

GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

November 18, 2025

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

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

Legislator Moroughan moved to approve the October 21st committee meetings as submitted, seconded by Legislator Kalamas, and carried.

Rail Trail Acquisition & Next Steps – Jackie Mahoney, Director of Recreation, Forestry & Parks Department

Jackie Mahoney began by stating that the next step would be to get an overview of existing conditions. This would include creating GIS Basemap showing parcel data, adjoining landowners, roadways and crossings, utilities, soils, topography, and arial assessments. Then there would be a Desktop Assessment which would include ecological and endangered species, ground and surface water conditions, wetlands and floodplains, historic resources, invasive species, and adjoining use. Finally, a Field Assessment would be completed which would include structural assessments, significant constraints, and crossing locations.

There will be many opportunities for public participation throughout the process including steering committee meetings, at least six of them. Stakeholder engagement will be had through our website; stakeholder focus groups which are small meetings with municipalities and clubs; adjacent property outreach, specific for landowners to discuss issues; virtual outreach through podcasts, surveys, and social media; and in-person events at community meetings and town board meetings. The public participation piece is the highest cost of the Master Plan.

The Destination Inventory and Analysis will include parks, schools, town centers, community centers with trail-oriented development and connections. Trail Design Considerations and Route Recommendations will look at a long-term trail map and future connections by developing design guides and plan. Cost Estimates and Implementation Plan will show cost estimates by area, an implementation plan, Trail operation and maintenance guide, and emergency preparedness guide. This process will likely be at least a year before a Master Plan is presented. The goal is to make sur that there is as much community involvement as possible.

Short Term Rental Law updates – Joan McNichol, County Attorney and Eric Virkler, County Treasurer

The presentation covered history of Short-Term Rental Legislation in Lewis County, current data & statistics; recent NYS Legislation resulting in Lewis County Changes; opting in versus opting out; recent steps; and recommended actions. The history showed that Lewis County initiated a five percent bed/occupancy tax in 2004 with enabling legislation under NYS Tax Law 1202-V. An Amendment was made in 2019 addressing Short-Term Rentals

(STR's) intending for Airbnb collection, however it was never executed. The County began identifying unregistered STR's informally and in 2024, an outside contractor helped expand registrations. The Treasurer manually tracks all properties with Occupancy Tax certificates and receives regular reports from registrants.

There are currently 23 hotels/motels/Bed & Breakfasts and about 110 Short Term Rental Units (STRU's) registered under the local law. An estimated 100 to 150 Short Term Rentals remain unregistered. Annual Occupancy Tax being collected is \$124,000 through August 2025. From 2022 through 2024 it ranged from \$165,000 to \$175,000 each year.

The 2024-2025 legislation established the NYS STRU Registry and updated property & Tax laws. Counties must register STRUs unless they opt out by June 22, 2026. STRUs must register to stay listed on platforms. Registration requires safety, insurance, and local compliance, which hosts attest to their requirements. Currently the County is waiving registration fees but could change that decision in the future. Hosts and booking services must keep 2-year records; registrations are valid for 2 years.

The recommendation is for Lewis County to opt-in because of several reasons. One is so the municipality becomes a State-covered entity for STRU oversight. STRU registrations must meet codes and safety requirements. Online booking services will be required to report activity. Hosts must register, attest to compliance, submit bed tax, and maintain records. County maintains registry, shares data with local governments, and may coordinate with booking agencies. Attorney General can enforce violations; County can notify Attorney General and conduct its own enforcement. Noncompliance fines are already set.

Opting out requires the county to file a local law by June 22, 2026; however, participation later is possible. The current county registry does not require State codes/safety standards. The county continues collecting occupancy tax from STR's but loses State support for registration and compliance. County must enter voluntary agreements with online booking platforms for local data. County handles its own enforcement of bed tax and filing requirements without State assistance.

Recently the County has taken steps by contracting with Deckard to develop an updated, integrated STRU registry for potential State Opt-in. Deckard is creating an online registration portal, targeting launch in December 2025. The County will register newly identified STRUs and require all existing properties to re-register in the new system. The recommendation to the board is to opt-in to NYS STRU law and registration system; amend local law to align with new State requirements; implement the Deckard STR registry and identify new STRUs; then share registration data with Towns/Villages every 60 days and coordinate with Towns/Villages on zoning and land use for STRUs.

