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**LEWIS COUNTY BOARD OF LEGISLATORS  
FINANCE & RULES COMMITTEE MEETING  
March 31, 2026**

**Present:**

Legislator Jessica Moser, Chair  
Legislator Jeffrey Nellenback, Vice Chair  
Legislator Herbert Frost III  
Legislator Thomas Osborne  
Legislator Barry Lyndaker

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**CALL TO ORDER**

Legislator Moser called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM

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**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Motion: Legislator Frost moved to approve the minutes of February 24, 2026, Finance & Rules Committee meeting as submitted.

Motion seconded by Legislator Lyndaker and adopted.

Vote: AYE – 4    NAY – 0        Recuse/Abstain – Legislator Moser

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**Health Insurance Updates**

Presenter: *Suzie Philips, Representative of Gilroy, Keirnan & Gilroy*

Suzie Philips, presented an overview of the County’s health plan renewal and budget projections. As of February 2026, the plan is operating at a near break-even point with a 100% loss ratio and a minimal deficit. Several upcoming changes were highlighted, including a switch in Pharmacy Benefit Manager to ProAct (projected to save approximately \$1.1 million over two years), a transition of the plan year to align with the calendar year, and implementation of a new wellness program with incentives.

Actuarial projections from Milliman, based on several years of claims data, indicate an expected premium increase of approximately 11.2% for a seven-month plan period (June–December 2026). This “middle-of-the-road” estimate is recommended to maintain financial stability, with equal likelihood of actual costs being higher or lower. It was noted that recent

cost-saving measures and a stable reserve fund of approximately \$3.05 million support this approach. The recommendation is to adopt the projected increase, maintain reserve levels, and revisit projections later in 2026 for the 2027 plan year.

## **Policy Committee Updates**

Presenter: *Caitlyn Smith, Director of Human Resources*

An update was provided on the work of the revitalized policy review committee, which has established regular meetings and operating guidelines. The committee recently completed extensive updates to the County's Workplace Violence Policy and Tuition Reimbursement Policy, both of which had not been formally reviewed since 2003 and 2007, respectively.

The revised Workplace Violence Policy has been expanded into a comprehensive prevention program aligned with New York State requirements, emphasizing risk identification, prevention, training, and enhanced safety measures such as building assessments, incident tracking, and coordination with the Sheriff's Office for training.

Updates to the Tuition Reimbursement Policy focus on improving recruitment, retention, and workforce development by increasing financial benefits, expanding eligibility to include certificates and broader career opportunities, and revising service and repayment requirements.

Drafts of both policies have been distributed for review and will be brought forward for formal adoption. The committee is also currently working on additional policies related to fleet safety, driver compliance, and drug and alcohol testing, with plans to present those later in the year.

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## **DRAFT RESOLUTIONS**

### **Draft Resolution No. 1**

Authorization to appropriate \$275,000 from the 2026 Fund Balance to cover unanticipated increases in electric utility costs across County buildings. Funds will be allocated to multiple departmental electric account lines, as identified by the Buildings and Grounds Director, to ensure sufficient coverage for the remainder of the fiscal year. Any unused funds will be returned to the Fund Balance at year-end. *Legislator Frost proposed amending this draft resolution to \$92,000 quarterly that way it can be monitored closely, all agreed.*

Motion: Legislator Moser moved that this draft resolution be forwarded to the full Board of Legislators for action.

Motion was seconded by Legislator Lyndaker and adopted.

Vote: AYE – 5    NAY – 0        Recuse/Abstain – None

## **Draft Resolution No. 2**

Fixing the date of a public hearing on Introductory Local Law No. 4-2026, “A Local Law Continuing an Additional Mortgage Tax for Mortgages on Real Property Situated in Lewis County.” The public hearing is scheduled for May 5, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. in the Lewis County Board of Legislators’ Chambers at the Courthouse in Lowville, New York.

Motion: Legislator Moser moved that this draft resolution be forwarded to the full Board of Legislators for action.

Motion was seconded by Legislator Frost and carried.

Vote: AYE –5 NAY –0 Recuse/Abstain -None

## **Draft Resolution No. 3**

Appointment of Mark O’Connor of Lowville to the Lewis County Industrial Development Agency Board of Directors to fill a vacancy created by a prior resignation. The appointment will be effective April 8, 2026, and will serve at the pleasure of the Board of Legislators. *Legislator Nellenback voiced his concern that there was no resume provided or interview done as he isn’t familiar with this individual. He would like to make sure that process is followed.*

Motion: Legislator Moser moved that this draft resolution be forwarded to the full Board of Legislators for action.

Motion was seconded by Legislator Osborne and carried.

