

GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE
July 23, 2024

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

Legislator Moroughan called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

Legislator Moroughan moved to approve the June 18, 2024, committee meeting minutes as recorded, seconded by Legislator Frost, and carried.

Flooding 2024 – Tim Hunt, Highway Superintendent

Tim Hunt began by explaining that the intense flooding in Lewis County was remnants of Hurricane Beryl. It began with meteorologists calling for potential severe weather, area wide, southern Lewis County. The NWS officially recorded 6.02 inches of rain, which set a record for rain received in a 24-hour period. To put this in perspective more a 200-year storm is categorized by 5.67 inches of rain and a 500-year storm would be 6.44 inches. This weather event would be around a 400-year storm. Most bridges and culverts are only designed to withstand a 100-year storm.

The timeline of events was reviewed. On July 10th at 6:00 a.m. all crews were sent to check on drainage issues, making sure pipes were open and beaver gates were clear. At 3:30 p.m. calls started coming in and crews were dispatched to ensure pipes were open. At 5:30 p.m. efforts then shifted to closing flooded areas and stabilizing washouts. At 8:00 p.m. efforts again shifted to closing whole roads and trying to stabilize major washouts. At 11:30 p.m. all crews were called back due to roads being too dangerous. At 1:00 a.m. all crews had safely returned.

On July 11th at 7:00 a.m. there was a meeting with Towns to coordinate repairs. At this point the Number Four Road was considered a top priority. There was focus making necessary repairs to open as many critical roads as possible. Through out this entire time there was excellent coordination with Emergency Management. The County Highway crew worked from 6:00 a.m. to dark on July 11th, 12th and 13th. Towns that were affected significantly were New Bremen, Watson, Martinsburg, Lowville, and Turin. Crews from the following neighboring Towns came without being asked and helped immensely, Croghan, Denmark, Diana, Pinckney, Greig, and West Turin.

Thank you's go out to North Country Contracts for supplying equipment to be used; DANC for sending out pumps; VS Virkler for stone; Millers Meat Market for having someone sit on each side of the Number Four Road where it washed out the road all day making sure no one went through and for providing a lunch for the Highway Crew; and for Family Ice-Cream for giving the Highway workers free ice cream. This

is what it means to live in a small community where everyone comes together to help out.

On July 15th and 16th was when the Department of Homeland Security sent out a Damage Assessment Team to evaluate the damage. They estimated that there was \$27 million in damage to Roads & Bridges, \$12 to \$20 million in damage to Lowville Academy Central School, and roughly \$2 million to the Lewis County Health System. This doesn't include any damages to Village Businesses or residents' homes. The damage done in Lewis County, Essex County and St. Lawrence County meets the NYS threshold for FEMA. FEMA can take from 3 to 5 years to get any reimbursement, so it is a process with many regulations and requirements.

County Attorney Joan McNichol questioned how long the Towns & County have to start making the permanent repairs, Tim Hunt stated that he hasn't heard of a specific time period yet. Most culverts that washed out and replaced as temporary work to open a road will have to be permitted and resized, which will likely require them to be replaced with bridges. For instance, the Wagner Road culvert will be replaced with a 50-foot to 75-foot bridge. Another thing to deal with is making sure any collapsed bridges/culverts are completely removed so they don't back up water.

Photos were shown of Wagner Road over Crystal Creek in New Bremen; Lomber Road over Crystal Creek in New Bremen; Tillman Road over Crystal Creek in New Bremen; Beeches Hill Road over Crystal Creek in New Bremen; Kotel Hill Road over Crystal Creek in Watson; and Number Four Road over Crystal Cree in Watson. On July 19th temporary bridges were requested from NYS. There is a meeting scheduled for tomorrow to discuss options.

