

Legislative Committee
September 4, 2024
11:00 a.m.

Attendees

Committee: Art Merrill, Lisa Driscoll, Eric Wilson, Timothy Kelso, Tina Molé, Allen Hinkley (Zoom)
Staff: Joe Ermeti, Shawn Smith, Haley Gransbury, Maria Kelso, Penny Bishop, Amy Merklen

Mr. Merrill called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. Upon a motion by Mrs. Driscoll, seconded by Mr. Wilson, the draft minutes of the August 7 committee meeting were approved.

Elections Commissioner Maria Kelso reported that they are busy preparing ballots and getting ready for early voting. They have been approved to receive a \$50,000 grant. They had demonstrations by both Dominion and Clear Ballot for voting machines and invited the election inspectors to attend and they plan to have a meeting to make a decision on which machines to purchase. She noted election security meetings continue to take a lot of their time. They are checking all the polling sites to prepare for the general election. Funds for the grant will help provide supplies where needed at the sites. In reply to Mr. Merrill, Ms. Kelso said the higher cost was approximately \$633,000 but she negotiated a loyalty credit of \$44,322 to bring that price to \$588,678. The difference in cost between the machines would be about \$139,678. She said she was able to get an extension on a \$48,000 grant to help pay for the machines. Committee scheduled a special meeting to review the Board of Elections budget on Thursday, September 12, at 9:30 a.m. in the Board Conference Room.

Acting County Clerk Haley Gransbury gave Supervisors her budget for review and approval. She announced that NYS DMV decided counties would receive 10.75% retention and sharing of all transactions done online and in person. She explained this is a big win for counties because previously, they received 12.7% of in person services but very little online revenue due to having to meet a threshold. She shared that her office was awarded a Local Government Records Management Improvement Fund Grant in the amount of \$55,037. The grant will allow them to convert the final mortgagee and mortgagor indexes into digitized records that would make them available to view online. Her next goal is to have all microfilmed deeds digitized so they could also be available online. Online records are available for the public to print at a cost of \$1.00 per page generating revenue for the Clerk's Office. This service is convenient for people to print documents without leaving their homes. Copies can also be printed at the County Clerk's Office for 65¢ per page. Her office also generates revenue for e-recording and e-filing. Mrs. Gransbury stated that IT upgraded their workstation computers, however, their printers, flatbed scanners, and label printers are outdated and she needs to have them replaced. She is also requesting new copier/scanner/fax machines for Delhi and Margaretville DMV Offices and is researching if it would be better to purchase outright or lease the equipment.

Public Defender Joe Ermeti gave out his budget for Committee review and approval noting Personnel has not released 2025 salary and fringe data yet. He has listed everything else in the draft budget including a \$150,000 Aid to Defense grant basically to be used for discovery. He has contracted with someone to view body camera footage and stationhouse video and spot footage that attorneys need to be aware of and review. He stated they are still down one attorney, and his office has been very busy especially since there have been more indictments for more serious crimes recently.

District Attorney Shawn Smith distributed the DA budget for committee review and approval. He stated no revenue was added for the traffic diversion as that is to be determined by the Finance Committee. In answer to Mr. Wilson, Mr. Merrill stated that traffic diversion revenue would be included in the DA's budget once the program is established and it is determined where funds would be disbursed. DA Smith had some minor increases to three expenditure lines which were extradition, special DA, and expert witness fees.

Clerk of the Board Penny Bishop circulated budget worksheets for the Board of Supervisors, Clerk of the Board, Legal Aid to Indigents, and Medical Examiner. She noted that the COB budget is much higher due to having additional building security officers. In reply to Mrs. Driscoll, Mr. Merrill and Ms. Molé explained that in addition to 111 Main Street, security officers are now stationed at 97 Main Street, 99 Main Street, DMV Building, and once open, the DSS South location in Walton.

Ms. Kelso reported that the Board of Elections staff is concerned about not having security for early voting for off hours and they are asking for security on election night. She plans to approach the Sheriff and Undersheriff and the Village of Delhi Chief of Police and ask them to just make their presence known around all the poll sites by stopping at the poll sites occasionally. She would ask the Sheriff if a deputy could stop at Board of Elections once or twice that evening—not stationed there but stopping by all poll sites maybe a couple of times throughout the election.

Upon a motion by Mrs. Driscoll, seconded by Mr. Kelso and unanimously carried, the Committee entered into executive session to discuss concerns with a particular county employee.

Committee reconvened in regular session.

County Attorney Amy Merklen announced she has a new assistant County Attorney who started on September 3. Her office still has one attorney vacancy and she continues to search to fill the position. Ms. Merklen will bring her budget to the special meeting scheduled for September 12.

Ms. Molé reported a new receptionist has started in the COB office.

Upon a motion, the meeting adjourned at 12:05 p.m.