

**ALLEGANY COUNTY BOARD OF LEGISLATORS  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**

**May 3, 2022**

**CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Philip G. Stockin called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG:** Chairman Stockin led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**LEGISLATORS PRESENT:** P. Stockin, G. Barnes, J. Burdick, P. Curran (*left at noon*), A. Cyr (*left at noon*), K. Demick, D. Fanton, G. Hanchett, B. Harris, S. Havey, D. Healy, J. Ricci (*arrived at 9:39 a.m.*), J. Ricketts-Swales, D. Root (Absent: Rumfelt)

**OTHERS PRESENT:** T. Boyde, A. Carrow, K. Hooker (*left at noon*), C. Jones, C. Knapp, B. Riehle, T. Ross,

Chairman Stockin welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Houghton College's sixth president, Dr. Wayne D. Lewis. Dr. Lewis replaced President Shirley Mullen who retired last year.

**Greeting by Houghton College President**

President Lewis welcomed the Legislators and others, noting that they are delighted to host us. President Lewis thanked Board members for their leadership and service and indicated that Houghton College wants to partner with the County and serve in any way they can.

Legislator Dwight "Mike" Healy asked about enrollment. Dr. Lewis stated that there are currently 75 students enrolled in Houghton's Buffalo campuses. The Buffalo campuses (Buffalo-East Side and Buffalo-West Side) offer four different Associate Degree Programs in Business, Criminal Justice, Liberal Arts, and Psychology. Dr. Lewis indicated that one of their top priorities is to grow the Buffalo campuses to have an enrollment of 300-500 students within five years. Dr. Lewis noted that depending on Pell and TAP awards, it is possible to receive a debt-free education. They also provide tutoring, textbooks, bus transportation, and laptops at no additional cost to the student. Chairman Stockin suggested clicking on "Buffalo Commencement" on Houghton's website to hear some touching stories and the positive impact that Houghton College is having in the community.

Houghton's main campus currently has 721 students, which is the smallest enrollment at Houghton's Allegany County campus ever. The college's top priority is growing this campus. Dr. Lewis indicated that enrollment should be up around 1,200 students. Dr. Lewis stated that it is such a privilege to serve at Houghton College. Dr. Lewis looks forward to working with Allegany County officials and would be happy to host us at Houghton College any time.

## **EDUCATIONAL RETREAT – PROJECTS AND PRIORITIES**

### **Development**

Chairman Stockin invited Planning & Economic Development Committee Chair Debra Root to provide an overview of where we are with a Development Department. Legislator Root stated that we have a fully functioning Planning Department and Employment & Training Department that are up and running; however, we do not have a Development Department that is up and running. We also do not have a County employee serving as a Development Director, and we need to create and fill the position of Director of Economic Development. Legislator Root hopes that they will be ready to make that request at the May 18 Planning & Economic Development Committee meeting. Legislator Root noted that they have reinstated the advisory committee, and they are in the process of updating the local law for both the Planning Department and the Economic Development Department. They also hope to add a Deputy to the Economic Development Director. Legislator Root also hopes to present these items at the May Planning & Economic Development Committee meeting.

County Administrator Carissa Knapp briefly described the process to go from a Director of Development position to Director of Economic Development, noting that the request has to be submitted to the state for approval. The Director of Development focused on the IDA and helping them get off the ground, and now we are looking in different directions and really want to focus on economic development. Legislator Root asserted that we need to look at the future for Allegany County and create a full, robust Economic Development Department, and give them the support they need moving forward.

There was a brief discussion regarding whom the new Economic Development positions will report to. Administrator Knapp clarified by saying other than the County Attorney and Clerk of the Board, all department heads report directly to the County Administrator, and they also have a specific committee of jurisdiction. The new positions will also be working closely with the new Deputy County Administrator who will be a communications specialist.

Legislator Dwight “Mike” Healy asked about advertising for the Economic Development Director, and Administrator Knapp noted that we need to be able to define what that person does prior to advertising for the position. Until the local law has been completed, and you know what the person is going to do, we cannot really advertise. Administrator Knapp stated that we should be able to hold interviews prior to the contract with Alfred State College ending in August.

