



## **Tioga County Worksession Minutes**

### **May 22, 2025 – 10:00 a.m.**

#### **Legislators Present:**

Legislator Brown  
Legislator Bunce  
Legislator Ciotoli  
Legislator Flesher  
Legislator Monell (*arrived @ 10:03 a.m.*)  
Chair/Legislator Sauerbrey  
Legislator Standing

#### **Legislators Absent:**

Legislator Roberts

#### **Guests:**

None

#### **Staff present:**

Peter DeWind, County Attorney  
Cathy Haskell, Legislative Clerk  
Jackson D. Bailey II, County Administrator  
Stephanie Baldwin, Deputy Legislative Clerk (*departed @ 11:03 a.m.*)  
Linda Parke, Personnel Officer (*departed @ 11:03 a.m.*)  
Gary Hammond, Commissioner of Public Works (*departed @ 10:16 a.m.*)  
Justin Ruggerio, Deputy Commissioner of Public Works, (*departed @ 10:16 a.m.*)

**Call Meeting to Order:** Chair Sauerbrey opened the meeting at 10:00 a.m.

**56 Main Street North Wing HVAC Discussion:** Deputy Commissioner of Public Works Ruggerio discussed the remaining work needed to complete the HVAC construction project at the County Office Building, specifically the North Wing system installation. Once the North Wing project is completed, the entire building will be done. A key challenge is the need to match the existing HVAC system, which requires the purchase of specific equipment that, according to the manufacturer, can no longer be produced as of January 1, 2026. Given this manufacturing cutoff, there is a pressing need to place the order now, as there is an expected price increase as of July 1, 2025. Delaying could result in significant cost increases or unavailability of the required equipment.

Chair Sauerbrey inquired whether the anticipated price increase was related to any political developments or whether it was a legitimate market-driven issue.

Deputy Commissioner of Public Works Ruggerio stated that there is a great deal of conflicting information circulating, making it difficult to discern the full picture. However, the LG manufacturer, which supplied the equipment used at the beginning of the project, issued a direct announcement regarding pricing. LG confirmed that they can hold current prices until July 1, 2025 after which a 10% increase will take effect. There are multiple factors involved. The equipment must be purchased through a sole-source authorized distributor, Meier's Supply in Conklin, NY due to Tioga County's Central New York location. While Meier's Supply can guarantee the current pricing, they cannot guarantee inventory availability. Deputy Commissioner of Public Works Ruggerio emphasized that it would be unwise to wait through an entire cooling season, as demand for R410A systems is likely to surge. This is largely due to the phase-in of the R454 refrigerant, which requires a completely different setup, along with additional engineering and safety considerations. In the Deputy Commissioner of Public Works Ruggerio's opinion, R454 is a less effective alternative compared to R410A. He further explained that securing all necessary equipment now would allow Tioga County to move forward with the remainder of the building's construction without supply chain concerns. Even if the County ultimately decides not to proceed due to construction cost estimates being too high, the equipment could potentially be resold—likely at a higher value—because of its discontinued status. Overall, he reiterated that R410A is superior to R454, both in performance and practical application.

Deputy Commissioner Ruggerio provided a rough estimate for the total cost of the project, including all associated components. The projected cost is approximately \$986,000 and will go through a formal bid.

Legislator Bunce inquired about potential future issues related to the phase-out of existing equipment and the long-term implications of continuing to use systems reliant on discontinued technology because as of January 1, 2026 the country is no longer able to manufacture or import equipment that operates using R410A.

Commissioner of Public Works Hammond explained that there are already two HVAC systems in place. If the County waits to buy the equipment, we could end up with two different systems running on one set of controls, which could cause problems and make things more complicated.

Legislator Flesher mentioned that a friend who works at Cornell shared concerns about the efficiency of R454 systems, stating that they use significantly more power to reach the same cooling temperatures as systems that use R410A.

Deputy Commissioner of Public Works Ruggerio shared that in Probation and the Court Annex, one system runs on R410A and the other on R454, and this has already caused several issues. Engineers have been out five or six times to troubleshoot problems, including a recent issue related to equipment coding. He noted that R410A has been in use since 2000, and the sudden shift to R454 has created challenges, especially with the supply chain and system compatibility.

