

FINANCE & RULES COMMITTEE
February 18, 2025

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

Legislator Osborne called the meeting to order at 1:57 p.m.

Legislator Osborne moved to approve the January 21, 2025 committee meeting minutes as recorded, seconded by Legislator Frost, and carried.

County Assessor & Data Collection services update – Candy Akin, Director of Real Property Tax

Candy Akin began by explaining that Lewis County has 25,380 parcels with only 10 sole appointed Assessors. Due to impending retirements in 2025 and that September 30, 2025, is the end of the 6-year term for appointed Assessors there is a need to assist Towns with these functions. The fee structure of \$10 per parcel for assessing services and \$3.25 for data collection services with annual increases between 2% to 5% is what is being proposed for utilizing County Assessor and Data Collection services. The goal is to secure contracts with at least three towns for assessing and two for data collection by September 30, 2025.

Severity Fund for Workers' Compensation – Cassandra Moser, Administrator of Lewis County Self-Insurance Plan

Cassandra Moser explained what the current Workers' Compensation Excess Liability policy was through Midwest at a renewal cost of \$97,576 with a \$2M self-insured retention limit. The premium was based on estimated payroll by class code and the yearly audit process was difficult to complete.

The current Workers' Compensation Fund Balance is \$6M and we haven't utilized the Workers' Compensation Excess Liability policy due to the high self-insured retention limit. In fact, there are only 3 current claims that are over \$500,000 and each of those happened prior to the Excess Policy being purchased so they wouldn't have any coverage anyway. The bottom line is that going through a commercial company the county has no control over the premium or how and when it can be utilized.

The proposal is to create a Severity Fund and policy for utilizing it and bring that in house rather than through a commercial company. The county would have complete control over the "premium" and how & when it can be utilized. The Fund Balance can be set, and the self-insured retention limits can be lowered. It would require an Employers Liability policy to be purchased as that was included in the Workers' Compensation Excess Liability Policy.

The following dockets were reviewed:

1. Authorizing a three-year Agreement with SHI International to provide Fortinet software, licensing, and maintain service protection for the County's Cybersecurity system for the term commencing April 11, 2025 through April 10, 2028 at a cost not to exceed \$75,000.00 which has been approved in the 2025 Capital Improvement Plan budget.
AYE 4 NAY 0

2. Authorizing the transfer of the approximate 0.44 acres of vacant land located immediately behind the one family residence of David C. Hodge and Michelle L. Smith located at 7456 Emi Lane, Lowville, NY, Tax Map Parcel No. 195.00-02-15.300, to said named owners in consideration of the payment of \$4,000.00; subject to the written consent and waiver of reversionary rights of the Lewis County Agricultural Society, Inc., as required under the deed restrictions; and provided that the owners incur all costs and expenses of the transfer of title, including but not limited to any abstract of title fee, deed recording fees and transfer taxes which may customarily be waived for the County.
AYE 4 NAY 0

3. Authorizing the Planning and Community Development Department to submit the MEP and ATC funding requests to the New York State Department of Transportation for the purchase of one (1) wheelchair van, one (1) 16-passenger Lot G bus, sixteen (16) bus WiFi modems, one (1) bus stop shelter for the LC JCC Ed Center, and seventy-five (75) bus stop signs for the Lewis County Public Transportation (LCPT) system and directs the Treasurer to appropriate the ATC, DASNY, and WinDenmark funds into the Bus Operations account lines.
AYE 4 NAY 0

4. Authorizing an Agreement with General Code, LLC to digitally codify the County's Local Laws through Local Law No. 5-2024 into the eCode360 Platform at a cost of \$15,995, and with annual maintenance and licensing services of \$1,195 as more fully set forth in its proposal dated January 30, 2025, and directs the Treasurer to pay the cost from the 2023 NYS Shared Services account.
AYE 4 NAY 0

5. Authorizing the Lewis County Planning and Community Development Department to submit a grant application to NYS ConnectALL under its Digital Equity Program Capacity grant program to continue to fund and expand the Lewis County Free Public Wi-Fi program at an amount not to exceed \$2,000,000, with a local share amount of \$10% of the total project costs submitted.
AYE 4 NAY 0

6. Authorizing the Lewis County Planning and Community Development Department to submit a grant application to FEMA under its 2025 BRIC funding for road scoping of County Rte. 22, with project costs estimated to be \$500,000 and a 25% required local share.
AYE 4 NAY 0

7. Authorizing the Lewis County Planning and Community Development Department to submit a \$500,000.00 grant application to NYSDEC under its Municipal Zero-Emission Vehicle (ZEV) Infrastructure Grant Program and a National Grid Make-Ready Program

application to purchase and install EV charging stations, with the project cost estimated to be \$500,000 which requires a 20% local share that could be covered by National Grid Make-Ready Program funding.

AYE 4 NAY 0

8. Authorizing the Lewis County Planning and Community Development Department to submit a grant application up to \$500,000.00 to US DOT under its PROTECT funding program for East Martinsburg Road improvements, with no required local match.

AYE 4 NAY 0

9. Authorizing the Chair of the Board to execute the Short Environmental Assessment Forms prepared by the Planning and Community Development Department declaring that these Actions and Applications will not result in any significant adverse environmental impacts; then adopting the recommendations of the Lewis County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board and Planning and Community Development Department, and placing the following parcel of land located in the Town of Greig, Tax Map Parcel No. 291.00-02-23.110 owned by William and Millie McLaughlin, (approximately 163.4 acres) into Agricultural District #6.

AYE 4 NAY 0

10. Accepting the proposal and authorizing an agreement with Samsara, Inc., for vehicle cameras, data equipment and licensing services for a portion of the County's vehicle fleet as more fully detailed and set forth in the proposal dated January 23, 2025, for a total cost of \$21,146.40 for the first year and \$20,990.40/year for the second and third years.

AYE 4 NAY 0

11. Authorizing Inter-Municipal Agreement(s) for data collection and/or assessment services with such Towns as may be interested in the provision of such services, with such terms and provisions as the County Attorney may recommend; setting the first-year rate, commencing April 1, 2025 through March 31, 2026, at \$3.25 per parcel for data collection services, and \$10.00 per parcel for assessment services. The County shall have the right to increase the rates between 2% and 5% on an annual basis, with any renewals subject to said rate increases.

AYE 4 NAY 0

12. Directing the Treasurer to adjust, apportion, and charge back a total of \$10,071.26 to the various Towns who have franchise agreements with Time Warner Cable which allowed them to deduct from taxes the franchise paid to the Towns.

AYE 4 NAY 0

13. Urging approval of Home Rule Request and to adopt New York State Senate Bill No. S4858 and Companion Assembly Bill No. A5514.

AYE 4 NAY 0

Motions

1. Legislator Osborne moved to accept and adopt the 2025 Finance & Rules Committee Goals, seconded by Legislator Frost, and carried.

2. Legislator Osborne moved to authorize the Administrator of Lewis County Self-Insurance Plan to set up a Severity Fund by April 1, 2025; obtain an Employers Liability policy by April 1, 2025; and then cancel the Midwest WC Excess Liability policy by April 1, 2025, seconded by Legislator Frost, and carried.

There being no other business to come before the committee Legislator Nellenback moved to adjourn the meeting at 2:26 p.m., seconded by Legislator Frost, and carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Cassandra Moser, Clerk of the Board