

**Members Attending:** Mr. Acres, Mr. Denesha, Mr. Fay, Mr. Forsythe, Mr. Lightfoot, Mr. Perkins, Mr. Reagen, Mr. Sheridan, and Mr. Smithers

**Members Attending via Video:** Mr. Arquiatt, Mr. Burke arrived at 5:32 p.m., Ms. Curran, Ms. Fiacco, Ms. Haggard, and Ms. Terminelli

**Others Attending:** Ruth Doyle, Kelly Pearson, Dylan Soper, Steve Button, Don Chambers, Jay Ulrich, Jason Pfothenauer, Bruce Green and Andrea Montgomery

**1. CALL TO ORDER AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA** – Mr. Acres called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. Mr. Denesha moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Mr. Smithers, and carried by a voice vote with fourteen (14) yes votes, and one (1) absent (Burke).

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – Mr. Perkins moved to approve the September 27<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes, seconded by Mr. Fay, and carried by a voice vote with fourteen (14) yes votes, and one (1) absent (Burke).

### **3. HIGHWAY – DON CHAMBERS**

A. Determining that the Purchase of Real Property and Construction of a New Truck Equipment Garage and a New Salt/Sand Storage Building in the Town of Potsdam in St. Lawrence County, New York and will not Result in any Significant Adverse Environmental Impact (Res) – Mr. Sheridan moved to forward this resolution to full Board, seconded by Mr. Forsythe and Mr. Fay.

Mr. Burke arrived at 5:32 p.m.

Motion carried by a voice vote with fourteen (14) yes votes, and one (1) abstention (Perkins).

B. Modifying the 2021 Budget for the Department of Highways for Equipment Repair, Maintenance, and Fuel (Res) – Mr. Perkins moved to forward this resolution to full Board, seconded by Mr. Fay, and carried unanimously by a voice vote with fifteen (15) yes votes.

C. 2021 Project Update (Discussion) – Mr. Chambers

### **4. SOLID WASTE – DON CHAMBERS**

A. Approving the 2022 St. Lawrence County Solid Waste Department Fee Rates (Res) – Mr. Denesha moved to forward this resolution to full Board, seconded by Mr. Perkins and Mr. Smithers, and carried unanimously by a voice vote with fifteen (15) yes votes.

## **5. COUNTY ATTORNEY – STEVE BUTTON**

A. Authorizing the Chair to Sign an Amended Contract with Odin Environmental, LLC for Expanded Environmental Investigation of Property Owned by Grant’s Gas and Grocery and for Initial Environmental Investigation on Property Owned by Rosalyn Salamacha, Bruce Galloway, and Fleet Techniques, LLC (Res) – Mr. Smithers moved to forward this resolution to full Board, seconded by Mr. Sheridan, and carried unanimously by a voice vote with fifteen (15) yes votes.

B. Authorizing the Chair to Sign an Agreement between the New York Environmental Protection and Spill Compensation Fund and County of St. Lawrence, New York, Regarding a Certain Tax Delinquent Property Owned by Betty Davis (Res) – Mr. Perkins moved to forward this resolution to full Board, seconded by Mr. Sheridan, and carried unanimously by a voice vote with fifteen (15) yes votes.

C. Authorizing the Chair to Sign a Contract with C&S Engineers, Inc. for Environmental Investigation on Property Owned by Newton Falls Holding, LLC (Res) – Mr. Denesha moved to forward this resolution to full Board, seconded by Mr. Perkins and Ms. Curran, and carried unanimously by a voice vote with fifteen (15) yes votes.

D. Authorizing the Chair to Sign a Contract with the St. Lawrence County Fire Training Facility, Inc., for Priority Use of the George E. Briggs Fire Training Center by the Participants of the St. Lawrence County Self-Insurance Plan (Res) – Mr. Denesha moved to forward this resolution to full Board, seconded by Mr. Forsythe, Mr. Perkins, and Ms. Curran, and carried unanimously by a voice vote with fifteen (15) yes votes.

## **6. COMMUNITY SERVICES – JAY ULRICH**

A. Reallocating Funding from the Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Abuse Program (COSSAP) Site-Based Grant to St. Lawrence County Community Services to Develop and Operate an Opioid Treatment Program in St. Lawrence County (Res) – Mr. Sheridan moved to forward this resolution to full Board, seconded by Mr. Lightfoot, Mr. Perkins, and Ms. Curran, and carried unanimously by a voice vote with fifteen (15) yes votes.