Legislator Bunce inquired as to whether this is a planned Capital project with funding available. County Administrator Bailey reported there is currently \$700,000 available for this project, therefore, the Legislature could do a resolution to appropriate additional funding into the Capital Budget in 2025 or build additional funding into the 2026 DPW budget. Deputy Public Works Commissioner Ruggiero reported that the earliest this project could be awarded by way of resolution is at the July 15, 2025 Legislature meeting.

In Legislator Roberts' absence, County Administrator Bailey reported Legislator Roberts previously sent an email to the Legislature regarding the availability date for refrigerant is 2045, but the HVAC suppliers are indicating an availability date of 2036, therefore, wanted to have it noted that the 2045 date may not be realistic. Overall, Legislator Roberts stated in her opinion it is the County's best option to move forward with this proposed purchase.

Commissioner of Public Works Hammond reported it is important to note that this new system will resolve some of our current system issues, as one of our units has or will soon reach the end of its service life.

**Call Meeting to Order:** Chair Sauerbrey opened the meeting at 10:14 a.m. for the ***Third Special Legislature Meeting of 2025*** for Legislature consideration of the following:

- ***Preorder HVAC Equipment from Sole Source Supplier of LG Equipment in Support of a Construction Project at the Ronald E. Dougherty County Office Building***

Legislative Clerk Haskell took roll call. Chair Sauerbrey led in the prayer, pledge, and voting process. Special Meeting adjourned at 10:15 a.m. with regular Worksession immediately following.

**District #5 Legislator Appointment:** A resolution has been prepared to appoint Andrew Aronstam as the incoming Legislator for District 5 at the June 10, 2025 Legislative Meeting. County Clerk Klett has been contacted by Legislative Clerk Haskell and will be present at the meeting to administer the oath of office at the end of the meeting. Once sworn in, Mr. Aronstam will be the official Legislative representative for District #5 and is expected to attend the June 19, 2025 Worksession. Preparations are underway to ensure a smooth onboarding. Coordination with IT and DPW is ongoing to have all necessary equipment and access ready. Some items are already in place; the remainder are on track for completion before June 19, 2025. Former Legislator Mullen returned his iPad, which IT is now resetting and preparing for Mr. Aronstam's use. Mr. Aronstam will serve the remainder of the current year through this appointment. Mr. Aronstam will be on the November general election ballot and must be elected to continue service and begin a full-term starting January 1, 2026.

**2026 Budget Discussion:** To kick off the 2026 budget process, County Administrator Bailey presented and reviewed the 2026 Budget Calendar and Budget Directives for Legislature approval. County Administrator Bailey reported he will distribute the Budget Calendar and Directives to the Departments and open the 2026 Budget on June 2, 2025 allowing Departments to begin entering their budgets with the expectation that Departments will begin discussions with their respective Legislative Standing Committees in July and present their final budgets at their August Legislative Standing Committees. County Administrator Bailey reported he introduced a new submission deadline of July 18, 2025 for Departments to submit their Capital Budget requests to Public Works and Information Technology. This earlier deadline is intended to support Commissioner of Public Works Hammond and ITCS Director Loveland in developing their 5-Year Capital Plans. In previous years, submissions have been delayed, impacting planning—this change addresses that issue.

Mr. Bailey reported August 15, 2025 is the deadline for departmental budgets and Capital Budget requests and August 29, 2025 is the deadline for Departments to submit personnel change requests.

Mr. Bailey reported the 2026 Tentative Budget Hearing is scheduled for Tuesday, November 12, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. in the Hubbard Auditorium.

The topic of 2026 Budget Discussion will be added to the Legislative Worksession agendas, per the 2026 Budget Calendar.

Chair Sauerbrey cautioned that the federal government is implementing changes and noted that Governor Hochul has expressed significant concern regarding Medicaid. She emphasized that messaging from the State suggests costs may begin shifting back to the counties, and that the County must carefully monitor the State budget to assess how these changes could impact local finances. She encouraged everyone to remain flexible in response to potential funding shifts.

County Administrator Bailey added that he plans to reach out to Department Heads to remind them that conditions can change quickly, and departments should be prepared to adapt.

Legislator Ciotoli inquired about the County's current Medicaid expense, to which County Administrator Bailey responded that it is approximately \$8.4 million.

