

**225<sup>th</sup> ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING**  
**Monday, January 8, 2024**

GARRISON, CLERK OF THE BOARD: Good morning and welcome. I would like to call this 225<sup>th</sup> organizational session to order. Please stand for the salute to the flag. Thank you. We will now swear in our newly elected County Clerk, Chelsea Merrihew. (Sworn in by Judge Meyer) Thank you Judge Meyer.

JUDGE MEYER: We are going to swear in the Deputy, County Clerk.

GARRISON: Yes, thank you. Deputy County Clerk, Stacey Hayes.

C. MERRIHEW: Thank you very much.

GARRISON: We will now swear in our newly elected Supervisors. Would Mr. DeLoria and Mrs. Wood please escort Mrs. Reusser to the County Clerk to be sworn in and escort her back to her new seat?

Would Mr. Stanley and Mr. Doty please escort Mr. Brassard to the County Clerk to be sworn in and escort him back to his new seat?

Would Mrs. Winemiller and Mr. Gilliland please escort Mr. Clark to the County Clerk to be sworn in and escort him back to his new seat?

Would Mr. Harrington and Mr. Barber please escort Mr. Smith to the County Clerk to be sworn in and escort him back to his new seat?

Thank you. I will now call the roll for the 2024 Board of Supervisors.

PRESENT:

Clayton Barber	- Town of Chesterfield
Charles Harrington	- Town of Crown Point
Cathleen Reusser	- Town of Elizabethtown
Kenneth Hughes	- Town of Essex
Matthew Stanley	- Town of Jay
Joe Pete Wilson	- Town of Keene
James Monty	- Town of Lewis
Stephen McNally	- Town of Minerva
Matthew Brassard	- Town of Moriah
Robin DeLoria	- Town of Newcomb
Derek Doty	- Town of North Elba
Chris Clark	- Town of North Hudson
Margaret Wood	- Town of Schroon
Davina Winemiller	- Town of St. Armand
Mark Wright	- Town of Ticonderoga
Michael Tyler	- Town of Westport
Shaun Gilliland	- Town of Willsboro
Favor Smith	- Town of Wilmington

Department Heads in attendance: Angie Allen, Laura Carson, James Dougan, Emily Evatt, Judith Garrison, Krissy Leerkes, Mary McGowan, Dan Manning, Michael Mascarenas, Chelsea Merrihew, Jack Mouton, David Reynolds, Heather Sheehan, Kristy Sprague and Matt Watts.

Also in attendance: Judge Meyer, Laurie DeZalia, Josh Favro, Dina Garvey, Stacey Hayes, William Tansey, Carol Calabrese, Jennifer Fifield, Krista Moran, Michael DePaoli, Linda Wolf, Stephanie DeZalia, Linda Gilliland, Captain Quentin Gilliland, Katie Brassard, Hedy Merrihew, Noel Merrihew, Noel Hartley Merrihew, Ryan Dolly, Sam & Will Dolly and Emma & Samantha Hayes.

News Media: None present.

GARRISON: I will now call for nominations for the 2024 temporary Chairman of the Board.

WILSON: Madam Clerk, I would to move the name of Charlie Harrington from the Town of Crown Point, as temporary Chairman for 2024.

GARRISON: Thank you. Do we have a second?

TYLER: I will second that.

GARRISON: Mr. Wilson moves the name of Mr. Harrington, seconded by Mr. Tyler. Are there other nominations?

WOOD: I move the nominations be closed and the Clerk cast one ballot for Mr. Harrington as temporary Chairman.

MONTY: I'll second that.

GARRISON: All in favor, opposed – carried. Would Mr. Wilson and Mr. Tyler please escort Mr. Harrington to the County Clerk to be sworn in and then to the dais.

HARRINGTON: The first order of business is to adopt the rules and regulations that will govern this board for 2024.