Legislator Healy talked about some of the improvements that Batavia has experienced over the last several years, and that we really need to hire someone that has “some skin in the game” – someone that just has to win, noting that perhaps there could be some type of incentive if we see positive results. Legislator Gretchen Hanchett stated at the last District II meeting, they mentioned the County hiring someone on a commission basis. County Administrator Knapp stated that the majority of our department heads are appointed to a four-year term that follows the Board’s term; however, they will be sure to provide some flexibility so the County is not locked in. Administrator Knapp stated that we are not just talking about one person, as the Director will be supported by staff that can also work on things. Maybe the Director will be a “wheeler and dealer” or perhaps we will need to contract with someone to do the “wheeling and dealing.” Legislator Healy remarked that he assumes that there are firms

that can handle that, and Administrator Knapp stated that we have to get the staff established too.

Legislator Root stated that she wanted to bring the new Board members up to date, noting that it is important to talk about how we are moving forward. It takes time, and we want to do it right, rather than rushing through it and possibly having to go back. Legislator Adam Cyr supported Legislator Root's statements and talked about the importance of taking things one step at a time.

Legislator Root asserted that we have to staff the Economic Development Office if we are going to get serious, and we have to have a vision for what we believe economic development will look like. If we are looking for a manufacturing company that is going to employ 100 people, we may be kidding ourselves. It takes steps to get where we want to be, and you cannot just bring in a business without the infrastructure. Legislator Jennifer Ricketts-Swales voiced her support, noting that they need to be measurable steps. Having specific goals in front of us all the time will keep things in line, and that is what we need to keep going. If things do not support our main goals, then we know we need to refocus. Legislator Hanchett mentioned that PR could be just as important as housing and infrastructure. We have to get that hope and information out there.

### **Filling Open Allegany County Positions**

Legislator Root talked about looking at job descriptions for a communications person too. Much of our focus and attention has gone to dealing with COVID-related issues over the last two years. Now we need to look at goals and move forward. Administrator Knapp indicated that she has done three or four rounds of interviews for the Deputy County Administrator position. She made two offers; however, they were both turned down. The caliber of applicants is just not there. Mrs. Knapp indicated that she also needs a Deputy to help with administrative issues. We could re-advertise, but we have been working on it constantly. Legislator Hanchett suggested using a recruiter, but Administrator Knapp was not sure how much that would help. Deputy County Administrator Tim Boyde remarked that if you look at national recruiters, many jobs are being reposted, as the caliber of applicants just is not there. We need to have a reason for people to come here. Mr. Boyde also commented that Nick Mazza, recruiter and former Livingston County Administrator, had recruited him, and Mr. Mazza has suggested growing our talent locally.

Legislator Root stated that our Employment & Training Office recently posted that there are over 400 jobs in Allegany County, and they have been researching how you fill these positions. You almost have to look at people that are already employed by Allegany County or working somewhere else. Legislator Root indicated that she believes the salary study will be huge in getting anyone to come here. Legislator Hanchett mentioned one of the classes she took at the NYSAC Conference challenged participants to look at how they are recruiting and talked about job descriptions and how people look at their job now. Legislator Ricketts-Swales said that we need to promote some of the other benefits to living here. If we can somehow offer something beyond a salary, like paying for someone's master's degree, that might make a difference. Administrator Knapp stated that some of those are not alternatives when you are using taxpayer money. We have done some brochures for some of our higher-level positions in the past; however, we do not do that for every position. We also target local as well as other

colleges. Legislator Janice Burdick asked if anyone within the County might work, noting that perhaps they could work into the position and be trained. They already live here and have a connection to Allegany County. Although they might not be the best person, they may be better than nothing. Pick someone that is trainable. Administrator Knapp stated that is a great career path, and that she as well as several others started that way. Administrator Knapp stated that some union employees are reluctant to leave the security of union positions especially if benefits are not as good. County Treasurer Ross stated that she also worked her way up. The benefits used to be better, but that is no longer true. In some cases, you lose some benefits when you go from some union positions to management. Ms. Ross also stated that some young people of today hate government. We have been fortunate to have some great people here; it is convincing them that it is the place to stay. Deputy County Administrator Boyde stated that they had identified several candidates to go through the NACo Leadership program; but it is very time consuming. We need to figure out who is an up and comer, and then figure out how to make them ready. Legislator Hanchett suggested initially making the position a lesser job so it can eventually grow into something more. Administrator Knapp stated that the Deputy County position has never really existed. The position was created before former County Administrator John Margeson retired for training purposes, but we could really use one now.

