

ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

January 6, 2026

The meeting was called to order at 5:04 p.m. by Clerk of the Board, Cassandra Moser. All Legislators were present and there were 15 other attendees present.

The Clerk of the Board called for nominations for Chairperson of the Board of Legislators for 2026. Legislator Osborne nominated Legislator Lawrence L. Dolhof, seconded by Legislator Moser. There being no other nominations to come forward, Legislator Hanno made a motion for the clerk to close the polls and cast one ballot for Legislator Dolhof, seconded by Legislator Kalamas. Legislator Lyndaker stated that he could not vote for Legislator Dolhof. The motion was then carried with Legislator Lyndaker opposed.

The Clerk then cast one ballot for Legislator Dolhof for the office of Chairperson. Having received the majority vote, he was declared Chairperson of the Lewis County Board of Legislators for 2026.

Chairman Dolhof made his way to the podium and thanked everyone for their continued support.

He then asked Legislator Kalamas for the Invocation, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Chairman Dolhof declared the December 18, 2025, meeting minutes approved by general consent.

REPORT OF THE FINANCE AND RULES COMMITTEE:

The Finance and Rules Committee met and recommend waiving the rules to allow action on late resolutions.

Signed by: Jessica Moser
Jeffrey Nellenback
Herb Frost
Thomas Osborne
Barry Lyndaker

Dated: January 6, 2026

Legislator Frost made a motion to waive the rules, seconded by Legislator Nortz and carried.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR:

Eric Schwartzentruer, member of the Railway Historical Society of Northern New York Board, thanked the Board for their financial support over the years. He

went on to explain that the Railway Historical Society of Northern New York provides cheap entertainment for those who can't walk or operate machinery, citing groups of handicapped adults who have visited. He wondered if there might be some kind of arrangement that could be made between the County as the new owners of the railroad. Last year they had their first riders in April which is right around the corner.

Chairman Dolhof responded by thanking Mr. Schwartzentruber and the Railway Historical Society for all they have done and look forward to working with them in the coming year. He briefly explained that the County has just re-engaged with the consultant hired for the Rail Trail project and assured Mr. Schwartzentruber that the County would reach out.

CLERK OF THE BOARD REPORT:

All Lewis County Legislators have indicated their wish to designate the Watertown Daily Times as their official newspaper for the year 2026, pursuant to Section 214 of the County Law. The Watertown Daily Times, a newspaper circulated in Lewis County, State of New York, as the official newspaper is designated to publish the session laws, concurrent resolutions of the Legislature as required by law to be published, certificates of nomination, local laws of the Board of Legislators, election notices, official canvass, and any other matters that are or may be required by law to be published in the official newspaper of the County.

Lewis County Community Services Developmental Disabilities Subcommittee member Louise Fox submitted her resignation letter to the Board effective December 4, 2025. Lewis County Community Services Board member Dr. John Wat submitted his resignation letter effective January 2, 2026.

The Clerk received the 2025 Annual report from Cornell Cooperative Extension of Lewis County and placed it on file.

Lewis County has received several grant awards from the Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) program; \$129,048.00 for East Martinsburg Road Flood Study, \$60,028.00 for Dam Analysis on Flood Resilience, \$207,292.00 for Lewis County BOA Pre-Planning Inventory and Analysis, and \$186,300.00 for Town and Village of Lowville Smart Growth Zoning Update.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- Chairman Dolhof announced the following Legislative Committees for 2026:
- General Services Committee Chair is Legislator Josh Leviker; Vice-Chair is Legislator Tom Osborne; committee members are Legislators Vincent Nortz, Jeff Nellenback, and Mike Hanno.

- Human Services Committee Chair is Legislator Tom Kalamas; Vice-Chair is Legislator Herb Frost; committee members are Legislators Vincent Nortz, Mike Hanno, and Barry Lyndaker.
- Finance and Rules Committee Chair is Legislator Jessica Moser; Vice-Chair is Legislator Jeff Nellenback; committee members are Legislators Herb Frost, Tom Osborne, and Barry Lyndaker.

