

Minutes

Administrative Services Committee

**October 19, 2020, 5:00 p.m.**

**Virtual Meeting via Zoom and Live-Streamed for public viewing**

Gerace Office Building, Mayville, NY

Members Present: Scudder, Muldowney, Davis, (Starks & Vanstrom via Zoom)

Others: Tampio, Ames, Dennison, Chagnon, Crow, Abdella, Torres, Button, Nazzaro, Geise

Chairman Scudder called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Approval of Minutes (08/17/2020)

MOVED by Legislator Muldowney, SECONDED by Legislator Vanstrom

*Unanimously Carried*

Privilege of the Floor

Chairman Scudder: We do have one communication that Kathy is going to read for us.

Clerk Tampio: *(Reading comments on behalf of Norm Green, Democratic Election Commissioner)*

*Administrative Services Committee  
Chautauqua County Legislature*

*Committee Members:*

*It is my privilege to endorse current Deputy Election Commissioner Luz Torres to be the next Chautauqua County Democratic Election Commissioner. Luz is a team player who will ensure the Board of Elections continues its leadership in the delivery of election services for Chautauqua County voters.*

*Our county does not follow the pack and while other counties in New York struggle and sometimes fail, we exceed and excel at what we do. Luz Torres has been a big part of that.*

*Examples:*

- *Our county is one of just seven counties in New York State that prints ballots in-house saving the tax-payers nearly \$1 million dollars aggregates since printing started ten years ago. Luz was a co-manager of the ballot printing operation for the county.*

- *When the NYS Attorney General's office investigated all counties in NYS with a US Justice Department Spanish language mandate, our county was the only county investigated not forced to sign a consent order for compliance. Luz has headed up the Spanish language compliance for county elections and has done an excellent job.*
- *While all struggle and some other counties fail, the Board of Elections has successfully recruited all of the inspectors needed to operate its poll sites and Luz has been a big part of that effort.*
- *Luz most recently has headed up the daily receipt of voter registrations, along with her bi- partisan partner Donna Sanderson, and the two have kept up on a daily basis with the incoming registrations completed same day as received. Note that at certain peak times, others in the office have also assisted. Our county leads NYS in same day processing of registrations, saving the board from having to bring in temporary help.*
- *Luz formerly handled the absentee ballot mailing and application area, and while Chautauqua County is not necessarily leading the state in this area, her knowledge of absentees means she will be hitting the ground running, if you confirm her recommendation for Election Commissioner.*

*On behalf of our entire office, we hope you will vote to forward Luz Torres to the entire Legislature body for its approval. Norman P. Green, Commissioner*

Chairman Scudder: Thank you. Was there any other communications?

Clerk Tampio: No, there were no other communications received.

Chairman Scudder: We will close the privilege of the floor and move on to resolutions.

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Proposed Resolution – Amend 2020 Budget Appropriations and Revenues – County Executive’s Office

Mrs. Dennison: Is there anyone there from the County Executive’s Office?

Chairman Scudder: There is not.

Mrs. Dennison: O.K., I can speak to this resolution. As it indicates, previously this year resolution 58-20 – we did a budget amendment at that time to authorize receipt of the grant and to amend the budget for the grant. At that time, we thought that the grant revenue was going to be \$220,778. The grant is actually only half of that and this resolution will decrease the revenue and correspondingly decrease the appropriation budget associated with this grant. So, its still no local share. It’s still 100% grant funded, it’s just that there’s less revenue and less expense with this particular grant.

Chairman Scudder: We are simply accepting less money.

Mrs. Dennison: That’s correct and spending less money.

Chairman Scudder: Thank you, Kathleen. Do you know why the change?

Mrs. Dennison: I don't really have information on that. I was just contacted by the County Executive's office. This grant- we get the money, but the United Way is the one that is actually doing the work, so we have a sub contract with United Way and unfortunately I really can't answer the question of why it was cut in half.

Mr. Button: Kathleen, the grant money- the pool of grant money was changed by the state from the time the original proposal was put out there to the time when the final formulation was made.