**RESOLUTION 31 – ADOPTING RULES AND REGULATIONS OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE ESSEX COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS.**

**This resolution was moved by Mr. Stanley, seconded by Mr. Monty and adopted upon a roll-call vote as follows:**

**AYES: 2853 votes**  
**NOES: 0 votes**  
**ABSENT: 0 votes**

HARRINGTON: We will now call for nominations of the 2024 Chair.

McNALLY: At this time I'd like to nominate and move the name of Supervisor Shaun Gilliland for the 2024 Chair of Essex County Board of Supervisors. Ten short years ago I joined this body along the same time as Shaun Gilliland. First days in office we were looking at 25% deficit in our budget and we got through that period for the next three or four years. Through the years we've dealt, through Shaun's years we've dealt with winter storms, summer storms, rain storms, floods, Covid, employee shortage, EMS crisis all under the guidance of Shaun Gilliland Essex County Chair.

I am an idea guy not saying that I'm a good idea guy but with Shaun as the Chair, he's reachable 24/7 and you can run anything by him and he's always open to listen. He's a very fair man. He's done a great job as Chair and I highly recommend that we have him continue to be Chair of Essex County. Thank you.

HUGHES: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to second the motion on the floor to nominate Mr. Gilliland as the Chairman of the Board for 2024 and if I may take a moment please allow me to share that I offer this second because I feel our collective experience with Mr. Gilliland at the helm for the past five years has been beneficial to the citizen of our eighteen towns. Mr. Gilliland brings a rare combination of depth and breadth of knowledge to this chamber and to this organization which never ceases to impress me as a member of this body. I am proud to support my next door neighbor from the great Town of Willsboro as the 2024 Chairman of the Essex County Board of Supervisors.

HARRINGTON: Are there other nominations?

BARBER: Mr. Chair, I move the nominations be closed and the Clerk cast one ballot for Mr. Gilliland as the 2024 Chair of the board.

WRIGHT: I will second that.

HARRINGTON: All in favor, carried. Mr. McNally and Mr. Hughes escorts Mr. Gilliland to the front of the room where he can take his oath of office and then escort him to the dais.

GILLILLAND: Holding the bible today will be my son, Captain Quinten Gilliland who is in town for a few days before he deploys for two years to Africa.  
We will now call nominations for the 2024 Vice-Chairman of the Essex County Board of Supervisors.

DELORIA: Mr. Chairman I would like to move the name of Mr. James Monty in nomination for the 2024 Vice-Chair.

STANLEY: Mr. Chairman I would like to second that.

GILLILLAND: Are there any other nominations?

WINEMILLER: I would like to move that the nominations be closed for the 2024 Vice-Chairman of the Board.

DOTY: Mr. Chairman I will second that.

GILLILLAND: All in favor, opposed – carried. Would Mr. DeLoria and Mr. Stanley please escort Mr. Monty to the County Clerk to be sworn in?

MONTY: Holding the bible for me will be my colleague and best friend, Ike Tyler.

GILLILLAND: Mr. Monty, you have some remarks?

MONTY: Well, first off I want to thank everyone for the support as Vice-Chair and I echo the sentiments that have been shared about our Chairman. Shaun and I have had some discussions at times we don't necessarily agree on everything but we agree that we want the best interest of the Essex County residents and like it was said, Shaun has led us through so much in the last five years here that it's absolutely amazing and it's an honor and privilege to serve with Shaun and to continue to serve the constituents of Essex County. Thank you.

GILLILLAND: Thank you very much. I'll echo it's been an extreme pleasure serving with Jim a constable professional. As he said, he and I sometimes have heated debates and they are debates not arguments and also I would like to say to all my colleagues I have served with here you are constable professionals in what you do and have really set the bar extraordinary high for the level of performance of a legislative board in a county in New York State. You look to many of our neighboring counties around the state that are in well, states of disrepair I guess but no matter what challenges have been thrown to us this board has risen to it.

I would like to welcome the four new supervisors here. Change is good. We look forward to your inputs. We look forward to your perspectives. When we have a new change sometimes it brings the perspectives or desires of county constituent's new perspectives on it so we look forward to that.