SPECIAL COMMITTEE REPORTS

Chairman Dolhof then announced the outside board assignments for 2026:

- Adirondack Park Local Govt. Review Board, Legislator Tom Kalamas
- Lewis County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Board, Legislator Jeff Nellenback
- Lewis County Agricultural Society Fair Board, Legislator Josh Leviker
- Lewis County Corporate Compliance Committee, Legislators Barry Lyndaker, Jeff Nellenback, and Herb Frost
- Lewis County Community Services Board, Legislator Tom Kalamas
- Cornell Cooperative Extension of Lewis County Board of Directors, Legislator Mike Hanno
- District 6 Fish & Wildlife Management Board, Legislator Larry Dolhof
- Fort Drum Regional Liaison Organization, Legislator Vincent Nortz
- Lewis County General Hospital Board of Managers, Legislator Vincent Nortz
- Lewis County Law Library Board of Trustees and Jury Board, Legislator Tom Osborne
- NYSDEC Open Space Advisory Committee, Legislators Herb Frost and Tom Osborne
- North Country Home Consortium, Legislator Barry Lyndaker
- Lewis County Planning Board, Legislator Jessica Moser
- Lewis County Alternatives To Incarceration Committee, Legislator Josh Leviker
- Lewis County Health Services Advisory Board, Legislator Tom Kalamas
- Lewis County Soil & Water Conservation District Board of Directors, Legislators Mike Hanno and Barry Lyndaker
- Lewis County Youth Bureau Advisory Board, Legislator Vincent Nortz

COUNTY MANAGER REPORT:

County Manager Tim Hunt reported that he has been working on compiling a list of recommended goals for 2026 to review with each of the committees in January. He thanked everyone who completed the survey on goals to be able to make sure that we are on the right track with what the priorities should be. He explained that he has also been working on a county government scored card that he'll be giving to each of the legislators as an annual checklist to monitor how the county administration is doing as far as making sure, we are complying with all the regulations, rules and continuing to have a healthy financial outlook.

COUNTY TREASURER REPORT:

County Treasurer Eric Virkler reported that the county continues to stay ahead of last year's sales tax receipts, with two more additional payments received since the report was released. The Health Fund reserve is slowly climbing in the right direction, which is good. The Rail Trail reserve balance and activity is now on the monthly report and shows all activity from the last quarter.

REPORT OF THE FINANCE AND RULES COMMITTEE:

RESOLUTION NO. 1 - 2026

**RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE STANDING RULES
OF THE LEWIS COUNTY BOARD OF LEGISLATORS**

Introduced by Legislator Lawrence L. Dolhof, Chairman of the Lewis County Board of Legislators.

BE IT RESOLVED as follows:

Section 1. The Lewis County Board of Legislators hereby adopts the Standing Rules of the Board of Legislators, which shall serve as the official Standing Rules of the Lewis County Board of Legislator for the year 2026.

Section 2. This Resolution shall take effect immediately upon adoption.

Moved by Legislator Moser, seconded by Legislator Frost, and adopted on the 6th day of January, 2026.

RESOLUTION NO. 2 – 2026

RESOLUTION AUDITING AND ALLOWING CLAIMS

Introduced by Legislator Thomas Osborne, Chair of the Finance & Rules Committee.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the claims presented for payment, in the total amount of \$2,813,209.35, are hereby audited and allowed for the amounts claimed; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Clerk of the Board is hereby authorized and directed to draw checks on the County Treasurer in favor of each of the claimants, of their assigns, for the amounts so audited and allowed.

Moved by Legislator Frost, seconded by Legislator Leviker.

Legislator Moser recused herself from the vote, as several payments included therein are either made payable to her for services rendered as an assigned council or reflect vouchers she approved in that capacity.