## **7. PLANNING – JASON PFOTENHAUER**

A. Setting a Date for a Public Hearing on Proposed Local Law D (No. \_\_) for the Year 2021, “Reapportioning Fifteen (15) Legislative Districts in St. Lawrence County” (Res) – Mr. Lightfoot moved to forward this resolution to full Board, seconded by Mr. Perkins, and carried unanimously by a voice vote with fifteen (15) yes votes.

## **8. VACANCY REVIEW COMMITTEE**

A. Real Property – Bruce Green requested to fill a Tax Map Technician, Position No. 106100002, in Real Property.

B. Office for the Aging – Andrea Montgomery requested to abolish an Advocate Worker and create and fill a Senior Advocate Worker, Position No. 800300007, in the Office for the Aging.

## **9. COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT – RUTH DOYLE**

A. Modifying the 2021 Budget for the County Administrator's Office for Costs Associated with Court-Ordered Treatment Services at New York State Operated Inpatient Mental Hygiene Facilities (Res) – Mr. Lightfoot moved to forward this resolution to full Board, seconded by Mr. Fay, and carried unanimously by a voice vote with fifteen (15) yes votes.

B. Third Quarter Financial Update (Info) – Ms. Doyle

## **10. OLD AND NEW BUSINESS**

Ms. Haggard said she would like to thank the employees at the Board of Elections for working hard at early voting.

Mr. Burke said he thought it was time to consider discussing sales tax on heating fuel, as the cost of living is taking a spike and those on fixed income may need assistance.

Mr. Sheridan said he agrees with removing tax from home heating fuel, and although it was voted down a few months ago the price of fuel going up it should be looked at again. Some people may have to decide whether to heat their homes or put food on their tables.

Mr. Denesha said he has previously advocated for removing tax from heating fuel. He said sales tax revenue has been good and the County now has an opportunity to give the citizens a break on home heating fuel. He said St. Lawrence County is one of the few counties that taxes home heating fuel.

Mr. Reagen asked for an estimate on the cost to the County on removing tax on heating fuel. Ms. Doyle said the total would be \$4.3 million. Mr. Reagen said he agreed with removing sales tax on heating fuel, and at this time County revenues are up and should be shared with the people who have contributed.

Mr. Forsythe said he did not know if the Board had previously voted on removing the heating fuel tax or if it was just discussion.

Mr. Perkins said he understands the concept, but some citizens can afford to pay the tax, and he asked if there was a way to break out the moderate to lower-incomed families. He said it is a large amount of money to remove from the budget.

Mr. Smithers said he understands doing this if it was a time of recession, but it is not. We are in a time of inflation and the government is going to pass another stimulus bill for trillions of dollars, and he does not see a need to do this at this time.

Mr. Lightfoot said to remember that the towns, City, and villages get half of the sales tax collected by the County, and they would lose that money if the tax was removed from heating fuel.

Mr. Acres said he is not in favor of a change as this would be a shift to the tax base that is paid by every individual in St. Lawrence County, and it would be a shift strictly to those who own property. The average home in St. Lawrence County is valued at \$104,000, and if you look at small farms, they have a negative income and their farms are valued at much more than the

average home, but they may actually be struggling to purchase food. This burden would fall strictly on those that own property. It is a complete shift. This is a tax that is paid by everyone whether they drive a car or heat a home or apartment – it was a tax where everyone was paying their fair share. There are programs, such as the HEAP Program, that is available for those needing assistance with heating fuel.

Ms. Terminelli said she agrees with Mr. Denesha and Mr. Smithers, but if the County does not collect the tax for heating fuel that does not mean the money won't be collected or diverted another way to the fuel source owners. Fuel companies may increase rates and the savings would be diverted to business owners. There may be ripple effects and this needs to be well thought out before making a determination.

Ms. Haggard said there are quite a few renter who pay heating fuel so it would not just affect homeowners.

**11. 2022 TENTATIVE BUDGET PRESENTATION** – Ms. Doyle presented the 2022 Tentative Budget.

Mr. Lightfoot moved to go to Executive Session at 7:08 p.m. to discussion negotiations, litigation, personnel, and appointments, seconded by Mr. Smithers, and carried unanimously by a voice vote with fifteen (15) yes votes.

## **12. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

A straw poll vote was taken during Executive Session regarding litigation with a vote of fourteen (14) yes votes and one (1) no vote.

Mr. Forsythe moved to go to Open Session at 8:20 p.m., seconded by Mr. Sheridan, and carried unanimously by a voice vote with fifteen (15) yes votes.

**13. ADJOURNMENT** – Mr. Acres adjourned the October Finance Committee meeting at 8:21 p.m., as there was no further business.