I will say one thing no matter what we do in this Chamber, we can obviate, we can pontificate, we can bloviate but the rubber meets the road is with our county employees, our workforce, our department heads that no matter what we do in here the absolute professionalism and dedication of our employees is what makes this county a top performing county and provides the absolute pinnacle of services to our constituents. I am extraordinarily proud to serve with each and every one of them. We proved during the Covid thing that absolutely no one employee was non-essential. Everybody was essential. In fact, during the beginnings of Covid we found that our cleaners were the most essential I guess it was because we didn't know what was going to happen and they kept us safe to continue county operations. First of all many of them are here today I'd like the board to thank them with a round of applause.

I will go over what this board has accomplished in my tenure a bit. First of all we developed the first of its kind model for the State transforming EMS services delivery and other counties all over depending on the size every county has a different size and shape and they delivered basically our model, our framework is what they went to look at first. So we can be very proud of that.

Our response to Covid right in the beginning of the Covid epidemic the decision was made that we, our number one thing would be to protect our workforce. At time we didn't know what Covid was going to look like. We didn't know how deadly it would be or how harmful or how many it would affect but protecting the workforce was the most important thing and that worked quite well compared to other counties. We didn't send people off home forever. We didn't pay massive amounts of money to keep people home the workforce continued working and kept delivery of services.

Our radio 911 projects continue to be the leader in the North Country. Without Essex County's radio systems and 911 systems you wouldn't have one for the North Country.

Our continued response to our housing crisis a statewide housing crisis that has befuddled the Governor's office but we jumped right into it and pretty much with help from Mr. Stanley and Mr. Hughes and Mr. Monty and all the supervisors we jumped in and established a land bank. We are taking off on that.

Broadband – when I first came into office it was terrible throughout the county now I have to drive around for a while not forever but for a while to find a blank space. We've come a long, long way in broadband throughout our own county and in each of our towns and that goes to the work of this board and the work individually in each of your towns.

North Hudson gateway – the county has jumped in to develop that as an Adirondack Gateway project and I don't know, I think Covid scared the state away and we continue to move forward with it and developing it. When this county and this body gets a vision and moves forward with it we don't shrink or back from it and that particular project is pretty much proven.

Sitting to the right of me here during my tenure in office is our County Attorney who when this county was challenged about election records, release of election records against election law this body stood up and said that won't stand we took it to Supreme Court, we took it to Appellate court and you allowed us to move forward and to take it to the Court of Appeals and our County Attorney, I sat there in Albany at the Court of Appeals and listened to an argument and he won. Just a tremendous job. This board, this county is not afraid to stand up for what's right and stand on its own two feet. We have a tremendous amount of momentum we need to continue this momentum going.

I want to also talk about in my tenure in office about the relationship with the State and many of us are biting our lips and tongues and grinding our teeth about what is happening in many areas of the state. When I first came in I thought the relationship with the state was more like the Hunger Games we all went running up to various things and begging the Governor to please give us something, give us something, give us something and it actually kind of disgusted me the way things operated. No town, no village could get along unless something was bequeathed to them. Then the relationship with the state kind of molded, changed a bit and it became a relationship with the various state agencies of cooperation and that lasted for several years. We felt we had a very collegial relationship with DEC, with Health, with Transportation, the public safety areas and stuff unfortunately now I kind of see that we are proceeding into the Cold War. Everything seems to be a fight. Everything seems to be a problem. That collegial environment has kind of gone away and it becomes a challenge for us and also a vision for us moving forward in the future. So I will give you some examples of the cold war, solid waste issue we have been fighting for years to continue on with our stipend from the State for the \$300,000, because we are forced to truck all of our solid waste out of the county and