The resolution was then adopted on the 6th day of January, 2026, pursuant to the following roll call vote:

AYES: Kalamas, Lyndaker, Hanno, Nellenback, Frost, Nortz, Leviker, Osborne, and Dolhof.

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: None.

RESOLUTION NO. 3 - 2026

**RESOLUTION WITH REFERENCE TO THE VICE-CHAIR
OF THE LEWIS COUNTY BOARD OF LEGISLATORS**

Introduced by Legislator Lawrence L. Dolhof, Chairman of the Lewis County Board of Legislators.

BE IT RESOLVED as follows:

Section 1. The Vice-Chair of the Lewis County Board of Legislators shall have and exercise all powers and duties of the Chair during any meeting over which he or she is called to preside.

Section 2. The Vice-Chair shall perform the duties of the Chair in the Chair's absence from Lewis County, or any time when the Chair is physically or mentally unable to perform such duties.

Section 3. During the periods described in Sections 1 and 2, the powers and duties delegated to the Vice-Chair shall not be exercised by the Chair.

Section 4. The Lewis County Board of Legislators hereby appoints Legislator Thomas Osborne to serve as Vice-Chair of the Lewis County Board of Legislators for the calendar year 2026.

Section 5. This Resolution shall take effect immediately upon adoption.

Moved by Legislator Kalamas, seconded by Legislator Nellenback, and adopted on the 6th day of January, 2026.

RESOLUTION NO. 4 - 2026

**RESOLUTION APPROVING THE FORM AND AMOUNT OF
A BLANKET UNDERTAKING COVERING OFFICERS,
CLERKS, AND EMPLOYEES OF LEWIS COUNTY**

Introduced by Legislator Lawrence L. Dolhof, Chairman of the Lewis County Board of Legislators.

WHEREAS, County Law § 403 provides that the County Clerk, County Treasurer, Deputy Treasurer, and such other county officers as may be specifically required by law must execute and file with the County Clerk an undertaking in amounts approved by the Board of Legislators; and

WHEREAS, Public Officers Law § 11(2) authorizes the governing body of a county, with its consent and approval, to procure a blanket undertaking form from a duly authorized corporate surety covering officers, clerks, and employees of the county in lieu of individual undertakings;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, as follows:

Section 1. The Lewis County Board of Legislators hereby approves a blanket undertaking in the amount of One Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$150,000) to be obtained from a corporate surety company duly authorized to do business in the State of New York. Said undertaking shall cover all officers, clerks, and employees of Lewis County and ensure that each faithfully discharges the duties of his or her office, and all trusts imposed upon him or her by law by virtue of their office and all trusts imposed upon them by law, including the duty to promptly account for and pay over all monies and property received by virtue of their office. In the event of a default or failure to perform such duties, the corporate surety shall indemnify the County of Lewis and the People of the State of New York for all damages, costs, and expenses resulting therefrom, not exceeding the amount specified above

Section 2. A certified copy of this Resolution shall be attached to a copy of the aforementioned undertaking and filed with the Lewis County Clerk's Office.

Section 3. That this Resolution shall take effect immediately.

Moved by Legislator Osborne , seconded by Legislator Frost , and adopted on the 6th day of January, 2026.

RESOLUTION NO. 5 - 2026

**RESOLUTION WAIVING THE REQUIREMENT FOR A SURETY BOND
FOR THE CHAIR OF THE LEWIS COUNTY
BOARD OF LEGISLATORS**

Introduced by Legislator Thomas Osborne, Vice-Chair of the Lewis County Board of Legislators.

WHEREAS, County Law § 450 provides that the Chair of the Board of Legislators is required to execute and file an undertaking with the County Clerk in such a form and in such an amount as may be determined by the Board of Legislators; and

WHEREAS, the Lewis County Board of Legislators has, on this date, adopted a resolution approving a blanket undertaking covering the officers, clerks, and employees of Lewis County;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, as follows:

Section 1. That the Lewis County Board of Legislators hereby determines that a separate undertaking for the Chair of the Board of Legislators shall not be required and formally waives any obligation on the part of the Chair to obtain a surety bond for the faithful performance of his or her duties pursuant to County Law § 450.

