that not all traffic tickets would not be eligible, such as passing a school bus, or any misdemeanor crime. Mr. Smith indicated there are other traffic diversion programs that allow the offender to pay a fee for the diversion with no required education nor would recidivism be addressed. He believes there are many benefits for public safety from the education this program provides.

Mrs. Driscoll made a motion to bring the proposal of using Advent eLearning for traffic diversion to the full Board for approval. The motion was seconded by Mr. Merrill and unanimously carried.

Mr. Miller will return on August 28 and present the Advent program at the next Board of Supervisors' meeting.

Elections Commissioner Maria Kelso reported that Haley Gransbury would be on the ballot for the November election for a full term. In reply to Ms. Molé, she explained that there are timelines when someone resigns and there is just so much time in which to hold a Republican Committee meeting and have a nomination. The nomination is given to the Board of Elections within a couple of days, and Mrs. Gransbury was within the timeline to get on the ballot. Ms. Kelso announced they received a grant extension with two additional grants being worked out with OGS that should be available soon. She said they would be required to purchase new voting machines by the end of this year. She attended the 2024 New York State Election Security Workshop with Information Technology Director Joe deMauro. The event was attended by Homeland Security, FBI, New York Board of Elections, New York State Intelligence Center, Cybersecurity Infrastructure and Security Agency, Elections Infrastructure Information Sharing and Analysis Center, and the Security Operations Center. Because the next election is considered a high profile election, there are concerns of potential interruptions. She will use grant funds to purchase supplies to be prepared for a variety of possible incidents that were addressed at the workshop so the election will be conducted as needed. In reply to Mr. Merrill, Ms. Kelso stated Clear Ballot and Dominion will be coming to give presentations once again before they decide which company they will go with. In response to Mr. Hinkley, she said the cost will be approximately \$650,000 for 32 new voting machines. Once the machines are purchased, New York State needs to audit them, and that could take months. They are looking to purchase the new machines right after the November election so they can get them up and running and be trained on them as well as train the election inspectors. In reply to Mr. Merrill, Ms. Kelso said they were awarded some grant funds, but not nearly as much as they hoped for. She received notice on Monday that their extension was approved for \$48,000. At this point, her office is getting geared up for this election. She stated there is a company out of Albany that has nothing to do with Board of Elections sending people absentee ballots in the mail/early vote by mail and their office is getting bombarded with phone calls.

Upon a motion by Mr. Merrill, seconded by Mrs. Driscoll and unanimously carried, the Committee entered into an executive session to discuss the work status and salary of a particular staff member in the Public Defender's Office as well as contract negotiations for the County Attorney's Office.

Committee reconvened in regular session. Upon a motion, the meeting adjourned at 12:28 p.m.