without notice anywhere a bureaucrat has come in and said, no you have to give us a 400 page solid waste plan which we don't have a solid waste facility we transport our waste. DEC should not be controlling authority for it the Department of Transportation should be the regulatory agency. Fish Hatchery – we are in fights over the fish hatchery right now which was a state facility, the county took it over we are running it to the best of our ability and now they are looking at every which way to force us to shut it down and not take the blame for it. You are all aware of our relationship with the State Police. The failed momentum on the North Hudson project and throughout, all over and many of you know this all of the state's broken promises throughout any management issues in the forest preserve. The withhold of the Covid funds, when they held just percentages of money that was owed to the county just went ahead and just cut it and now the FMap funds \$600,000 of targeted money from the Federal Government should have come to the county was just chopped off at the knees and we didn't get it. Taking what I perceive as kind of bad news is what is the envision of the future and that is with this board and that is we need to take a look at our county in a view point of self-sufficiency. Luckily, when the FMap money was cut, when the Covid money was cut you know with Covid they shut off the funds to the county we were in a financial position in this county to weather that without harm. Many counties had to go to the bank losing millions and millions of dollars and having to bond just for operations. We didn't have to do that so we have work in self-sufficiency particularly financial self-sufficiency and a lot of times it takes courage with the board to say, like Mr. McNally acknowledged when he first came in we had to look at a 25% tax hike in order to keep ourselves solid that took a lot of courage on the board to be able to do that and it's all part of our vision of self-sufficiency.

So we've got a work list this year coming forward we have a building we are building the youth Ag building moving forward. We have a lot of FEMA repairs we have to do. We are going to remove this old jail here that has to go forward. EMS we have to, we are transferring our support for our countywide framework of EMS delivery from grants to the budget and I'm sure there will be debates on that but I think that we're in the financial position to do that quite effectively with minimal impact upon the taxpayers.

I'd like to take a look at increasing our sports and recreational opportunities in all the towns. We have a sports council that has been resurrected and is anxious to help so we can look at more and more venues to raise the tide for all the towns on the success that North Elba has had in recreational tourism. Our county is unique in the state that we have the largest sector of our economic success is in tourism. We have a lot of expensive radio upgrades that we are going to have to move forward with because of generational changes and technology of our 911 and emergency radio system. We need to continue that housing momentum. We are in a lot better position than a lot of together counties but housing and jobs education, cost of living everything is all parts of trying to keep people here living and working in Essex County and if we can't make a niche in the housing crisis we're in for trouble.

The last thing too is the one thing I've learned in my time as Chairman and my time on the board is no matter how we plan it, how we look forward for the year there's always another black swan in the swamp, something is going to come out that nobody had figured, nobody had guessed you know that we would of have Covid so we have to be prepared to react and respond to that black swan that comes in and as you look national and internationally the world is becoming and unsafe place in this hyper connected world

we live it will come to affect us one way or another be it immigration or anything so as I said, working with this board in the past, working with our county professionals there's no challenge that I could even foresee that can't be met by this wonderful board and the wonderful people that work for it and I really appreciate another opportunity to serve and I want to thank each and every one of you.

We will begin with resolution number two.

**RESOLUTION #2 – APPOINTING THE CLERK OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AND THE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE ESSEX COUNTY SELF INSURANCE PLAN.**

This resolution was moved by Mr. Hughes, seconded by Mr. Brassard and adopted upon a roll-call vote as follows:

**AYES:** 2754 votes  
**NOES:** 0 votes  
**ABSENT:** 99 votes (Reusser)

GILLILLAND: We will now swear in the Clerk of the Board.

GARRISON: Chairman Gilliland I would like to announce my Deputy, Dina Garvey to be sworn in at this time. Thank you.

**RESOLUTION #3 – AUTHORIZING COMPENSATION FOR THE SUPERVISORS OF ESSEX COUNTY.**

This resolution was moved by Mr. Tyler, seconded by Mr. Barber and adopted upon a roll-call vote as follows:

**AYES:** 2853 votes  
**NOES:** 0 votes  
**ABSENT:** 0 votes

**RESOLUTION #4 – DESIGNATING OFFICIAL NEWSPAPERS FOR 2024.**

This resolution was moved by Mr. Wright, seconded by Mr. DeLoria, and duly adopted.