Legislator Nortz asked if the NYS Governor's declaration of a Natural Disaster would help the residents, County Manager Ryan Piche responded that it helps with public infrastructure but not private residences. Legislator Nortz voiced his concern that the residents and small business owners are the ones who need help right now. Ryan Piche strongly encouraged anyone who has any damage done to their property from the flood to use the damage assessment tool on the county website and Facebook page to report it. Robust participation should lead to more funding. The Small Business Association (SBA) should be able to provide low interest to low interest loans to residents. There is preliminary talk about possibly having NYS open up some funding for residents and small businesses.

Ryan Piche also threw out the idea that the County could assist with hiring a consultant engineer company to help with completing the FEMA forms and engineering requirements. FEMA allows 5% for administrative costs, so the county would pay up front but then be reimbursed down the road from FEMA.

The following draft resolutions were reviewed:

1. Authorizing 2024/2025 renewal agreement between the Buildings & Grounds Department and the NYS Unified Court System for cleaning and maintenance services, as well as preventative building and property maintenance for the period of April 1, 2024 through March 31, 2025 in consideration of the payment of \$145,526.00.
AYE 4 NAY 0
2. Accepting title of property at 6314 East Main Street, Village of Turin, in consideration of discontinuing further unsafe structure enforcement action against the Owner and authorizing the Codes Department to follow through with the demolition and removal procedures under the Local Law.
AYE 4 NAY 0
3. Amending the 2024 Compensation Plan with reference to the District Attorney's Office to abolish one (1) full-time Administrative Assistant position at an hourly rate of \$20.59 up to \$24.12 and create one (1) full-time Paralegal position at an hourly rate of \$21.46 up to \$24.15 effective immediately.
AYE 4 NAY 0
4. Authorizing agreement with C&S Engineers to provide professional construction observation and support services at the Glenfield Complete Streets & Blue Street projects, as required by the NYS DOT, and in accordance with the scope of services outlined by C&S in its proposal dated May 28, 2024, at a cost of \$199,933.74.
AYE 4 NAY 0
5. Authorizing Inter-Municipal 5-year agreements for control of snow and ice removal and treatment on certain County roads and parking facilities with such Towns and Villages at a first year rate of \$7,560.00 per mile, with an automatic annual renewal increase of 4% and parking lot reimbursement at \$0.06 per square foot. The total cost of such services in 2025 from all jurisdictions shall not exceed \$1,381,918.86.
AYE 4 NAY 0
6. Appointing Edward Bullis as a member of the Junkyard Review Board to fulfill the unexpired term of John Szijarto from August 7, 2024 through December 31, 2026.
AYE 4 NAY 0
7. A SEQRA review of an addition of 0.26 miles in the Town of Martinsburg, of new trail into the Lewis County Trail System and declaring no significant impact.
AYE 4 NAY 0
8. Setting the Public Hearing to receive public comment regarding the addition of 0.26 miles in the Town of Martinsburg, of new trail into the Lewis County Trail System for September 3, 2024 from 5:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.
AYE 4 NAY 0
9. Accepting the 2023/2024 Phase III snowmobile funds from OPRHP and appropriating \$99,329.40 (30% of total) to be distributed to the Lewis County Area Snowmobile Association.
AYE 4 NAY 0

10. Amending the 2024 Compensation Plan with reference to the Solid Waste Department to abolish one (1) full-time Medium Equipment Operator (MEO) position at an hourly rate of \$22.28 up to \$26.14 and create one (1) full-time Heavy Equipment Operator (HEO) position at an hourly rate of \$23.49 up to \$27.55 effective immediately.

AYE 4 NAY 0

11. Authorizing amendment to the Memorandum of Understanding between Lewis County and Solid Waste Department by adding the remaining balance owed on the Scale House for a repayment amount of \$1,499,658.52 representing the outstanding balance with interest of 1.5% per annum, payable in annual payments through June 30, 2041.

AYE 4 NAY 0

There being no other business to come before the committee, Legislator Moroughan moved to adjourn at 2:42 p.m., seconded by Legislator Kalamas, and carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Cassandra Moser, Clerk of the Board