

**PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE**  
Monday, March 11, 2024 - 9:30 AM

Mark Wright, Chairperson  
Ike Tyler, Vice-Chairperson

Chairman Wright called this Human Services Committee to order at 9:30 am with the following Supervisors in attendance: Clayton Barber, Matthew Brassard, Chris Clark, Shaun Gilliland, Charlie Harrington, Kenneth Hughes, Steve McNally, Jim Monty, Cathleen Reusser, Favor Smith, Matthew Stanley, Michael Tyler, Joe Pete Wilson, Meg Wood and Mark Wright. Robin DeLoria, Derek Doty and Davina Thurston were excused.

Department Heads present: James Dougan, Judy Garrison, Mary McGowan, Mike Mascarenas, Jack Moulton, David Reynolds, Heather Sheehan, Matt Watts and Dan Woods. Miriam Hadden had been previously excused. Kristy Sprague was absent.

Deputies Present: Josh Favro.

Also present: Barry Finnegan, Wendel Hughes and Rob Wick.

News Media present: None present.

WRIGHT: We will begin the public safety committee meeting, if you will stand to salute the flag please. Thank you. I understand we have two guests this morning. Mr. Finnegan and Mr. Hughes if you would like to come up we will give you the floor and they want to discuss North Country Honor Flight.

FINNEGAN: Good morning. We just wanted to take a little bit of time after all these years and I'm not sure how many years it's been but I know since the beginning, Essex County has donated to Honor Flight religiously every year where it's become a line item which is just, it's helped us out since the beginning unbelievably. Way back then, things were just getting going. We were trying to find our own little spot in the Honor Flight world and what you guys did for us will never be forgotten you basically got us off the ground and turned North Country Honor Flight into what you see today. We have sent 780 North Country Veterans most of them will come back and tell you it's the best day of their life so again, we can't ever thank you guys enough and now your continued support through times coming out of Covid, inflation and everything else the price of our flights have gone crazy and your continued support makes us feel a lot more comfortable that we'll be able to keep sending these Veterans and continue for a long time. We've gone through the WWII era, we've gone through the Korean War Veterans, and we're still getting them some WWII still out there. Right now we are in the middle of our Vietnam Veterans who as we all know weren't treated very well when they came back home so we are excited to send the Vietnam Veterans and this program will continue for a long time hopefully with the support of you guys we've got a bright future. Once again, I just wanted to thank everybody and I appreciate all the years of everything that you've done. Thank you.

WRIGHT: I know one of my residents took a trip on the Honor Flight. He said it was one of the most exciting and rewarding experiences that he's ever done so thank you.

MONTY: When is your next flight Barry?

FINNEGAN: Our first flight this year is May 18<sup>th</sup>, we'll have 30 Veterans go down and 30 guardians and we're ready to do it again on June 22, one more time on August 31<sup>st</sup> and again on October 5<sup>th</sup> so four flights. Four flight days we send 2 planes on each of those days so a total of eight flights. We're getting a 120 Veterans per year down there now which coming out of Covid we had quite a waiting list and we've learned the hard way that anybody on a waiting list is not a great idea especially when you're dealing with the older WWII and Korean guys and Vietnam guys are not very healthy Agent Orange has just run rampant through that entire generation so we don't like to fool around. We like to get them down there as soon as possible.

TYLER: Yeah, I can tell you I went on that trip several years ago and it was just an incredible journey and thank you very much for what you guys do.

FINNEGAN: Thank you Ike.

MONTY: I just want to say if you've never seen an Honor Flight leave Plattsburgh do yourself a favor, go and bring lots of Kleenex because it's a very moving ceremony and Barry and Wendel do a heck of a job with all the volunteers and providing this service and it's just an amazing event. Thank you.

REUSSER: I had the privilege of escorting my father under Richard Cutting's time back in those days and yes, definitely is quite a sight and the public support is amazing and the effects on the Veterans it's something that you just can't talk.