### **Specific Development-Related Projects:**

Chairman Stockin asked what specific development projects the group would like to look at:

1. The waterline, currently operated by IDA, should be studied and reviewed. Develop a long-term plan for water.
2. Former Legislator Kevin LaForge was heading up a study on a Countywide water system before he left. That may still be something that should be considered for the Crossroads area.
3. Legislator Gretchen Hanchett suggested looking at infrastructure. Look at smaller bites we can make towards infrastructure and making sites shovel ready.
4. Legislator Healy suggested looking at previous I-86 corridor studies and possibly do a new one. We need to make the most of what we have, and if we ever want to attract a major employer or manufacturing company, we need to look at acquiring land. Chairman Stockin agreed and said developing I-86 is a big one.

## **PUBLIC SAFETY**

### **EMS**

Chairman Stockin announced that we plan to have another Committee of the Whole devoted to EMS in the near future. A resolution creating the EMS Advisory Board has been drafted and will be presented soon. The EMS Advisory Board members are appointed by the Chairman of the Board and confirmed by Board Resolution. Chairman Stockin asked if anyone has suggestions on members for that Board, please submit those suggestions to him. County Administrator Knapp stated that several Board members have been going to some meetings, and they may have a good idea of who might be good members. The membership can be between 5 and 21 members. Some categories of members include a representative from the

following: medical field, 911, ambulance, hospital, doctor, etc. We need to find people that are knowledgeable and willing to put the time in.

Chairman Stockin suggested the County might want to consider applying for a municipal CON (Certificate of Need) for Countywide ambulance. Administrator Knapp indicated that there are several ambulance services in Allegany County, and many are struggling to maintain sufficient volunteers and staff. Each ambulance company has a limited area of operations under their own CON, and MTS has a CON that covers the entire County. Under a municipal CON, the County could assist in coordinating and aiding existing ambulance services. A municipal CON would also allow the County to prepare for any worst-case scenarios where gaps in service become significant enough that the County would need to consider stepping in with personnel or other additional assistance. Several counties have gone to a municipal CON, but there is still lots to do.

Legislator Dwight Fanton asked if we compensate anyone for taking EMS-related classes. Administrator Knapp stated that Office of Emergency Services Assistant Director Bonnie VanHousen is focused on training, and we do subsidize for some things. We will have to look into how far we can go with that.

Legislator Kevin "Fred" Demick stated if the County had a CON, we could look into providing paramedics or EMTs. We definitely do not want to lose our local ambulances, and we need to fail-safe that. Legislator Demick suggested creating a shared services program, and Legislator Healy indicated that there may even be funding, and Legislator Demick agreed that it should be looked into. Legislator Fanton said let's research it, and see what we can do. It is a lot to ask someone to go to all of those classes and not do anything, and it would be nice to see what we could do.

Legislator Havey talked about a local facility where people could be trained. Some training can occur in the Crossroads building, but it is not adequate for other training. Legislator Demick stated that Alfred State College is also looking into some things.

County Administrator Knapp stated that as we look at our own space needs and buildings, we need to create a long-term plan. We are talking about a DPW building, room at Board of Elections, long-term lease at crossroads where we will have to either vacate or put money into buildings.

Legislator Healy talked about the flow between departments and parking needs. Some departments belong together and some do not. We also need to develop succession and transition plans. Administrator Knapp stated that we went through seven or eight new department heads during the last Board's term, and we will face more. The Probation Director has announced that he plans to retire although that is a tested civil service position. The Sheriff is also up for election and our current Sheriff indicated he is not seeking re-election.

Legislator Fanton mentioned the Maintenance Supervisor, and Mrs. Knapp indicated that she did an exit interview with Mr. Brown yesterday. Legislator Fanton stated that we have added several buildings since Mr. Brown started, and the position could grow into its own department. Legislator Fanton also suggested the possibility of creating a Deputy position that would have oversight over this position.

## **Building Security**

IT Director Keith Hooker has been doing a lot of work on the building for security – software, swipe cards, etc. Administrator Knapp said that the Building Security sub-committee suggested adding cameras, door access cards, etc. IT Director Hooker has been looking into it, and it may be a good use of American Rescue Plan (ARP) Funds

## **Recess**

A brief recess was held from approximately 10:20 a.m. to 10:32 a.m.

## **COUNTY PROPERTY**

### **Willets Avenue Properties in Belmont (Episcopal Church Properties)**

Allegany County took ownership of the property at 8, 10, and 12 Willets Avenue in Belmont when they purchased it from the Episcopal Diocese in 2019 (Res. No. 137-19).

