

GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE
March 19, 2024

Present: Andrea Moroughan, Chair; Herb Frost; Thomas Kalamas, and Jeffrey Nellenback. Josh Leviker, Vice-Chair had been excused.

Legislator Moroughan called the meeting to order at 1:07 p.m.

Legislator Kalamas moved to approve the February 20, 2024, committee meeting minutes as recorded, seconded by Legislator Frost, and carried.

Solar Eclipse event on April 8, 2024 – Robert Mackenzie, Director of Fire & Emergency Management; and Kristen Aucter, Director of the Lewis County Chamber of Commerce

Kristen Aucter explained that there have been partial eclipse viewings in Lewis County over the years, but this is the first total eclipse. The 2024 Great North American Solar Eclipse is happening on Monday, April 8th, 2024, and Lewis County is in the path of totality. Thousands of visitors are anticipated across the North Country. Naturally Lewis is leveraging its tourism brand, Discover Tug Hill to promote experiencing the eclipse in the Adirondacks-Tug Hill Region.

Tourism is not the end goal; it is a means to an end. The idea being that some of the visitors of the eclipse will hopefully find Lewis County a great place and will want to come back to experience more. Naturally Lewis is branding the experience as *Totality on the Tug* with pre-order merchandise. They are hosting a namesake event; partnering with local businesses and organizations to leverage external dollars for local growth by offering business recourse kits on the website and encouraging business to be open on Sunday and Monday; and partnering with Lewis County Agricultural Society, Lowville Free Library, and William H. Bush Memorial Library.

Robert Mackenzie explained that the state has been looking at this for over a year. Jefferson County is in the path of totality as well and this could cause Interstate 81 to become grid locked on Monday, April 8th. Currently the known events in Lewis County are Lewis County Fairgrounds, Oswegatchie Educational Center, “Lights Out” Roads End Orchard on Crofoot Hill Road in Constableville, “Block Party” at Harrisville Fire Department, Snow Ridge Chairlift Rides from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., Lewis-JCC Education Center on East Road to host 4H kids, Osceola Ski Resort, and 3 Willows Event Center. There could be more as the time draws closer.

School Closures on April 8th are West Leyden Elementary closing at 11:00 a.m., South Lewis closing at 11:30 a.m., Lowville Academy will only have a half day, Beaver River closing at 12:30 p.m., Copenhagen closing at noon, Harrisville will only have a half day. Some of the schools are hosting “Block Party” type events for the

community. Lewis County Hotels as of March 18, 2024, show Edge Hotel has lots of rooms available, Ridge View has 22 out of 63 rooms booked, and Turin Highlands has all 6 rooms booked.

The main plan is to try and control the chaos. No one knows for sure how many people will show up for the eclipse from outside Lewis County but to make sure the county is prepared the Sheriff's Department will be fully staffed with one extra staff, Lowville Police Department will be fully staffed, Lewis County Search & Rescue will have an additional crew member, and Fire & EMS operations will be at the ready. The areas of concern regarding traffic are Route 177, Route 12, Route 26, Route 812, and Moose River Road.

The wild card is the weather and if it will be historically cold and overcast or will it be a warm sunny day. If the day is snowy and overcast it likely will reduce the number of people who would show up, but if it is sunny and warm it could mean even more than expected show up. Just being prepared and ready for a large number of additional visitors is the best plan of action right now.

Ryan Piche explained that some counties have declared a pre-emptive State of Emergency (SOE) based on the vast influx of people they are expecting. Most schools are closing early, along with Fort Drum, and various county governments. He wondered if the committee might consider a 2:00 p.m. early dismissal for employees so everyone can get out and get home before roads get to inundated with vehicles.

Legislator Moroughan moved to allow for an early dismissal of all non-essential personnel at 2:00 p.m. on Monday, April 8th due to the Solar Eclipse, seconded by Legislator Frost, and carried.

The following draft resolutions were reviewed:

1. Authorizing Supplement Agreement No. 2 between Lewis County Highway Department and Foit-Albert Architecture, Engineering & Surveying, P.C. for CR 29 West Road Bridge over Whetstone Creek through December 31, 2024, for the additional amount not to exceed \$261,400.00.

AYE 4 NAY 0

2. Awarding bid and authorizing contract with Prentiss & Carlisle Management Company, Inc. for the term of April 3, 2024, through April 30, 2026, in the amount of \$22,000.00 payable for the harvesting of timber at Hough Memorial Forest in New Bremen.

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The following motion was made:

1. Legislator Moroughan moved to award bid for hot asphalt mix based on project location in accordance with the tabulation of all bids prepared by the Highway

Superintendent and placed on file with the Clerk of the Board for the period of April 1, 2024, through March 31, 2025, seconded by Legislator Nellenback, and carried.

2. Legislator Moroughan moved to award bid for pavement marking to K & T Striping LLC in accordance with the tabulation of all bids prepared by the Highway Superintendent and placed on file with the Clerk of the Board for the period April 1, 2024, through March 31, 2025, seconded by Legislator Kalamas, and carried.

There being no other business to come before the committee, Legislator Frost moved to adjourn at 1:25 p.m., seconded by Legislator Nellenback, and carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Cassandra Moser, Clerk of the Board