FINNEGAN: We give back a lot. We are actually changing lives so while these Veterans have never been appreciated, didn't know people appreciated them and when they come back home they realize that and they just say they are like a different person when they come back home. We recently took one of the guys, he's from the Leatherstocking Honor Flight out of Cobleskill and he's responsible for starting ten different hubs in New York of honor flights so he knows every hub in New York and throughout most of the country on how they operate and how they do things. We took him down there as a thank you because he helped us get going so we sent him down as a thank you and he came back home, he had a tear in his eye and he said, I've seen a lot of honor flights he said, I've been over – he's been over 50 times himself and he said, your public support is off the charts. He says, the community engagement is something we don't see anywhere else so to everybody here and everybody in the North Country that comes out and supports that's what makes the whole thing work and I'll give you a great example today Dave Reynolds is sitting right there, his support to go pick up these Veterans to get them up to the Oval on flight day morning is incredible. Nobody else in the country does things like this. We pick up individually each Veteran and transport them up to the Oval for the opening ceremony and they are thrilled to death by the time they get to the Oval, they think it's a fantastic day and we're just getting started. Thank you Dave and thanks to everybody else in the North Country that helps support this program.

W. HUGHES: And you guys being the leader in this was really good because now Clinton County and Franklin County are both contracted too so you guys started it so thank you.

WRIGHT: Thank you.

FINNEGAN: Thank you very much everyone. We really appreciate everything.

WRIGHT: Alright we don't have a report from the Veteran's office. County Sealer – Dan Woods.

WOODS: Good morning everyone. If you turn to the second page you'll see my February report. New York State had asked to do extra pricing accuracies last month they are looking into they want to see where the problems are themselves. There is something in the works. As you can see, there was a lot of questions the last few months so how did the other stores compare to the Family Dollar, Dollar Generals? I did an inspection at Dollar General in Willsboro, they had 30 overcharges so 70%, and then I went to Tractor Supply in Ticonderoga they only had 4 overcharges so 96% it's not the 98%, the 96% is fantastic. It's right where the State thinks that a failure should be they are still in the range. I went to the Family Dollar in Etown, they had 18 overcharges so 82% and then the Kinney Drugs in Etown and they only had 2 overcharges, that's 98% so you can see how these other retail stores are comparing to these other Family Dollar, Dollar Generals and it's not a whole Essex County problem every other establishment that seems to have a pricing accuracy coordinator is getting above the 95% they have somebody that's there that does that as their sole full-time job. The stores that do not have pricing coordinators hired are the ones that are still getting the 85% and below. I hope that answers any questions you've had in the last year. If you have any other questions I'd love to answer them.

HUGHES: Hi Dan, good morning. Question, do you know what the formula is for breaking down the cost for a gallon of gas?

WOODS: I'm not sure I understand exactly your question.

HUGHES: If I go to a mobile station and it cost me right now, \$3.00 pretend it's that, so \$3.00 right do you, are you privy to understanding the taxes and the profits and all of what makes up that \$3.00? Is that something that your office is aware of or knows about or are you just mostly concerned about making sure one gallon equals \$3.00?

WOODS: So the portion of my job in jurisdiction is I make sure that whatever they are charging and they have visible to see to the customer of it's \$20 a gallon okay you better be getting one gallon for that \$20. I do see the paperwork whenever I do the inspections for New York State and the petroleum quality testing, I do see all the delivery paperwork but there's nothing stating that this station can charge \$20, this station can charge \$7 and somebody else can undercut them at \$3, it's all based on what they want to sell it for as long as they're getting that price for that amount.

HUGHES: Thank you. I know we've had conversations in this chamber before about the cost of a gallon of gas in different locations around the county and I personally would like to see more transparency, this isn't on you but I'm just putting this out to my colleagues about how we actually get to a gallon you know, \$3.33 in one place, \$3.30 cents in another I just would like to see more transparency on how we actually get there.

