

FINANCE & RULES COMMITTEE
March 19, 2024

Present: Tom Osborne, Chair; Jeffrey Nellenback, Vice-Chair; Herb Frost; Vincent Nortz; and Barry Lyndaker.

Legislator Osborne called the meeting to order at 2:54 p.m.

Legislator Osborne moved to approve the February 20, 2024 and March 4, 2024, committee meeting minutes as recorded, seconded by Legislator Nortz, and carried.

Broadband Expansion update – Candy Akin, Director of Real Property Tax

Candy Akin reported that she has hired a full-time data collector who has experience. Most assessors are contracted with multiple towns which doesn't allow the necessary time for data collection. This creates records that are not current and could be missing improvements. The recommended cost would be \$3.25 per parcel to the Town for the County to take over this duty. This covers 75% of the cost, with the County covering the remaining 25%. If the county would take this service over for all Towns, then it would require two full-time data collectors.

Currently only two towns have data collectors. The next step would be to initiate outreach to Towns offering this service at the recommended cost. Each Town who would like to take advantage of this service would need to sign RPTL 1537 agreements. Building permits are delivered monthly to Real Property Tax Office for updates but it doesn't always have all the information. The better the data the more taxable value is increased.

Legislator Dolhof questioned what a Data Collector actual does, Candy responded that they collect data on property sales, new construction, new additions. They take pictures, measurements, etc. on all parcels to gather as much information as possible to create accurate files. Assessors then use that data to calculate the values. The Assessors that have heard about this are all on board. Legislator Nortz questioned if anyone has spoken to the Towns about the cost of \$3.25 per parcel, Candy responded that she hasn't yet, but the rate recommended is in the range of the current cost.

Lewis County Health Insurance Plan

Ryan Piche began by reminding the Committee of information that was sent out by email and presenting the quote received from Excellus to go fully insured which is anywhere from 34% to over 100% depending on the plan and tier. If it was sent out to RFP there is a change that the bids might come in lower. The Union has had open houses for employees. Management sent out a survey to employees for feedback on ideas for costs saving measures. The open enrollment sessions will be

scheduled during the month of April for employees to review the options one on one with GKG if they would like.

Legislator Osborne voiced his opinion that starting this process earlier in the year would be good so that employees have more time to review the plans or other programs out there. He also felt like perhaps the breakdown of 75% county and 25% employee could be looked at along with other changes and understand that the Union would also have to agree. Ultimately no one likes to have to increase premiums but currently it is the only way to increase the necessary revenue for expenses. Legislator Nortz agreed that an Ad Hoc Committee to look into future changes is necessary.

Legislator Lyndaker felt strongly that looking at changes needs to be started much sooner because a 26% increase is a lot for an employee who is only making \$20.00/hour. Ryan Piche thought that perhaps conversations and meetings to look at future changes could start in June because that is what was done with the Medicare Advantage Program for retirees. That seemed to work well even though it didn't create the needed savings to match the increased claims expense. Legislator Nortz pointed out that the actuarial data states that this increase has only a 50% chance of working.

The following dockets were reviewed:

1. Authorizing increases to Health Insurance Premiums for the plan year commencing June 1, 2024, by the following percentages: 26% for the Excellus PPO Plan, 20% for the Simply Blue Hybrid Plan, and 20% for the Simply Blue High Deductible Plan, in order to ensure plan premium equivalents, cover claims and expenses and to stabilize the health insurance fund balance. *Legislator Nortz recused himself due to his participation in the plan. Legislator Lyndaker was opposed.*
AYE 3 NAY 1
2. Authorizing licensing and consulting agreements between SHI International Corp. and the County of Lewis effective April 1, 2024, through December 31, 2024, for the County's Microsoft 365 account and email system at a cost of \$80,000.00 for licensing and \$39,860.00 for consulting, and patch management and remote support software under Ninja One Program at a cost of \$6,876.00.
AYE 5 NAY 0
3. Urging New York State to reduce the cost of State-Mandated Programs on local taxpayers.
AYE 5 NAY 0
4. Awarding bid and authorizing contract between the County of Lewis and LaBella Associates to provide professional services for the rezoning of the Town of Watson at a cost not to exceed \$94,450.00 with an anticipated completion date on or about October 31, 2025.
AYE 5 NAY 0

5. Setting a public hearing on May 7, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. at the Lewis County Courthouse Board of Legislators Chambers for public input with reference to Round 8 Restore NY Funding application for the redevelopment of 6832 McAlpine Street, Lyons Falls in an amount not to exceed \$2,000,000.00.

AYE 5 NAY 0

6. Appointing Gerald Haenlin of Lowville, NY as a member of the Lewis County Industrial Development Agency Board of Directors effective April 3, 2024, for an indefinite term.

AYE 5 NAY 0

The following motions were made:

1. Legislator Osborne moved to accept the NYMIR Package, Inland Marine, Crime, and Privacy & Security Cyber Liability Insurance renewals in the total amount of \$269,630.12 effective April 5, 2024, to April 5, 2025, seconded by Legislator Nellenback, and carried.

There being no other business to come before the committee Legislator Frost moved to adjourn the meeting at 3:14 p.m., seconded by Legislator Lyndaker, and carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Cassandra Moser, Clerk of the Board