Section 2. That this Resolution shall take effect immediately.

Moved by Legislator Moser, seconded by Legislator Nortz, and adopted on the 6th day of January, 2026.

RESOLUTION NO. 6 - 2026

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING 2026 BUDGET APPROPRIATIONS
AND FUND TRANSFERS TO CAPITAL PROJECTS**

Introduced by Legislator Thomas Osborne, Chair of the Finance and Rules Committee.

BE IT RESOLVED as follows:

Section 1. That the following budget appropriation be made to the Capital Equipment account to transfer funds budgeted for 2026 in the General Fund, and to appropriate said funds to the Capital HAD Fund, with a transfer from A0990100 992500 (To Capital Equipment):

<u>Increase Revenue:</u>	
H0990100 350310	\$950,000.00
Project HAD	

<u>Increase Expenditure:</u>	
H0990100 499900	\$950,000.00
Project HAD	

Section 2. That the within resolution shall take effect immediately.

Moved by Legislator Frost, seconded by Legislator Moser, and adopted on the 6th day of January, 2026.

RESOLUTION NO. 7 - 2026

**RESOLUTION RE-APPOINTING CLERK OF THE BOARD
AND AUTHORIZING EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT**

Introduced by Legislator Lawrence L. Dolhof, Chairman of the Lewis County Board of Legislators.

WHEREAS, pursuant to County Law, the Board of Legislators appoints a Clerk of the Board to serve the Board of Legislators during the term of the elected Board; and

WHEREAS, the Lewis County Board of Legislators wishes to re-appoint Cassandra Moser to continue to serve as Clerk of the Board and as Administrator for the Workers Compensation Plan, and to enter into an employment agreement to provide for the terms and conditions of her service during said term;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED as follows:

Section 1. The Lewis County Board of Legislators hereby re-appoints Cassandra E. Moser of Croghan, New York, to serve as Clerk of the Board and Administrator of the Workers Compensation Plan.

Section 2. The Lewis County Board of Legislators hereby authorizes a renewal employment agreement to be negotiated by and between the County of Lewis and Cassandra E. Moser, setting forth the terms and conditions of her employment.

Section 3. The term of said appointment is effective January 1, 2026 through December 31, 2026.

Section 4. The compensation for said positions, retroactive to January 1, 2026, is established and set in the amounts set forth in the adopted 2026 budget, and is in accordance with the Management Compensation Plan and Schedule currently in effect.

Section 5. The Chair or the Vice-Chair of the Board of Legislators is hereby authorized to negotiate the terms of said renewal Agreement and to make, execute, seal and deliver said Agreement.

Section 6. The within resolution shall take effect immediately.

Moved by Legislator Kalamas, seconded by Legislator Leviker, and adopted on the 6th day of January, 2026.

RESOLUTION NO. 8 – 2026

**RESOLUTION RE-APPOINTING LEWIS COUNTY ATTORNEY
AND AUTHORIZING EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT**

Introduced by Legislator Lawrence L. Dolhof, Chairman of the Lewis County Board of Legislators.

WHEREAS, pursuant to County Law §500, the Board of Legislators must appoint a County Attorney to serve during the term of the elected Board; and

WHEREAS, the Lewis County Board of Legislators wishes to re-appoint Joan E. McNichol as County Attorney and to enter into a renewal employment agreement to provide for the terms and conditions of her service during said term;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED as follows:

Section 1. The Lewis County Board of Legislators hereby re-appoints Joan E. McNichol of Lowville, New York 13367, to continue service as Lewis County Attorney pursuant to County Law § 500, for the 2026 Board of Legislators' elected term.

Section 2. The Lewis County Board of Legislators hereby authorizes an updated employment agreement to be negotiated by and between the County of Lewis and Joan E. McNichol, setting forth the terms and conditions of her employment as Lewis County Attorney for this new term.