County DPW crews remodeled and upgraded the back building (Recreation Hall) for the Board of Elections, and they did a great job. It has worked especially well for early voting. Administrator Knapp explained that when we purchased the property from the Episcopal Diocese, they were not interested separating the parcels, and we have been exploring a couple of different options. Selling one of the parcels could make it much more difficult for us to use the area the Board of Elections occupies. Our Social Services Department is interested in moving the Child Advocacy Center (CAC) into the parsonage. We currently rent space in Olean and Wellsville for the CAC. Representatives from our Public Works and Social Services Departments toured the building along with Administrator Knapp and a state inspector, and they came up with some ideas. A Code Enforcement Officer also did a walk through and made some additional suggestions. Legislator Janice Burdick asked if Social Services Commissioner Edna Kayes planned to use one of the buildings as a shelter, and Administrator Knapp indicated that she does not. Legislator Fanton asked if federal money could be used for renovation, and Administrator Knapp said yes, it would be a good use of federal money. We have not applied for any other grants. Ardent is our partner, and they help us administer the CAC. They have looked at some grant opportunities and we already received some grant funding for the CAC Program. Administrator Knapp confirmed that parking is probably adequate and DPW resurfaced the parking lot not too long ago. We also have parking at the Baptist church. If necessary, parking could also be added on the Whitney side of the property.

Legislators discussed the attractiveness (or lack thereof) of the church and what it could be used for. Administrator Knapp indicated that we would have to seriously renovate, sell, or tear the building down. It is probably not sellable, and she prefers not to tear it down. Administrator Knapp talked about being a good neighbor and finding a constructive use for the building. Legislator Root suggested that it might make a good visitor center, Chairman Stockin indicated it might make a good meeting space, and Deputy County Administrator Boyde suggested that it might make a good place for training our Board of Elections people. Legislator Demick stated that it might make a good training center for EMS, and Legislator Ricketts-Swailes suggested creating a small business development area. County Administrator Knapp

mentioned the requirements to bring the church up to code for a training center versus office space might be different, but these are all things that can be investigated.

### **County Space Needs**

County Administrator Knapp stated that we do not have a plan for the empty space on the Third Floor of the County Office Building (Old Jail) and asked Board members what they would like to use that space for. Mrs. Knapp noted that she is not pleased with how they set things up there, and she is not sure that either office (Health Department and Public Defender) is well suited to the Third Floor. Chairman Stockin mentioned the recreation yard up by the old Jail, and Legislator Fanton stated that a study was done, and they determined that the current structure could not support a roof. Legislator Healy asked how many square feet are currently not being used, and County Administrator Knapp indicated that she doesn't know the square footage, but she will find out.

Legislator Healy noted that the old Belmont School is still out there too. Administrator Knapp stated that we are required to have many of our offices within the village because we are the County seat. We would need a public referendum to move some offices outside of the Village so looking at real estate within the village is always a good idea. One thing that makes it easier is that the infrastructure is already in place.

Legislator Burdick remarked that if the Public Works Administrative Staff moves out of the County Office Building, we would have that space to use. County Administrator Knapp noted that most of the interior walls are adjustable and can be moved or changed. Legislator Healy asked if we ever received the outstanding grant money from the state, and Mrs. Knapp confirmed that the state paid all of the back grant commitments.

Legislator Root mentioned that we may need to put another Space Needs Committee together, and Administrator Knapp agreed that we probably do need a sub-committee that can specifically focus on that area and help develop some long-term strategic plans.

### **Land Bank**

County Administrator Knapp noted that a few people had listed the Land Bank as something they would like to talk about today. Mrs. Knapp noted that both the Director of Planning and she are on the Land Bank Board of Directors. The best way to handle Land Bank discussion is to forward any questions, concerns, or ideas you have regarding the Land Bank directly to County Administrator Knapp, she will research it, and then we can have a meeting devoted to Land Bank discussion. Legislator John Ricci stated that there are millions of dollars in the state budget for Land Banks, and Administrator Knapp stated that the Land Bank Board is getting some ideas around to come to this Board with those ideas and requests.