Vote: AYE –5 NAY –0 Recuse/Abstain -None

## **Draft Resolution No. 4**

Authorization to hold a public hearing on May 5, 2026, to solicit community input on potential 2026 NYS Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding applications for projects related to community development, economic development, and public facilities. The hearing fulfills required citizen participation requirements and will inform the County’s submission of grant applications of up to \$1,000,000 per project.

Motion: Legislator Moser moved that this draft resolution be forwarded to the full Board of Legislators for action.

Motion was seconded by Legislator Nellenback and carried.

Vote: AYE –5 NAY –0 Recuse/Abstain -None

## **Draft Resolution No. 5**

Authorization to hold a second public hearing for the Lewis County Imminent Threat Program CDBG Project #636IT566-25. The hearing, scheduled for May 5, 2026, at the Lewis County Courthouse, will provide residents with an opportunity to comment on the accomplishments and administration of the \$274,710 program, in compliance with NYS CDBG citizen participation requirements.

Motion: Legislator Moser moved that this draft resolution be forwarded to the full Board of Legislators for action.

Motion was seconded by Legislator Lyndaker and carried.

Vote: AYE – 5    NAY – 0            Recuse/Abstain – None

## **Draft Resolution No. 6**

Approval of an 11% increase in health insurance premiums for all three Lewis County Health Plan options (excluding Medicare-eligible retirees), effective June 1, 2026. The increase is recommended by the Plan Administrator, County, and Hospital management teams, based on actuarial analysis by Milliman, to ensure the fund can sustain claims and maintain a stable balance.

Motion: Legislator Moser moved that this draft resolution be forwarded to the full Board of Legislators for action.

Motion was seconded by Legislator Frost and carried.

Vote: AYE – 5    NAY – 0            Recuse/Abstain – None

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## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Rising Demand, Limited Capacity: Addressing the Need for Expanded Grant Support**

Presenter: *Timothy Hunt, County Manager*

An overview was provided on the increasing reliance on grant funding across County departments to offset local tax dollars. Since 2020, both the number and complexity of grant opportunities have grown significantly, alongside rising project costs and increased demand from municipalities. In 2025, the Planning Department submitted 45 grant applications and secured 20 awards totaling approximately \$8.1 million.

Due to expanding needs, including support for the Lewis County Health System, the Village of Lowville's Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI), and local infrastructure projects, the current grant staff is at capacity. To address this, a proposal was presented to create an

additional grant administrator position. Funding for this role would be offset through administrative fees and a proposed Memorandum of Understanding with the Lewis County Health System, under which the County would provide grant writing services for an annual fee of \$85,000.

Legislators expressed support for the initiative, noting the potential to increase external funding and reduce reliance on local taxes, while also suggesting a future review to assess staffing needs and overall effectiveness.

### **Motion No. 1**

Authorize the establishment of an interdepartmental partnership between the Lewis County Health System and the Lewis County Planning and Community Development Department for grant writing, development, and administration services, outlining the terms and scope of services at an annual cost of approximately \$85,000 to the Health System; further amending the County Compensation Plan to create one full-time Grant Manager position with a salary range of \$58,000 to \$82,552 annually.

Moved by Legislator Moser, seconded by Legislator Nellenback and adopted.

Vote: AYE – 5    NAY – 0            Recuse/Abstain – None

### **Motion No. 2**

Authorize three Intermunicipal Agreements between the County and the Village of Lowville for NYS Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) projects C1003375 (Veteran’s Park Improvements), C1003376 (Downtown Branding and Wayfinding Strategy), and C1003374 (State Street Revitalization), including provisions for reimbursement administration whereby the Village will submit requests to NYS and remit administrative reimbursements to the County Planning & Community Development Department, not to exceed 20% of each project’s total cost.

Moved by Legislator Moser, seconded by Legislator Frost and adopted.

Vote: AYE – 5    NAY – 0            Recuse/Abstain - None

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## **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

At 1:45 PM Legislator Moser moved to go into Attorney Client privileged session to discuss potential litigation and or negotiations of an existing contract, seconded by Legislator Frost and adopted. Legislator Moser invited all legislators, County Attorney, County Manager, Deputy County Manager, and Clerk of the Board to join.

At 2:06 PM Legislator Moser moved to enter regular session, seconded by Legislator Lyndaker and adopted.

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## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Committee, Legislator Moser moved to adjourn the meeting at 2:07 PM.

Motion seconded by Legislator Nellenback and carried.

Vote: AYE – 5    NAY – 0            Recuse/Abstain - None

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Respectfully submitted,  
*Cassandra Moser*  
Clerk of the Board