**RESOLUTION #5 – ORDERING THE CONFINEMENT OF DOGS TO PROTECT THE DEER HERD.**

This resolution was moved by Mr. Monty, seconded by Mr. Barber, and duly adopted.

**RESOLUTION #6 – ADOPTING AN INVESTMENT POLICY AND DESIGNATING DEPOSITORIES FOR COUNTY FUNDS.**

This resolution was moved by Mr. Tyler, seconded by Mr. Doty and adopted upon a roll-call vote as follows:

**AYES:** 2853 votes  
**NOES:** 0 votes  
**ABSENT:** 0 votes

**RESOLUTION #7 – PURSUANT TO REAL PROPERTY TAX LAW §554 AND §556 DELEGATING TO THE ESSEX COUNTY AUDITOR THE AUTHORITY TO APPROVE CORRECTIONS TO THE TAX ROLLS OF NOT MORE THAN \$2,500.00, AND THE PAYMENT OF REFUNDS DUE AS A RESULT OF SUCH CORRECTIONS.**

This resolution was moved by Mr. Doty, seconded by Mr. Monty and adopted upon a roll-call vote as follows:

**AYES:** 2853 votes

**NOES: 0 votes**  
**ABSENT: 0 votes**

**RESOLUTION #8 – OF ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE ESSEX COUNTY PURCHASING POLICY AND ALL PROCEDURES RELATED THERETO AND AUTHORIZATION OF THE CONTINUED USE THEREOF.**

This resolution was moved by Mr. Barber, seconded by Mr. Brassard, and duly adopted.

**RESOLUTION #9 – APPOINTING A COUNTY ATTORNEY.**

This resolution was moved by Mr. Stanley, seconded by Mr. Wright and adopted upon a roll-call vote as follows:

**AYES: 2853 votes**  
**NOES: 0 votes**  
**ABSENT: 0 votes**

**RESOLUTION #10 – APPOINTING A COUNTY AUDITOR.**

This resolution was moved by Mr. Wilson, seconded by Mr. Hughes and adopted upon a roll-call vote as follows:

**AYES: 2853 votes**  
**NOES: 0 votes**  
**ABSENT: 0 votes**

**RESOLUTION #11 – APPOINTING A PURCHASING AGENT.**

This resolution was moved by Mrs. Winemiller, seconded by Mr. Hughes and adopted upon a roll-call vote as follows:

**AYES: 2853 votes**  
**NOES: 0 votes**  
**ABSENT: 0 votes**

**RESOLUTION #12 – APPOINTING AN ESSEX COUNTY PUBLIC DEFENDER.**

This resolution was moved by Mr. Tyler, seconded by Mr. Monty and adopted upon a roll-call vote as follows:

**AYES: 2853 votes**  
**NOES: 0 votes**  
**ABSENT: 0 votes**

**RESOLUTION #13 – ADOPTING LOCAL LAW NO. 1 OF 2024.**

This resolution was moved by Mr. Brassard, seconded by Mr. Barber and adopted upon a roll-call vote as follows:

**AYES: 2853 votes**  
**NOES: 0 votes**  
**ABSENT: 0 votes**

**RESOLUTION #14 – AMENDING RESOLUTION NO. 301 OF NOVEMBER 6, 2023, ENTITLED, “APPROVING THE 2024 ESSEX COUNTY SELF-INSURANCE BUDGET AND THE WORKERS’ COMPENSATION FOR TOWNS AND THE VILLAGE OF LAKE PLACID CONTRIBUTIONS”**

This resolution was moved by Mr. DeLoria, seconded by Mr. Wright and adopted upon a roll-call vote as follows:

**AYES: 2853 votes**



**NOES: 0 votes**  
**ABSENT: 0 votes**

**RESOLUTION #15 – APPOINTING THE ESSEX COUNTY CLERK AS THE ESSEX COUNTY RECORDS MANAGEMENT OFFICER PURSUANT TO THE ARTS AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS LAW §57.19 AND 8 CRR-NY 185.2.**