Legislator Ciotoli also asked about sales tax revenue projections for the current and upcoming fiscal years. County Administrator Bailey noted that in the last quarter, sales tax revenue increased by 3.2%, indicating a normal upward trend. He explained that while automobile sales—particularly white automobile sales—are down, there has been a significant increase in internet sales tax, resulting in a shift in revenue sources that is currently balancing out overall.

Legislator Bunce raised concerns about how some sales tax revenue is being directed to Broome County, highlighting the difference between purchases made through Walmart.com versus in-store at Walmart.

County Administrator Bailey said he would prepare and share a detailed breakdown of the County's sales tax data at the next meeting.

**County Administrator Report:** County Administrator Bailey provided the following report for May 2025:

- **Collective Bargaining** – County Administrator Bailey reported the Tioga County Corrections Association, Inc. "TCCA" collective bargaining agreement expires December 31, 2025. There was a Kickoff Meeting on May 13, 2025, for "TCCA" with a follow up meeting scheduled for May 22, 2025. The Tioga County Law Enforcement Association, Inc. "TCLEA" collective bargaining agreement also expires December 31, 2025. Those negotiations will resume at a later time.
- **Employee Support** – County Administrator Bailey will be conducting a presentation Friday, June 27, 2025 from 9:00 am – 12:00 pm for I4A – "Financial FUN-damentals". This training is available to all county employees with a limit of 60 participants. County Administrator Bailey will continue working on Budget 101/Finance Overview training with the Munis module owner group. When testing is complete this training will be available in NeoGov.
- **Department Visits** – County Administrator Bailey will be scheduling a visit with the Department of Public Works, Department of Motor Vehicles, and the County Clerk.
- **County Coroners** – County Administrator Bailey reported that himself and Legislative Clerk Haskell will meet with the County Coroners for their quarterly meeting on May 23, 2025 to review their concerns, coroner duties, administrative items, payroll, and the 2026 budget.
- **Strategic Plan** – County Administrator Bailey reported instead of quarterly updates, they are going to be biannual. June reminders will be sent to Department Heads that updates are due at the Department's respective Legislative Standing Committee in July.
- **County YTD Budget Report (All Funds)** – This report provides a breakdown of the Objects of Revenue and Objects of Expense by the original budget modifications and revised budget. County Administrator Bailey noted this report includes all funds and not just the General Fund. County Administrator Bailey reported the original budget appropriated \$6.3 million with modifications including carry forwards from 2024 for a total of \$15.2 million but that does include the accruals carried forward from 2024 to 2025. County Administrator Bailey reported this is normal throughout the process of the carry forwards and most of this is capital funding. County Administrator Bailey reported the actual YTD revenues, as of April 2025, are \$50,624,194 and YTD expenses are \$32,592,389.

- **County Administrator Budget (A1230)** – County Administrator Bailey reported a 31.5% utilization to date with no issues of note. There are some training costs for the Leader's Meeting coming out that the County Administrator's budget.
- **ARPA Local Fiscal Recovery Fund Project Worksheet** - County Administrator Bailey reported he is required to report 2024 ARPA expenditures by April 30, 2025 for the reporting period of April 1, 2024 – March 31, 2025. This report was completed timely, and it is available upon request if anyone would like to see it. There has been no feedback from the State. County Administrator Bailey reported all ARPA funding must be spent by 2026. Mr. Bailey reported during the interim of waiting to hire a new Veterans' Service Agency Director, the Legislature withheld \$20,000 of the \$25,000 allocation for 2025. Mr. Bailey reported a resolution will be forthcoming for Legislature consideration at the June 10, 2025 Legislature meeting to allocate the remaining \$20,000.
- **Budget kickoff** – County Administrator Bailey reported Monday, June 2, 2025 is the budget kickoff. A budget calendar and budget directives will be provided to the Departments.
- **Capital Projects** – County Administrator Bailey attended the Radio Tower Communications Upgrade Project Committee Meeting on April 25, 2025, which included a visit to Public Safety and a meeting with consultant, Frank Yoder. Mr. Yoder is managing additional responsibilities and has secured approximately \$250,000 to improve the tower structure so it can properly support the new communications equipment. He indicated that there may be a need for further remediation and is currently working with Director of Emergency Services Cornelius to identify a qualified firm to assess the tower. A resolution will be brought forward to approve a contract with a contractor who can evaluate and recommend necessary modifications. Currently, the contracts, proposals, and change orders are still under review. He also carried out some analysis to help determine more efficient placement of the equipment to improve signal quality. Director of Emergency Services Cornelius was notified that the space the County was currently leasing on a month-to-month basis was no longer available therefore resulting in the removal of major equipment from this space to other secured County-owned locations. Mr. Bailey reported DPW was very instrumental in this relocation process.
- **Public Information Officer** – County Administrator Bailey reported he is continuing to work through the EO.105 Public Information Basics Online training.
- **County Policies** – County Administrator Bailey reported the Policy Review Committee is reviewing policies by way of Microsoft Teams/Channels to allow for member communication, sharing documents, and tracking changes prior to meeting in person. This month, the Committee reviewed the Gifts and Donations Policy and the Remote Work Policy – Pilot Program. Resolutions will be forthcoming for Legislature consideration at the June 10, 2025 Legislature meeting for the adoption of the new Gifts and Donations Policy and the six month extension of the Remote Work Policy – Pilot Program from June 30, 2025