### **Recreation**

Legislator Root stated that the Allegany County Trails Task Force has been revitalized and is being chaired by our Assistant Director of Economic Development and Planning Michelle Denhoff. COVID presented a problem, and most of the meetings had to be held via zoom. Previously the different trail groups were splattered all over between the Snowmobile, DEC

Trails, Impact Group, Philips Creek, horse trails, etc. Legislator Root asked how Allegany County could capture something similar to the Hatfield-McCoy Trails in West Virginia. They are a nationally known trail system most popular for its off-highway vehicle trails. The trail system is a multi-county project. Legislator Root also mentioned Lewis County's Snowmobile and ATV Trail Systems, noting that we need to capture something like that and bring economic development to Allegany County. Legislator Root said that the Trails Task Force has been a great advisory committee where they have been able to work with each other, rather than everyone working in their own silo. The advisory board recommended hiring a full-time Recreation Director to look at outdoor recreation opportunities. Our Planning and Development Specialist Nick Arquette was plotting walking and snowmobile trails on a map and was working on a map to connect trails between towns and to neighboring counties. Mr. Arquette was doing a great job, but unfortunately, he recently left to move closer to his family, and we were very sorry to see him leave. The Ralph Wilson Grant for \$50,000 (*Accepted by Res. No. 140-20*) has been a huge help and was being used to see how those different trails can be connected. They also looked at using railroad beds, facilities, titles, who owned them, etc. At one time, the County gave many of the titles to the landowners, and in hindsight, we probably shouldn't have done that. They were looking at talking to some of those landowners to see how we could get back in. Legislator Root also mentioned that there is a Trail Town Initiative that was established in 2021 where the Letchworth Gateway Villages (LGV) will be working with municipalities in Southern Monroe, Livingston, Wyoming, and Allegany Counties to establish a network of Trail Town hubs along the Genesee Valley Greenway and Genesee River corridor. The project aims to boost outdoor tourism, create more resilient communities, and support the region's post-COVID recovery.

Legislator Root stated that ATVs could be a huge revenue gain, but it might be the heaviest lift to get it going. They have been looking at registering ATVs, and we need a separate group just for that. We are losing a lot of money in registration fees and sales tax. Lewis County is getting \$17 million in sales tax. Some of our towns have adopted local laws allowing ATVs to drive on town roads, and we have been looking at options for the County. Legislator Root mentioned a bill in the Senate (S2709) and Assembly (A4957) that amends the definition of all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) to include certain vehicles of up to 70" long and 1500 pounds. The bills were forwarded to Transportation for consideration. The bills raise the defined weight of an ATV from 1,000 pounds to 1,500 pounds of dry weight to allow certain ATVs to be registered in New York. Legislator Root indicated that she talked with Assembly Giglio's office yesterday, and that Assembly Giglio has signed a similar bill, and the main difference is in width and poundage. Lewis County ended up hiring a lobbyist to work on this. We met with representatives from Lewis County at the NYSAC Conference, and they want other counties to know how serious they are. We are missing out on an economic development driver, and it could make a huge impact. There is opposition downstate for this. Legislator Healy asked if the intent of the law is to treat ATVs like snowmobiles, and Legislator Root said that there is another bill in the Assembly to create a fund similar to the snowmobile registration and do the same things for ATVs.

County Administrator Knapp talked about the recommendations from the task force. The Recreation Director could be working on things other than just trails such as Rushford Beach. Legislator Healy talked about a County Park in the Belvidere area, noting that it went by the wayside, and they ended up doing something closer to Wellsville. Administrator Knapp mentioned that Director of Planning Kier Dirlam believes we should be looking for property to make into a County park. We have not identified an area yet, but that could certainly fall under



the Recreation Director too. Legislator Kevin “Fred” Demick mentioned the forestlands, and Administrator Knapp stated that we are limited to what can be done in the reforested areas. Legislator Root stated that they do have some figures that show there is potential for revenue especially for local stores, gas stations, etc. if we were to create a County park. It would be a key attraction for Allegany County. People come here to enjoy the forestlands. Chairman Stockin said the state is not excited for ATVs in forestlands, and Administrator Knapp mentioned that we also have a local law prohibiting motorized vehicles in forestlands.