**This resolution was moved by Mr. Harrington, seconded by Mr. Stanley, and duly adopted.**

**RESOLUTION #16 – AUTHORIZING PAYMENT TO INTERCOUNTY APPRAISAL SERVICES, INC. (DONALD HOFFMAN) FOR APPRAISALS FOR FOUR (4) ESSEX COUNTY LAND BANK PROPERTIES; AUTHORIZING THE COUNTY CHAIRMAN OR COUNTY MANAGER TO EXECUTE ANY AND ALL DOCUMENTS TO TRANSFER SAID PROPERTIES TO THE LAND BANK; AND AUTHORIZING TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH THE ESSEX COUNTY LAND BANK TO HOLD POTENTIAL SURPLUS MONEY UNTIL PROPERTIES ARE SOLD.**

**This resolution was moved by Mr. Stanley, seconded by Mr. Wright and adopted upon a roll-call vote as follows:**

**AYES: 2853 votes**  
**NOES: 0 votes**  
**ABSENT: 0 votes**

**RESOLUTION #17 – AUTHORIZING AN INCREASE FOR COUNSEL AT FIRST APPEARANCE SERVICES, EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2024.**

**This resolution was moved by Mr. Tyler, seconded by Mr. DeLoria and adopted upon a roll-call vote as follows:**

**AYES: 2853 votes**  
**NOES: 0 votes**  
**ABSENT: 0 votes**

GILLILLAND: Discussion?

McNALLY: Do we have an amount that this is going to effect the budget?

MANNING: Yeah, what this is is I think most of you know that last year the State of New York increased the Assigned Counsel fee that we pay our Assigned Counsel who represent indigents from \$75.00 to \$158.00, so it was a substantial increase to pay those people and well deserved. Those are our regular assigned counsel attorneys. The Counsel at first appearance is a different animal the state a couple years ago mandated that everybody that appears before a Judge whether he be at justice court level or the county level needs to have an attorney present so we developed a program which we will have four attorneys handle counsel at first appearance and these attorneys will appear after hours on Fridays, all day Saturdays, all day Sundays until 8 o'clock at night and they are on-call they are paid to be on-call and they are paid a stipend when they appear actually appear if they get called to appear for the court. The current contract calls for \$200 on Friday night to be on-call, \$200 on Saturday and \$200 on Sunday for a total of \$600.00 then if you appear, the current contract says if you appear you're paid \$100 just for that appearance. A typical appearance is running anywhere between 2 ½ to 3 hours or more if it's a more complicated matter and that includes travel time. So with this \$158.00 increase to that one side of the assigned counsel program the attorneys it's not fair to allow them to charge only \$100 and I had spoken to them and they had a figure which was a little high I felt. I investigated it with Clinton county and some of the other counties so what this does it keeps the \$200 for Friday, Saturday and Sunday in place but it increases the \$100 per appearance to \$300 an appearance

so if you multiply \$158 times 2 that's \$316 it's like a two-hour payment for that attorney. We need these CAFA attorneys. Without them the Public Defender's office would probably be saddled with some of this work which often the case may be so this is fair. I compared this to the budget. I took a look at each CAFA attorney, what they made last year and what they made the year before and then looked at the budget. The budget, the money that we are getting the Harrell- Harring money that we are getting amounts to \$82,500 and with these increases and basing it on the last two year figures we probably will be right around \$80,000 so within the perimeters of our budget. I can't guarantee that there might not be many more cases I doubt it when I look through this they're not very voluminous as far as appearances are concerned. Appearances you may have one or two by these attorneys in a month span but they are mandated by ILS the people that give us all the money and so they give us the money so I recommend that we go with Harrell.

McNALLY: Okay thank you.

GILLILLAND: Further discussion?

WINEMILLER: Are these all in Essex County, all these attorneys?

MANNING: Yes. Carl Rubino, Brian Kennelly, Eric Weyand and one other gentleman I don't know from the Public Defender's office those four individuals and they do a great job. There's no been no, the Public Defender's office have been scheduling these people so there have been no hiccups nor here nor there. It's been working well.