McNALLY: A lot of it has to do with time of delivery because I owed a gas station at one time, I would have to buy gas, I would buy nine or ten thousand gallons at a time so when I bought my gas we marked ours up 10 cents a gallon but if I bought the gas at say, \$3.00 and sold it for \$3.10, and I paid \$3.00 for it I would maintain that pricing until the end so if the price of gas went up I maintained but these bigger companies have port price posted everyday so they know, so if they sell a gallon of gas today they could look and see what it is to replace that gallon today plus, supply and demand if you have three gas stations on one corner you are going to get a better price than if you have one gas station.

WRIGHT: Anything else for Dan? Thanks Dan.

WOODS: Thank you. Have a great day.

WRIGHT: Board of Elections – Jack, Mary.

MOULTON: Good morning. Just a quick update it's hard to believe but next weekend starts early voting already for the presidential primary on April 2<sup>nd</sup> because of where Easter fell this year, Easter Sunday we will not have voting so instead they've allowed us to do an extra hour of voting for the whole early voting period to make up for that eight hours but I just wanted to make you all knew that. Any questions? That's all we've got.

WRIGHT: Alright, thank you very much. No report from District Attorney. Emergency Services.

WATTS: Good morning. Everybody get a copy of our report? Any questions on that? I do have a couple resolutions for upgrading our radio system, increasing revenues and appropriations for \$1,380,700 million that's coming from funds, correct me if I'm wrong Mike from the radio project that we still have and from ARPA funds.

MASCARENAS: Yeah, so I've been prepping this board for over a year now on some of these things that need to happen. When we turned on the switch for the new radio project we didn't necessarily plan real well for the end of life items that were on the list. We did have a \$1 million dollars left in the original radio project so we are going to use that to complete that upgrade. We budgeted an additional \$500,000 as part of this year's budget and the other \$380,000 is going to come from ARPA. The ARPA stuff needs to be under contract this year. We need to get on the list for the vendor to be able to do the work for us. I can tell you we had a handful of meetings with our subcontractors, they are doing the maintenance of that system and we're holding it together of kind of with bubblegum and glue a catastrophic failure could happen and we don't have the parts to be able to fix it if that were the case so that upgrade is totally necessary, that's the problem with the world we live in now everything is a five to kind of seven year rotation when it comes to support of those technological products and once that support stops happening you either have to upgrade or you're going to be left in the dark so that's where we are at with that project right now. We are in a good position financially right now because we did plan for it through last year and we'll have to plan for that as part of capital improvements moving forward going to out years. So this is just a budget amendment that allows us to utilize those funds that we plan on to use.

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A BUDGET AMENDMENT IN THE EMERGENCY SERVICES DEPARTMENT INCREASING REVENUES AND APPROPRIATIONS IN THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF \$1,380,700.00, RADIO PROJECT AND ARPA FUNDS. Stanley, Hughes**

WRIGHT: Discussion?

SMITH: What does ARPA stand for?

MASCARENAS: It is American Rescue Plan so following Covid our county was awarded \$7 million dollars from the Federal Government most of that for us, all your towns were awarded the same. My guess is your predecessor probably spent it? So you're probably in good shape but most of those funds can be used as loss revenue here at the county because of the amount but we're really allowed to use it on many items. This board approved a plan that I put together last year for these expenses this was one of the projects in that plan along with removal of the jail, funding for Cornell Cooperative Extension Building etc. If we don't have those funds contracted by years out, we need to return them. So we really need to move on some of these items this

year and make sure we get that done.

HUGHES: A request and a question. A request would be could you send out that plan to the board again so that all the new supervisors have access to that? And my question is I think there's probably ten different projects on that plan if I remember correctly how does this fit into how does this run up against the budget that you pitched in that plan? Are we over? Are we under? Is this exactly the amount?

MASCARENAS: We are in pretty good shape. The truth is I have to amend that plan so for instance, we set aside \$200,000, for solid waste and that's where we got the glass crusher up at there if you remember that project well, we spent \$180,000 so I want to reallocate that extra \$20,000 but here, actually on this one this one what you're going to see is I think \$350,000 off the top of my head we need to move some money around a little bit to get that extra \$80,000 in there, the land bank was another project there's a lot of them but budget wise we are fine. We planned well and we are fine in terms of that I'm not worried about that but I am going to bring an amendment to that ARPA plan to you to review and look at so we can update it.

