

Legislative Committee
February 5, 2025

Attendees

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

Supervisor: Donald Smith

Staff: Haley Gransbury, Amy Merklen, Joe Ermeti, Penny Bishop, Paula Schermerhorn,
Christine Boest

Mr. Hinkley called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m.

County Clerk Haley Gransbury distributed the Delaware County Clerk's Office 2024 Annual Report. The report indicates the Clerk's Office collected \$4,046,726.31 in 2024 which is down by \$236,431.04 from 2023. The mortgage tax collected was \$1,389,315.34 of which 50% goes to the towns, 25% goes to county and 25% goes to the state. The report includes a summary of other revenues such as fees for copies, certifications, maps, as well as filing fees, DMV fees, recording fees among others. Mrs. Gransbury reported her office is short 2 employees and she has received an eligible list from Personnel with 5 candidates. She will be holding interviews to fill the positions.

Board of Elections Deputy Commissioners Paula Schermerhorn and Christine Boest reported that they both attended the NYS Election Commissioner Association's Winter Conference which was held in Albany. They had daily meetings each day from 9 to 5 and met with all their constituents to discuss ideas and projects and had several state Board of Election forums regarding new election laws and best practices. A summer conference will be held in August in Lake Placid. They just received the new voting machines from Clear Ballot, and yesterday had their first hands-on training session on the machines. The "Training the Trainer" session is necessary in order to teach election inspectors. There is much to do to get the machines prepared for election training in April. After that they will be trained on the EMS System, which is where they create the ballots. Clear Ballot will be on hand to help them create their first election using these machines. Ms. Schermerhorn announced that February 25 is the first date to sign petitions. They will run enrollments on February 20 so they will have information on how many signatures would be needed. In reply to Mr. Merrill, Ms. Schermerhorn said petitioning information is posted on their website. She reported they will need to purchase new ePoll pads because the current ePoll pads cannot be updated and would be obsolete. They have a grant for \$43,722 which should cover the cost. In addition, they applied for an extension on a tier grant which was approved. They also applied for an extension on the Center for Tech and Civic Life Foundation grant of \$50,000 for non-metro infrastructure, which was approved as well. Ms. Molé thanked BOE for the grant which allowed them to purchase three new security cameras to use at Board of Elections. The cameras will be installed as soon as they are delivered. In reply to Mrs. Driscoll, Ms. Molé said cameras would be installed both outside and inside.

Public Defender Joe Ermeti reported that his office is presently fully staffed with attorneys. One new position has been created that is not currently funded by ILS. After he filled the position, he contacted ILS and they did verbally agree to fund the position. ILS has agreed to an additional \$400,000 of which \$163,000 would be to fund the new attorney, with the balance to be put into an account that he currently does not use, which is for an assigned counsel administrator. Those funds are presently building up because they cannot be used for anything other than an assigned counsel administrator. They are trying to put a program together where they would have an office that covers both Otsego and Delaware Counties. It would be somewhat of a conflicts office with attorneys and staff and so forth. He noted that what will be received in this line would not come close to covering the costs of that office. He has been working with Personnel on this. He stated his office has grown and they are getting more space in their building from Office of the Aging next door. He stated that his senior paralegal passed the Bar and has moved into an attorney position, and he is moving the current legal assistant to the senior paralegal position and plans to fill her position with a new hire. The changes won't be made until the additional space is completed. He stated his office has received approximately \$1.4 in grants and they are better able to compensate for salaries. Inditements are up and his office remains very busy. A lot more cases are being held in county court rather than town court like they used to be. He noted that crime is not declining. In reply to Supervisor Smith, Mr. Ermeti said ILS funding depends on the Public Defender's Office doing things the ILS way concerning local and CAP court including in-person representation.

Clerk of the Board distributed the 2024 Medical Examiner report. She referenced the draft 2025 Legislative Committee meeting calendar which needed review and approval. Meetings would remain on the first Wednesday of the month at 11:00 a.m. Supervisor Lisa Driscoll made a motion to approve the draft schedule. The motion was seconded by Mr. Kelso and unanimously approved.

County Attorney Amy Merklen reported her office has been very busy, but still understaffed.

Mr. Merrill made a motion to enter into executive session to discuss litigation. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Driscoll and unanimously carried.

Committee reconvened in regular session.

Upon a motion by Mr. Merrill, seconded by Mr. Wilson, the draft minutes of the December 4 committee meeting were unanimously approved.

Upon a motion, the meeting adjourned at 11:50 p.m.