The following draft resolutions were read:

1. Authorizing a three-year elevator service agreement between Buildings & Grounds Department and Elevattitt to service four elevators and one chair lift in the Courthouse Building at a cost of \$12,000 in 2026; \$12,600 in 2027; and \$13,230 in 2028.

AYE 4 NAY 0

2. Amending compensation plan of the Department of Fire and Building Codes to abolish one full-time Senior Code Enforcement Officer position and create one full-time Code Enforcement Officer position effective immediately.
AYE 4 NAY 0
3. Authorizing the budget transfer of \$4,979.52 from Contingency to Emergency Management accounts to cover the cost of one Grain Bin Rescue Kit to be utilized by all Lewis County Fire Departments.
AYE 4 NAY 0
4. Amending compensation plan of the Department of Highway to create two (2) full-time Motor Equipment Operator Trainee positions effective immediately.
AYE 4 NAY 0
5. Authorizing Master Agreement with NYS Department of Transportation for the construction Phase of CR 17 (Woodbattle Road) over Cobb Creek to pay in the first instance, 100% of the cost of construction and inspection phase for the project for portions thereof, with the understanding that qualified costs may be eligible for federal-aid, state-aid, or reimbursement from Bridge NY funds; and to appropriate \$3,356,843.00 in the Capital Bridge Program to facilitate said project.
AYE 4 NAY 0
6. Authorizing Supplemental Agreement No. 1 between Lewis County Highway and Barton & Loguidice to provide additional engineering services for the Design and Construction Phases regarding the bridge replacement project identified as CR 17 (Woodbattle Road) over Cobb Creek for a term of July 2, 2023 through December 31, 2027 for an additional amount not to exceed \$287,000.00.
AYE 4 NAY 0
7. Updating appointments to the Lewis County Rail Trail Advisory Committee and Subcommittees.
AYE 4 NAY 0
8. Reappointing Wendy Moser of Glenfield, NY, as the Lewis County Sportsmen's Representative member of the Region 6 Fish and Wildlife Management Board to serve a two-year term effective January 1, 2026 through December 31, 2027.
AYE 4 NAY 0
9. Authorizing Inter-Municipal agreement(s) for control of snow and ice removal and treatment on certain winter recreation parking facilities with such Towns and Villages as the Lewis County Director of Recreation, Forestry & Parks deems appropriate, in accordance with the rate of \$0.0624 per square foot from the period of October 2025 through April 30, 2026, with an opt out option which needs to be submitted by May 1st of each year.
AYE 4 NAY 0
10. Authorizing the appropriation within the Snowmobile Trails account to reflect the 2025-2026 Snowmobile Trail Grant Award in the amount of \$346,000.
AYE 4 NAY 0

11. Authorizing the budget transfer of \$18,499.00 from within Solid Waste account lines utilizing unspent funds for equipment acquisition to cover the cost of unanticipated vehicle repairs.
AYE 4 NAY 0
12. Reappointing members Mackenzie, Maracchion, and Ortlieb to the Lewis County Traffic Safety Board to serve a three-year term beginning on January 1, 2026 through December 31, 2028.
AYE 4 NAY 0
13. Designating Lawrence L. Dolhof as the Lewis County Responsible Local Official with respect to New York State Department of Transportation projects and naming John Reed, Lewis County Superintendent of Highways, as the alternate.
AYE 4 NAY 0
14. Introductory Local Law No. 8-2025 "A Local Law Amending and Replacing Local Law No. 6-2019: "A Local Law Imposing a Tax on Occupants of Hotel or Motel Rooms and Other Short Term Rentals in Lewis County" and setting the public hearing for December 18th, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.
AYE 4 NAY 0

There being no other business to come before the committee, Legislator Moroughan moved to adjourn at 2:33 p.m., seconded by Legislator Nellenback, and carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Cassandra Moser, Clerk of the Board