to December 31, 2025. Regarding the Remote Work Policy – Pilot Program, further review will occur during this extension period and allow CSEA to also review the policy, as they have done in the past. In addition to the continual review of the Remote Work Policy – Pilot Program, the Committee will begin reviewing the Procurement Policy

- **Leaders Meeting (Quarterly)** – County Administrator Bailey reported feedback on the Leaders Meeting held on Tuesday, April 29, 2025, at the Neighborhood Depot. D5 Consulting coordinated an Ice Breaker / Team Building Exercise followed by a Department Head Round Table / County Update. Sister Mary from Tioga County Rural Ministries (TCRM) presented for this event followed by a tour of the TCRM facility which everyone agreed was absolutely beautiful. The feedback after the event was positive; the D5 Consulting portion was only an hour and reviewed some good management strategies – a good refresher. The cost for the hour was about \$700 so County Administrator Bailey is continuing to follow up with Department Heads for feedback to decide how they want to move forward. The next Leaders Meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 29th discussing Public Safety, TAM Brief, & De-Escalation Training.
- **Community Outreach/Communication** – County Administrator Bailey shared a Department Spotlight Series of Peter J. DeWind, Esq., County Attorney and Thomas R. Cline, Esq., Public Defender which included a media write up and picture. The Morning Times wrote an article “County Celebrates Dedication to Legal Integrity” to spotlight their years of service and dedication to the County. The next Department Spotlight will feature the County Clerk and DMV.
- **Miscellaneous -**
  - 59<sup>th</sup> Annual County Finance School** - County Administrator Bailey reported on attending the 59th Annual County Finance School in Glens Falls, NY. He noted that it was a very valuable experience, having last attended in 2018. It was also a meaningful opportunity to spend time with Treasurer McFadden prior to his retirement and to meet many of his colleagues and professional contacts. County Administrator Bailey shared that the seminars were informative and well run, including several hosted by the Office of the State Comptroller (OSC). Additionally, Dan Acquilano from the Comptroller’s Office provided a detailed budget overview, covering nearly every element OSC reviews in county budgets. One major focus was on fund balance levels, with many counties currently exceeding their fund balance policy thresholds due to COVID-related factors, staff vacancies, and sales tax surpluses. The sessions emphasized the need for counties to review fund balance policies, including clearly defining what to do when fund balances exceed set limits.
  - Tioga County Chamber of Commerce Leadership Tioga Program** – County Administrator Bailey reported the May 14, 2025 session was at Hanson Farms for Cornell Cooperative Extension with Dr. Kristi Snyder getting an overview of CCE and how they function and operate. The June 11, 2025 session will be at Tioga Opportunities.

**Child Advocacy Center Open House** - On April 25th, County Administrator Bailey attended the Child Advocacy Center Open House with Legislator Standinger and made a public statement. Mr. Bailey highlighted the extensive efforts and collaboration required to get the center operational. County Administrator Bailey expressed appreciation for the setup, noting its thoughtful design and purpose. He mentioned frequent conversations with Liz Meyers, who has a clear vision for the center: to provide a safe and supportive space for children who may need to interact with law enforcement, counselors, and other professionals in cases of child abuse. The center is designed to be child-friendly and comforting, creating an environment where children can feel safe and supported. The open house was well attended, reflecting strong community interest.