WINEMILLER: Thank you.

GILLILLAND: Further discussion? Roll call please. Do you have another one?

MANNING: Yes, I do. The Personnel office has requested that we reclassify under civil service rules a caseworker for the HELP program reclassify that to non-competitive civil service designation, a social services worker through the HELP program that would be reclassified to non-competitive and the emergency services call taker/dispatcher for the HELP program be also reclassified as non-competitive and that the rules be amended in that respect. We also need to set a public hearing pursuant to law, I guess before the next meeting so part of this resolution would designate the ability to establish a public hearing.

GILLILLAND: Do we have twelve to allow this on the floor?

GARRISON: Yes, we do.

**RESOLUTION #18 – SETTING A PUBLIC HEARING TO AMEND THE ESSEX COUNTY CIVIL SERVICE RULES BY MAKING CERTAIN CHANGES TO THE TEXT AND APPENDICES AND RECLASSIFY CERTAIN CIVIL SERVICE POSITIONS.**

**This resolution was moved by Mr. Barber, seconded by Mr. Brassard, and duly adopted.**

GILLILLAND: Discussion?

MASCARENAS: I can see everybody's eyes saying what the heck is going on here? In the state's effort to assist counties with recruitment and retention issues they kind of agreed to budge a little bit in certain program areas around their conditions of civil service and this gives us the opportunity to take advantage of that so positions such as caseworker, social services worker,

call taker/dispatcher those positions that are becoming hard to recruit the state is allowing us to look at this for a period and see if getting rid of the civil service testing requirement will allow us to bring some people in and get those jobs and no longer be a barrier for employment. So in order to do that we need to have a public hearing, we need to change our rules to put those titles in those categories. Now it's not forever, it's only for a determined period of time. I'm hoping that the state will do this long term but when we have somebody to come in and apply that testing requirement is always a problem with giving up a full time job to come here and work for now I've got to take an exam and maybe not score in the top three so they still have to meet the minimum qualifications of the job, they just don't have to take the test and score in the top three in these difficult areas of recruitment. So it's a good opportunity. The state has offered us the ability to help we should take advantage of it.

MONTY: I just wondered Mike what's the timeframe? You said we are going to look at it for a year or two?

MASCARENAS: It was a year. They just extended it so I'm assuming it's going to be for 2024 and then we would have to re up if they allow us to.

MONTY: Thank you.

HUGHES: Thank you Mr. Chairman. Is the HELP program a state program? A county program?

MASCARENAS: It's offered by the state re leaving counties of the civil service requirement for certain titles. Now they are going to get the last say so we're going to have a public hearing, we are going to send this down, the state is either going to approve our rules or not going to approve our rules so you've got to be able to show that you've had x amount of exams, you haven't got applicants, all those things so Jen will put that together, that package after the public hearing, send it down to the state and they will say yay or nay. The county caseworkers, social services workers are almost automatic, the DSS association has been lobbying civil service very hard over the last couple of years and this was a solution they came up with.

HUGHES: Is that Department of Labor when you say the state?

MASCARENAS: No, it's state civil service. State civil service is separate from State Department of Labor.

HUGHES: Thank you.

STANLEY: Once this sunsets does the person who is in the position then need to test?

MASCARENAS: No. They are granted permanent status after they fulfill the requirements of their probationary period. So they still have a probationary period but after that they are granted permanent status under the HELP.

GILLILLAND: So this motion right now is to set the public hearing once the public hearing is done we will have another regular board meeting to final approve before we send it off to the state. The public hearing we are setting for?

MANNING: I'm trying to remember. It's kind of goofy thing, not like most. I think it has to be posted three days so – is there any rush on this Mike?

MASCARENAS: I think if we had it following ways and means would probably be good.

MANNING: Okay what time?

GARRISON: Ten forty-five.

GILLILLAND: Okay so 10:45 on the 29<sup>th</sup> of January. Further discussion? All in favor, opposed – carries.