HUGHES: Thank you.

WRIGHT: Any further discussion?

MONTY: Speaking of the town's share Mike and I know this is our decisions, not yours but I made my plan out similar to the way you did yours and some of those funds we didn't spend or didn't cost us as much to do as we anticipated so I can either allocate them to another project or claim them as loss revenue, is that correct?

MASCARENAS: Yes, that is correct.

MONTY: Okay that's what I thought.

MASCARENAS: You would want them committed by years end. If it's a construction project you want to contract with that vendor that's what committed means in terms of their definition.

MONTY: Right well, we're pretty much committed to everything but I had a couple ideas and I just wanted to make sure I amend it and have it contracted by the end of the year but the revenue or loss revenue portion of it can actually be?

MASCARENAS: Yeah.

HUGHES: General Government services I think.

MONTY: Yes.

MASCARENAS: Yeah we are all kind of concerned about it we certainly don't want to utilize those funds to help out our situation but the reason why those loss revenues are there and put in place is we got \$7 million which is a lot of money for us but think about all those counties across the United States and what they got like Westchester County and those types of things so the Feds kind of changed the rules and the roles, I think they had capacity issues of even being able to provide oversight and auditing function so but in that manner we are in a pretty good spot.

MONTY: My \$350,000 means nothing.

WRIGHT: Any other discussion? Alright, if no discussion all in favor, opposed – carried.

WATTS: And a resolution authorizing the County Chairman or County Manager to execute a sole source contract with Motorola not to exceed \$1,880,700.00 for the upgrade.

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE COUNTY CHAIRMAN OR COUNTY MANAGER TO EXECUTE A SOLE SOURCE CONTRACT WITH MOTOROLA SOLUTIONS IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$1,880,700.00, FOR MAINTENANCE OF RADIO SYSTEM AND COMMUNICATION EQUIPMENT. Tyler, Stanley**

WRIGHT: Discussion? No discussion all in favor, opposed – carried.

WATTS: I'm going to ask Rob to come up to do the EMS resolutions that we talked about at the sub-committee.

WICK: Good morning. The first resolution we had is to extend the existing contract between Essex County and Emergency Management Resources. They are our third party insurance billing company so all the medical responses that we have they process all those claims for us. It's in our existing budget we just need to renew that contract.

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE COUNTY CHAIRMAN OR COUNTY MANAGER TO EXECUTE A ONE-YEAR CONTRACT RENEWAL WITH EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT RESOURCES, LLC FOR INSURANCE BILLING SERVICES FOR THE ESSEX COUNTY EMS PROGRAM. Tyler, Stanley**

WRIGHT: Discussion?

HUGHES: How long is the contract for?

WICK: One year.

WRIGHT: Any other discussion? Alright, if no discussion all in favor, opposed – carried.

WICK: The next resolution is to increase appropriations by \$19,500.00 to enter into an agreement with Center for Government Research (CGR) They were the company that did the original EMS report and strategic plan that we're operating off of and so this line of work would be for them to renew that to go back and put into that report updates for everything that we have done and also kind of poll the other EMS agencies and make any further recommendations going forward.

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE COUNTY CHAIRMAN OR COUNTY MANAGER TO EXECUTE AN AGREEMENT WITH THE CENTER FOR GOVERNMENT RESEARCH (CGR) IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$19,500.00, TO PROVIDE AN UPDATED REPORT TO THE ESSEX COUNTY EMS STRATEGIC STUDY AND STRATEGIC PLAN. Stanley, Tyler**

WRIGHT: Any discussion? No discussion, all in favor, opposed – carried.

WICK: The next resolution is to hire an EMT to address the request from Westport EMS. This would be a budget modification so it would be an increase for \$54,060.32 for wages and

\$38,876.51 for fringes. The wages would be covered by the EMS agency as a contracted activity and then the fringes incurred by \$38,876.51 that would be covered by the Essex County EMS grant.