Section 3. The term of said appointment is effective January 1, 2026 through December 31, 2026.

Section 4. The compensation for said position, retroactive to January 1, 2026, is established and set in the amount set forth in the adopted 2026 budget, and is in accordance with the Management Compensation Plan and Schedule currently in effect.

Section 5. The Chair or the Vice-Chair of the Board of Legislators is hereby authorized to negotiate the terms of said renewal Agreement and to make, execute, seal and deliver said Agreement.

Section 6. The within resolution shall take effect immediately.

Moved by Legislator Frost, seconded by Legislator Leviker, and adopted on the 6th day of January, 2026.

RESOLUTION NO. 9 – 2026

**RESOLUTION RE-APPOINTING LEWIS COUNTY MANAGER
AND AUTHORIZING EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT**

Introduced by Legislator Lawrence L. Dolhof, Chairman of the Lewis County Board of Legislators.

WHEREAS, the County established the position of County Manager pursuant to Lewis County Local Law No. 4-1987, whose function it is to serve as the chief administrative officer, as well as the budget officer, on behalf of the Board of Legislators during the term of the elected Board; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Legislators wishes to re-appoint Timothy Hunt as County Manager and to enter into a renewal employment agreement to provide for the terms and conditions of his service during said term;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED as follows:

Section 1. The Lewis County Board of Legislators hereby re-appoints Timothy Hunt of Lowville, New York 13367, to continue service in the position of County Manager pursuant to Local Law No. 4-1987 for the 2026 Board of Legislators' elected term.

Section 2. The Lewis County Board of Legislators hereby authorizes an updated employment agreement to be negotiated by and between the County of Lewis and Timothy Hunt, setting forth the terms and conditions of his employment as Lewis County Manager for this new term.

Section 3. The term of said appointment is effective January 1, 2026 through December 31, 2026.

Section 4. The compensation for said position, retroactive to January 1, 2026, is established and set in the amount set forth in the adopted 2026 budget, and is in accordance with the Management Compensation Plan and Schedule currently in effect.

Section 5. That the Chair or the Vice-Chair of the Board of Legislators is hereby authorized to negotiate the terms of said renewal Agreement and to make, execute, seal and deliver said Agreement.

Section 6. That the within resolution shall take effect immediately.

Moved by Legislator Kalamas, seconded by Legislator Nellenback, and adopted on the 6th day of January, 2026.

RESOLUTION NO. 10 – 2026

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING FIRE ADVISORY BOARD
AND PROVIDING FOR PAYMENT OF ALLOWABLE EXPENSES**

Introduced by Legislator Lawrence L. Dolhof, Chairman of the Lewis County Board of Legislators.

WHEREAS, the Lewis County Board of Legislators recognizes the vital role of volunteer fire departments in providing emergency services and protecting the lives and property of county residents; and

WHEREAS, the establishment of a Fire Advisory Board under Section 225-a of the County Law provides a mechanism for coordination, communication, and oversight among all volunteer fire departments in the County; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary to appoint members to the Fire Advisory Board and authorize the payment of allowable expenses to support the efficient operation of the Board and its activities;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED as follows:

Section 1. Pursuant to Section 225-a of the County Law, the Lewis County Fire Advisory Board shall consist of the Fire Chief of each volunteer fire department in Lewis County, or a designated Assistant Fire Chief. These individuals are hereby appointed to the Board for a term of one year, commencing January 1, 2026, through December 31, 2026. All members shall be considered county officers and shall serve without compensation.

Section 2. The Lewis County Fire and Emergency Management Director, Robert MacKenzie, III, is hereby authorized to appoint up to six (6) Deputy Coordinators, who shall also serve without compensation. The Director shall submit a list of appointees to the Clerk of the Board of Legislators promptly after appointments have been made.

Section 3. All necessary and allowable expenses incurred by the Lewis County Fire Advisory Board and the Deputy Coordinators shall be paid upon due audit, in accordance with applicable law.