Administrator Knapp stated that we also have many waterways that are accessible. Legislator Root also mentioned the Genesee River Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP), which puts together plans to guide development decisions that address public access, recreational opportunities, tourism, and economic development, and identifies ways to sustainably capitalize on the region’s natural and cultural assets. The Genesee River Wilds, Genesee Valley Greenway, and Genesee River Blueway, and the Wag Trail were also mentioned. There are grants available for some of these things, and this would be another area where a Recreation Director could be very helpful. County Administrator Knapp asked what we as a County can do to augment this. Legislator Gretchen Hanchett stated that it would be important to develop recreation for all four seasons and mentioned snowshoeing. Legislator Ricketts-Swales indicated that one of the obstacles for the Greenway is the property that was sold, and the property was either made into farmland, and some of it even washed away.

## **Rushford Lake**

County Administrator Knapp updated Board members on Rushford Lake noting that they met with the Lake District to discuss issues as we only lease the land. We tentatively plan to replace the bathhouses two to three years down the road. We need to look at the foundation and make plans. We are replacing the lightning, and a lot of the plumbing. We are also painting and doing some cosmetic things. We are looking at using the WNY logo and colors as well as credit to the Lake District. We purchased two new lifeguard chairs, and put more sand in, as well as some work in the parking lot and gate. Administrator Knapp noted that there is a short timeframe when things can be worked on because things were too wet. Chairman Stockin stated that there are areas that feed into the lake. If we could get clearance, we could scoop out gravel, which would help the County and clear out the channel, but we would need to get permission from the DEC.

## **PERSONNEL**

### **Grant Writer**

County Administrator Knapp explained the difference between two different Grant Writer positions. Much of what we do is grant driven. We need one person that can research and apply for grants and see what we can do to find additional funds. The Planning Office does look into this and also helps municipalities to secure grant funding, and we need someone to administer the grant and make sure we are compliant and able to properly complete the required paperwork. Currently we are allowing departments to handle their own grants, and we really need a dedicated person to handle it. Therefore, we need one grant writer that looks for opportunities and one that manages the grants we obtain. Legislator Healy asked if we

could contract for these types of position. Administrator Knapp indicated that we have relied on a few companies, and we have secured a few that way, but they have not been administering those grants, and we definitely do not want to just rely on them. Director of Planning Kier Dirlam is looking at a position in his office to look for grant opportunities, and this would probably fall under the Planning Specialist title. Chairman Stockin indicated that he is not sure that many towns realize the County can help with grant opportunities. Chairman Stockin stated that the Town of Caneadea worked with Kheops, and they ended up administering the grant for them. When Kheops stopped, Caneadea went to Bernie Rotella with Rotella Grant Management out of Sanborn, NY, for a flat fee. Phase 1 and 2 were paid, and then Phase 3 was rejected so Caneadea ended up spending \$2,000 on a grant that was not awarded. Legislator Hanchett talked about paying someone by what he/she does. Legislator Healy asked about bonuses, and Administrator Knapp stated that how you pay County officers is right in the law; however, we will have County Attorney Allison Carrow research that. Chairman Stockin indicated that he believes paying bonuses would be frowned upon.

### **Procurement/Purchasing Person**

Legislator Debra Root asked if we want to look at a procurement/purchasing position down the road. County Treasurer Terri Ross said many things have happened over the years. Purchasing is essential. We have a program with purchasing office supplies that currently runs through Clerk of the Board Riehle's office, and we recently switched to a copy machine program through the Information Technology Department. We currently do that with computer, copiers, supplies, postage, and printers. We do have a procurement policy and go by state law as far as what needs to be followed. It would help to have a dedicated person to take care of some of that. Legislator Healy asked if that should be offered as a shared service, and Treasurer Ross indicated probably not yet; however, we can certainly offer guidance. Attorney Carrow mentioned that there are some differences between the purchasing guidelines between County and Town purchases. It is one thing to offer advice; it is another to go into a shared services agreement especially considering variations in law. This would definitely need a broader conversation. Legislator Healy stated that perhaps the expertise and advice could be a shared service. Legislator Demick mentioned the Piggyback Law, noting that there is a lot to explore there. Attorney Carrow stated that there is a lot of information with purchasing from the standpoint of General Municipal Law, and she briefly described the difference between bids, quotes, and request for proposals (RFP). We would need to know the particulars of different procurement policies. The Piggyback Law was established about 10 years ago, and we are part of it. Some counties indicate that other counties can use their bids, and some counties only offer it to their municipalities. We include it in many of our road materials. We are also involved in some nationwide program. Legislator Demick provided a few examples of when that has worked well. County Treasurer Ross said when you piggyback off someone else, you need to make sure that you get copies of all of the documentation so we are able to provide proof that the right procedures were followed.