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE COUNTY CHAIRMAN OR COUNTY MANAGER TO EXECUTE A CONTRACT (ES-24-0019) AMENDMENT WITH ESSEX COUNTY, THE TOWN OF WESTPORT AND THE WESTPORT EMS TO HIRE AN ADDITIONAL EMT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$92,936.93 (WAGES & FRINGE) WITH FUNDS TO COME FROM EMS GRANT FUNDS. Tyler, Smith**

WRIGHT: Any discussion?

STANLEY: Just a clarification this was for an EMT, correct?

WICK: Correct.

STANLEY: And these amounts might be slightly lower since it is an EMT instead of an AEMT?

WICK: Correct.

WRIGHT: Any other discussion? All in favor, opposed – carried.

WICK: The next resolution is to request the purchasing agent to go out to advertise bids for some AED units to respond to the Etown-Lewis EMS squad request for some additional equipment. This would be either to refurbish AED units or one brand new unit so the budget established for this is \$35,000 and this would be reimbursed from the EMS grant.

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PURCHASING AGENT TO GO OUT TO BID FOR AED's FOR THE ELIZABETHTOWN-LEWIS EMS SQUAD. Stanley, Tyler**

WRIGHT: Discussion? No discussion, all in favor, opposed – carries.

WICK: Then the final resolution we have here is to hire a senior account clerk. This would be a grade 8 position. The daily administrative duties would be to assist with scheduling and a lot of the administrative activities that are happening there with EMS. We've got Mike Watts the EMS Coordinator that is also providing duties in the medic car so him being constantly out on the road it takes him out of the office quite a bit so this is something that is going to be able to help them keep the ball rolling so to speak and also deal with the known increase of the demands that we've got for services coming down the pike. The cost for this for budget modification would be a total of \$43,894.50 for wages and \$30,726.15 for fringes so the total increase would be \$74,620.65.

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING TO HIRE A SENIOR ACCOUNT CLERK, GRADE 8 POSITION IN THE EMS PROGRAM IN THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF \$74,620.65, WITH FUNDS TO COME FROM THE EMS GRANT FUNDS. Tyler, Stanley**

WRIGHT: Any discussion? No discussion, all in favor, opposed – carries.

WATTS: Any other questions for us?

WRIGHT: Any questions for Matt?

WATTS: Thank you.

WRIGHT: Sheriff Reynolds.

REYNOLDS: I'm here if you have any questions?

WRIGHT: Any questions for Dave? If not, okay thank you very much. Probation.

SHEEHAN: Good morning everyone. You have my report and if you have any questions I'd be happy to answer them.

WRIGHT: Any questions? Looks like you're free. Public Defender is not here and Conflict Defender is excused. Anything else to come before the committee?

HUGHES: Quick question Mr. Chairman. Who is responsible for the Veteran's office on this agenda?

WRIGHT: That would be the gentleman far to your right there at the end of the table.

HUGHES: McNally? Okay thank you.

MASCARENAS: I can give you a quick update. The State is in the process of hiring. I think they've got some candidates finally that position has been vacant for over a year now. Our Veteran's office has been staffed by the county individual only. She's doing a tremendous job in keeping that going but she's optimistic this time. This is the third time that hopefully the state will be able to hire someone and we'll be up to full staffing there.

WRIGHT: Anything else?

GILLILLAND: I would like to call for a quick executive session to update on state negotiations with DEC and to discuss a personnel issue.

WRIGHT: Motion by Mr. Hughes, second by Mr. Smith.

THE COMMITTEE MOVED INTO AN EXECUTIVE SESSION AT 9:57 A.M.  
TO DISCUSS STATE NEGOTIATIONS AND TO DISCUSS A PERSONNEL ISSUE  
AND MOVED BACK INTO OPEN SESSION AT 10:28 A.M.

WRIGHT: Alright we are out of executive session at 10:28 a.m. no decisions were made. Does anyone on the floor have anything else? If not, we are adjourned.

As there was no further discussion to come before this Public Safety Committee it was adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Garrison, Clerk  
Board of Supervisors