Mrs. Dennison: O.K.

Chairman Scudder: Any questions? All in favor say aye? Opposed?

*Unanimously Carried*

Proposed Resolution – Amend 2020 Budget Appropriations – Real Property Tax

Mr. Button: It became necessary here a month or so ago- we had to do some additional software maintenance on our property tax system, which was not originally in our budget, but I'm essentially transferring the money that we would have spent on the auction this year that we didn't have over to the property tax to cover that, so it's a net wash for us.

Chairman Scudder: O.K., questions, comments, concerns? All in favor say aye. Opposed?

*Unanimously Carried*

Proposed Resolution - Authorize Transfer of Tax Foreclosure Property to Chautauqua County Land Bank Corporation

Mr. Abdella: This is a little bit of a matter of the cart before the horse. The Land Bank actually has already conveyed the property in question under the side lot program to a neighboring property owner. This is a vacant lot after a demolition, but it did so without having actually received the deed from the County to do that. So, this is really a housekeeping matter to go ahead and have the county authorize the transfer to the Land Bank, which then will allow the Land Bank to do a corrective deed to confirm a second time the transfer of the property.

Chairman Scudder: So we're going to make it official?

Mr. Abdella: Yes.

Chairman Scudder: Thank you for that explanation. Questions, comments, concerns?

Legislator Muldowney: In that deed they'll join the two properties, right?

Legislator Chagnon: They've already been joined.

Mr. Abdella: The prior deed was flagged by the assessor and per our normal protocol and they've already been merged.

Legislator Muldowney: O.K.

Chairman Scudder: Everybody good? All in favor say aye. Opposed?

*Unanimously Carried*

Proposed Resolution – Denial of Level 3 Communications, LLC Applications for Refunds/Credits of Real Property Taxes Form RP 556 for the 2017- 2018 School Tax Year

Mr. Abdella: This is one of a continuing number of resolutions we've had over the past few years as far as the application primarily by this level three communication. There's been one other tech company who has been continuously, without success, trying to have their fiber optic lines considered non-taxable property and it really has failed at each juncture in the court system. They keep trying to come up with ways to (*inaudible*) the judicial decisions and this is yet another case where they have filed applications for refunds and it would be my recommendation that we deny those applications.

Chairman Scudder: So, basically this is their latest attempt. I've been hearing about this for about 6 or 8 years. Questions, comments, concerns? All in favor? Opposed?

*Unanimously Carried*

Proposed Resolution – Confirm Appointment – Luz Torres (D) Commissioner of Elections

Chairman Scudder: I know she would like to speak to us, so I've invited her to come up front. We did hear the letter from Mr. Green and I think we're all familiar with this resolution, so if you'd like to speak to us, now is your time.

Ms. Torres: Mr. Chairman and Legislators, the committee (*inaudible*) as the future election commissioner and I'm looking forward to working, with your approval, at the Board of Elections bipartisanly with Brian and the rest of the staff as I do now. I've been working there for 7 years right now and did everything from absentees to making ballots and my concern and priority is to the voters. I want everyone to vote, make sure everyone has an opportunity, and to make the office run well and I just learned a lot and I've been there for 7 years and I am qualified to be the next election commissioner.

Chairman Scudder: Anybody have any questions they would like to ask or comments to make?

Legislator Muldowney: You're currently the deputy commissioner?

Ms. Torres: Yes, I am.

Legislator Muldowney: And how long have you been doing that?

Ms. Torres: Two years. Doris Parment left and I became the deputy commissioner to Norm Green and in his absence I've made decisions in his place for anything in the office that needed to be approved. I'm also an office manager- co-office manager bipartisanly and everything we do is bipartisanly.

Chairman Scudder: Thank you. Anybody else? All in favor of the resolution? Opposed?  
*Unanimously Carried*

Discussion – Administrative Code Letter – Steve Abdella

MOVED by Legislator Starks, SECONDED by Legislator Muldowney to adjourn.

*Unanimously Carried (5:22 p.m.)*

Respectfully submitted and transcribed,  
Olivia Ames, Deputy Clerk