

**Legislative Committee**  
**November 6, 2024**

Attendees

Committee: Allen Hinkley, Art Merrill, Lisa Driscoll, Eric Wilson, Timothy Kelso, Tina Molé

Staff: Haley Gransbury, Judith Garrison, Maria Kelso, Joe Ermeti, Schuyler Kinneman, Penny Bishop, Amy Merklen, Molly Magnis

Mr. Hinkley called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. The minutes of the September 4 regular committee meeting and the September 12 special committee meeting had been unanimously approved via email and were posted on October 2.

Acting County Clerk Haley Gransbury reported on the NYSAC Clerks' Fall Conference she attended in October. One topic discussed at length was regarding the Clean Slate Law which will take effect November 16, 2024. This new law creates a new section to seal convictions for most offenses from the public and most agencies and ultimately will affect how records will be kept by County Clerks. County Clerks will receive orders from the court telling them what to seal. The law will also affect town and village courts. She gave Supervisors a copy of the PowerPoint slides from the presentation that contained a lot more detail on the law. In reply to Mr. Merrill, Mrs. Gransbury said she recommends disseminating the information to local town and village courts. Another document from the conference that she distributed contains a detailed listing of the duties of a County Clerk including being Clerk of the Supreme Court, Recorder of Deeds, Agent of Commissioner of DMV, and Records Management Officer of the County. In addition, Mrs. Gransbury stated she attended a recent meeting of Town Clerks in Hamden where she introduced herself and let the clerks know she would help them with their records. She would help with records management as she was the one who originally digitized all the town board minutes and said the county and towns have a copy of those records as well as the record being on file at Ulster County. She said she wants to help the towns digitize records and fill out grant applications for applying to preserve historic records. She would like to go to each town to see what their records look like, where they are stored, how much they have, and how they are filed. Ms. Molé said it's a good idea, given that years ago the Town of Deposit lost records. Mrs. Gransbury noted that the Town of Tompkins had a fire in the past.

Elections Commissioner Judith Garrison stated that she felt she was caught between various committees over the issue with the ballot box. She had explained to people that NYS gives BOE autonomy related to staffing and management of employees. Ms. Molé said the ballot box issue came up after the November 6 Legislative Committee meeting was cancelled. Ms. Kelso reported she had received numerous calls over the weekend, to which she told everyone they are a bipartisan agency, and she does not make a decision on her own; the ballot drop box has been there for quite some time and they don't have a problem with any kind of vandalism and they check the box many times a day. She also said she would not make a decision without discussing it with the second commissioner. Ms. Garrison said generally when an issue comes up, she would take it to their board which consists of the two commissioners and two deputies to discuss and vote on. She asked the committee that if in the future when an issue arises, to talk it out in person. Ms. Kelso said the decision to remove the box was a directive to them. She said she had asked for cameras before they moved to the new location and noted they have had the funds for the cameras but the cameras still have not been installed. When calls came from reporters, there was no time to talk with people. Ms. Molé reminded Ms. Kelso that when they asked for additional security for early voting, additional security was provided for every minute as requested. Ms. Kelso said they have the funds and would pay for the additional security. Ms. Garrison indicated the BOE has their own social media policy, to which Ms. Molé stated the only thing she asks is that both commissioners approve all social media posts and press releases. Ms. Garrison stated they are willing to do that. Ms. Molé conferred that BOE staff are County

employees and are governed by a committee system. She furthered that the ballot drop box was not mandated by the state, and three years ago it should have been brought to the committee for approval. She asked both commissioners that in the future when they are making decisions to bring those decisions to the committee. Ms. Kelso responded that they are going to invite New York State Board of Elections down here to meet our County Attorney and this committee. Ms. Kelso said they get bombarded by the NYS BOE because of what is being said. Mr. Hinkley commended both commissioners for their efforts over the past few weeks.

Assistant District Attorney Schuyler Kinneman requested approval to pay overtime for two clerical employees. The overtime would be to replace the default of comp time. There is not a lot of overtime, but on the occasion when it does happen, they would prefer the staff be paid overtime rather than comp time. Mrs. Driscoll made a motion to approve overtime rather than comp time for DA clerical staff. The motion was seconded by Mr. Merrill and unanimously approved.

The Clerk referenced the Medical Examiner report that was distributed along with a proposed budget amendment resolution to transfer funds. She stated two additional deputy examiners have been hired and there are not enough funds in the personal services and other budget lines to go through the end of 2024. The resolution is to transfer \$25,000 from contingency. Mr. Merrill made a motion to approve the budget amendment to transfer the requested funds to ME. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Driscoll and unanimously approved.

The Clerk asked for approval of a second proposed budget amendment resolution to accept the third quarter ILS 18-B reimbursement of \$38,381. Mr. Merrill made a motion to approve the budget amendment to accept NYS 18-B reimbursement. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Driscoll and unanimously approved.

Public Defender Joe Ermeti explained that in his ILS budget from the state, there is a section for an 18-B assigned counsel administrator. They don't have an 18-B assigned counsel administrator, so he has never used that money. They are allotted \$45,000 a year for that position. He had a preliminary meeting with the Otsego County PDO who is proposing a shared services agreement for an 18-B administrator. In reply to Ms. Molé, Mr. Ermeti said he has a part-time person starting shortly. He announced that the paralegal in office passed the bar exam and he feels she may apply for the open position. He noted one problem he has is a lack of workspace. Ms. Molé said that OFA has agreed to give up space to the public defender's office.

County Attorney Amy Merklen introduced the new Assistant County Attorney Molly Magnis. She said they still have one open position in her office, and they are very busy. Ms. Molé welcomed Ms. Magnis on behalf of County employees and the Board of Supervisors.

Upon a motion by Mr. Merrill, seconded by Mrs. Driscoll and unanimously carried, the Committee entered into executive session to discuss personnel matters.

Committee reconvened in regular session.

Mr. Wilson made a motion to ask the County Chaplin from the Sheriff's Office to lead the Board in prayer at County Board meetings. The motion was seconded by Mr. Hinkley and unanimously approved.

The Clerk gave a draft resolution for the 2025 Board Meeting Schedule to be reviewed and considered for approval at the next Legislative Committee Meeting.

Upon a motion, the meeting adjourned at 11:55 p.m.