Legislator Standinger added that, although he has limited experience with child abuse investigations involving children, such resources were not available during his time. He commended the center's design, particularly its use of cameras and video equipment, and noted that it provides a welcoming and well-thought-out approach. Though the project was costly, Legislator Standinger emphasized that it will serve an important purpose and likely ease the workload for County Attorney DeWind.

**Building Coordinator's Meeting** - On May 1, 2025, the Building Coordinator's Meeting was held at HHS, facilitated by Safety Officer Holbrook. She provided an update on active shooter training. The NeoGov training module has been sent out to employees and is currently in progress. Safety Officer Holbrook also reported that she met with HHS Department Heads to gather feedback on the training and the counseling services offered afterward. While the availability of counseling was viewed positively, the consensus was that the counselors themselves did not fully meet expectations. Feedback was compiled and has been shared with EAP for consideration in future planning. Additional updates included: ongoing work to update room layouts and building maps, a request was sent to the Sheriff's Department for in-person active shooter training, a proposed training schedule which includes two days at 56 Main Street, two days at HHS, and an additional day at HHS for employees at the Courthouse, Annex, and other locations. Departments were asked to help identify any scheduling conflicts, especially due to vacations. The Sheriff's Office indicated they would do their best to accommodate. Legislator Standinger suggested that the training be filmed to accommodate employees who cannot attend due to valid, pre-approved reasons. However, the expectation remains that all County staff attend in person unless an exception is warranted. The Sheriff's Office is currently coordinating the schedule, and details will be shared once finalized.

**Approval of Worksession Minutes:** On motion of Legislator Monell, seconded by Legislator Flesher, the May 8, 2025, minutes were unanimously approved.

**Action Items:** Currently, there are no action items.



**Other:**

**NYSEG Rate Increases** - Legislator Bunce raised concerns about recent NYSEG rate increases and asked if anyone had attended related meetings. Legislator Monell shared that he had given NYSEG's contact information to several individuals. Legislator Ciotoli noted that the State may have uncovered information in its investigation into NYSEG practices. Multiple Legislators expressed frustration with the situation.

Chair Sauerbrey reported that she has been in contact with the regional NYSEG coordinator, who expressed interest in holding community meetings in Tioga County. Since county buildings are closed in the evening, arrangements are being made with Tioga Opportunities, Executive Director Christine Shaver, to host the sessions—tentatively scheduled for mid-June, between 4:00 PM and 7:00 PM. NYSEG intends to meet with residents individually, not in large groups, to provide personalized customer support. Chair Sauerbrey will share specific details as soon as they are confirmed.

Legislator Monell commented that the main concern is the rate increases and that residents would appreciate having someone available to meet with them directly.

Legislator Bunce recommended that the County further discuss the issue and suggested reviewing Tioga County's own NYSEG bills to determine whether County facilities have experienced similar increases.

In response, Chair Sauerbrey explained that Tioga County was formerly a member of MEGA (Municipal Electric and Gas Alliance), a cooperative energy program that previously resulted in significant cost savings. She noted that now might be a good time to re-explore MEGA or similar programs to assess whether they could again provide savings. Chair Sauerbrey emphasized the importance of reviewing all options before committing to a new energy provider.

Legislator Monell asked for data on whether the County's NYSEG bills have increased. County Administrator Bailey agreed to look up that information, and Legislator Brown confirmed that certain County buildings have already experienced increases.

**Executive Session:** Motion by Legislator Monell, seconded by Legislator Ciotoli, to move into Executive Session to discuss matters regarding current litigation, proposed acquisition of real property, and employment history of a particular individual at 11:03 a.m. Motion carried.

Motion by Legislator Monell, seconded by Legislator Bunce to adjourn Executive Session at 11:39 a.m.

Meeting adjourned at 11:39 a.m.

Next Worksession scheduled for Thursday, June 5, 2025, at 1:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Stephanie Baldwin*, Deputy Legislative Clerk