We also need to look at internal controls to administer our own purchases and make sure we get the best value. We do have an electronic financial system that could be useful with some controls on purchasing. Legislator Hanchett said it would be good to know how much the County can save by doing these things and make it into a good PR thing.

## **County Fleet**

Legislator Gary Barnes asked if the County has been under any pressure to move our owned and leased vehicles to electric. Administrator Knapp and Treasurer Ross indicated no; however, there have been some conversations that it may be required for our bus fleet down the road. Ardent is currently working with the NYS DOT. Treasurer Ross said that we have a monthly mobility management meeting, and that came up during the last one, and the Ardent Executive Director Carrie Whitwood was going to do more research on it.

For our own fleet, we have moved to a leased fleet, which gives us some flexibility if we needed to go to electric. We would have to build charging stations and everything else. It is not a requirement yet. Ardent is looking at using some federal money to put in charging stations for public use. Legislator Root suggested contacting Southern Tier West (STW), noting that there is money through NYSERDA. Legislator Janice Burdick confirmed that STW sent a notice to all towns regarding available money for charging stations. Chairman Stockin indicated that there are some charging stations at the hotel in Houghton as well as on campus.

## **American Rescue Plan (ARP)**

Legislator Hanchett asked if we have gotten to the point where we know where the American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds can be used. Administrator Knapp stated that the County contracted with Drescher and Malecki (*Res. No. 148-21, dtd 06/14/21*) to help us figure out the best way to use those funds. Many of the departments only put down very small projects. They have been in conserve mode for so many years, it is difficult to see the bigger picture and think about big projects. Administrator Knapp asked what project the Board would like to fund. Legislator Root asked what the timeline is to make that decision. County Treasurer Terri Ross stated that all money has to be committed by the end of 2024, and it all has to be spent by 2026. The time is going to go very fast, and the Board needs to decide how they want to allocate \$9 million. Legislator Havey asked if there are any restrictions on how the money can be spent, and Ms. Ross indicated that there is not. Legislator Healy suggesting investing some of the ARP money, rather than just spending it, noting that we need to invest it to save us money in the future as it may generate more money going forward. Administrator Knapp stated that we really need to look at projects that can be completed by 2026.

## **Capping the Gas Tax**

Legislator Adam Cyr said he believes the County should move forward with capping the gas tax. Many of our businesses are counting on it, and it would really help them. Legislator Cyr asked for a show of hands from those that would support this. Attorney Allison Carrow indicated that we missed the June deadline, and Legislator Cyr indicated that we could get ready to offer this by September. Legislator Gary Barnes indicated that he is generally opposed to this type of thing and does not believe that it makes sense. County Administrator Knapp indicated that it should be placed on the Ways & Means agenda before August so that it can all be hashed out. Legislator Root stated that we need to get more information so that an informed decision can be made. County Treasurer Terri Ross asked what kind of information would they like to see. Administrator Knapp indicated that they already have quite a bit of

information, and Attorney Carrow mentioned that they did some homework back when it was first discussed. Treasurer Ross suggested putting something together that would show how much savings people might see if the tax was capped at both \$2 and \$3/gallon. Legislator Rickett-Swales wondered if any of the smaller counties were doing this. It was noted that the counties were caught off guard as everything happened very quickly. Some of our surrounding counties are offering the cap.

### **Lunch Recess**

A lunch recess was taken from noon until 12:46 p.m. when the group reconvened. Legislators Curran and Cyr had to leave for the day, and IT Director Keith Hooker also had to leave.

### **Attorney/Client Session**

A motion was made by Legislator Fanton, seconded by Legislator Havey, and carried to enter into attorney/client session at 12:49 p.m. Immediately following discussion at 1:58 p.m., a motion was made by Legislator Root, seconded by Legislator Havey, and carried to end the attorney/client session and return to the regular meeting.

### **Future Committee of the Whole Meetings**

Board members agreed that we need additional Committee of the Whole meetings to discuss development, public safety, EMS, and infrastructure. There will be a Committee of the Whole at 3:00 p.m. on Wednesday, June 1, to discuss development, and there will be a Committee of the Whole at 3:00 p.m. on Wednesday, June 8, to discuss EMS.

### **ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 2:00 p.m. on a motion by Legislator Root, seconded by Legislator Havey, and carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Rigby Riehle, Clerk of the Board  
Allegany County Board of Legislators