Section 4. This resolution shall take effect immediately.

Moved by Legislator Moser, seconded by Legislator Osborne, and adopted on the 6th day of January, 2026.

RESOLUTION NO. 11 - 2026

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING 2026 BUDGET TRANSFERS
WITHIN THE HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT ACCOUNTS**

Introduced by Legislator Lawrence L. Dolhof, Chairman of the Lewis County Board of Legislators.

BE IT RESOLVED as follows:

Section 1. That the following 2026 budget transfer be made within the Highway Department accounts to provide funding for lease payments on Enterprise vehicles. Funds shall be transferred from Project HAD Capital Equipment (Account No. H0990100 499900):

<u>Increase Revenue:</u>	
DM513000 350310	\$110,000.00

<u>Increase Expenditure:</u>	
DM513000 223400	\$110,000.00

Section 2. That the following 2026 budget transfer within the Highway Department accounts to provide funding for various annual lease payments. Funds shall be transferred from Project HAD Capital Equipment (Account No. H0990100 499900):

<u>Increase Revenue:</u>	
DM513000 350310	\$610,832.00

<u>Increase Expenditure:</u>	
DM513000 223300	\$610,832.00

Section 3. This resolution shall take effect immediately.

Moved by Legislator Nortz, seconded by Legislator Leviker, and adopted on the 6th day of January, 2026.

RESOLUTION NO. 12 - 2026

**RESOLUTION TO SET A PUBLIC HEARING WITH REFERENCE TO
ADOPTION OF A NEW SHORT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FORM (SEAF)
FOR AGRICULTURALLY VIABLE LAND UNDER AG DISTRICT #6 WITH “UNLISTED
ACTION” DESIGNATIONS UNDER SEQRA AND A COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT
WITH NYSDAM FOR A COORDINATED REVIEW OF SAME**

Introduced by Legislator Thomas Osborne, Chair of the Finance & Rules Committee.

WHEREAS, the Lewis County Legislature administers the Agricultural District Program pursuant to Article 25-AA of the New York State Agriculture and Markets Law; and

WHEREAS, the creation, modification, consolidation, or termination of Agricultural Districts is subject to review under the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA); and

WHEREAS, the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets and Lewis County have proposed a cooperative agreement (MOU) establishing procedures for coordinated SEQRA review and the use of a new Short Environmental Assessment Form (SEAF) specifically for Agricultural Districts relating to unlisted actions as defined under SEQRA; and

WHEREAS, the Lewis County Legislature desires to conduct a public hearing to receive comments on the proposed adoption of the new Short Environmental Assessment Form and related SEQRA cooperative agreement for the Agricultural District Program in Lewis County;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, as follows:

Section 1. The Lewis County Board of Legislators hereby sets a public hearing to be held on February 3rd, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. for the purpose of receiving public comment on the adoption of a new Short Environmental Assessment Form for “unlisted actions” related to agricultural districts in Lewis County and a SEQRA cooperative agreement (MOU) with NYSDAM for the Lewis County Agricultural District Program.

Section 2. This resolution shall take effect immediately.

Moved by Legislator Hanno, seconded by Legislator Lyndaker, and adopted on the 6th day of January, 2026.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Legislator Nortz reported that Fort Drum is one of nine locations in running to house a small nuclear reactor which would provide all the power necessary for Fort Drum. He would like to see the board adopt a resolution in support of this potential project at Fort Drum. This year the United States Ski Team is being sponsored by the 10th Mountain Division and will have a patch on their uniforms. The Alpine Express Bus Run is continuing to grow with additional marketing being done. In November there were 183 rides and in December it increased to 397 riders. Birnie Bus is purchasing 3 new 22 passenger buses for potential growth of routes. The Planning and Community Development Department has done a good job.

There being no other business to come before the Board, Legislator Frost moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:26 p.m., seconded by Legislator Nellenback, and carried.