MASCARENAS: I'm asking for a resolution to come from the floor on a budget amendment increasing revenue and appropriations by \$1,250,000 for CBDG project #382MH333-23.

GILLILLAND: Twelve to allow it on the floor please?

GARRISON: Yes, we do.

**RESOLUTION #19 – ACCEPTING A \$1,250,000.00 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) FOR PROJECT #382MH333-23 FOR THE ESSEX COUNTY MANUFACTURED HOMES REPLACEMENT AWARD FROM THE OFFICE OF COMMUNITY RENEWAL; AND AUTHORIZING A BUDGET AMENDMENT FOR THE SAME.**

**This resolution was moved by Mr. Stanley, seconded by Mr. Monty and adopted upon a roll-call vote as follows:**

**AYES: 2853 votes**  
**NOES: 0 votes**  
**ABSENT: 0 votes**

GILLILLAND: Discussion? Being none, roll call please.

MASCARENAS: I have another resolution approving sub-recipient agreements with the Pride of Ticonderoga and Adirondack Roots for Essex County Manufacturing Housing Replacement Award, CDBG Project #382MH333-23, each sub-recipient will receive \$625,000, for a total of \$1,250,000.

GILLILLAND: Twelve to allow it on the floor please?

GARRISON: Yes, we do.

**RESOLUTION #20 – AUTHORIZING A CONTRACT/SUBRECIPIENT AGREEMENT WITH THE PRIDE OF TICONDEROGA AND ADIRONDACK ROOTS TO ACT AS SUBRECIPIENT OF ESSEX COUNTY'S COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) UNDER THE HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ACT, (PROJECT #382-MH333-23) FOR MANUFACTURED HOMES REPLACEMENT AWARD WITHIN THE COUNTY.**

**This resolution was moved by Mr. Monty, seconded by Mr. Stanley and adopted upon a roll-call vote as follows:**

**AYES: 2853 votes**  
**NOES: 0 votes**  
**ABSENT: 0 votes**

GILLILLAND: Discussion?

HUGHES: How is that money dispersed? Is it one lump sum in the beginning? Is it reimbursement?

MASCARENAS: Typically they do a reimbursement program where as the money is spent we get it right to them so that claim will come into the Treasurer's department release and then we'll wait for it to come to CDBG to the county.

HUGHES: Thank you.

GILLILLAND: Further discussion? Being none, roll call please. Anything further to come before our robust body this morning?

BRASSARD: Yes, I'd like to make a resolution of condolence to the family of Daniel "Digger" Laing. He was a highway worker for the Town of Moriah, young man, my age, lost his life New Year's Eve. Tragic thing.

GILLILLAND: Twelve to allow it on the floor please?

GARRISON: Yes, we do.

**RESOLUTION #21 – OF CONDOLENCE TO THE FAMILY OF DANIEL “DIGGER” LAING.  
This resolution was moved by Mr. Brassard, unanimously seconded and adopted.**

HUGHES: Mr. Chairman in you would indulge me please I would like to update the board on some broadband issues, is that okay for a couple of minutes?

GILLILLAND: Sure.

HUGHES: Thank you very much. I wanted to just bring you up to speed to the Board of Supervisors some information I experienced recently about broadband and I'm happy to take any questions after.

The Lake Champlain-Lake George Regional Planning Board issued an RFP in July of 2023, for an on call broadband data planning GIS engineering consultant whose duties shall include data collection and analysis planning feasibility analysis, GIS assistance and engineering services on an as need basis to assist to the implementation and execution of ongoing colleges and programs. There's a lot there.

Funding for this RFP comes from the Northern Borders Regional Commission in a total amount of \$440,000, with the duration of the contract to be a two-year term with an optional renewal clause for another couple years.

In mid-August of 2023, a representative from Essex, Washington, Hamilton and Warren Counties interviewed three qualified firms from nine total applications and I was proud to represent Essex County in that process. Tectonics engineering consultants, geologists and land surveyors of Latham was selected as the winner of the RFP and according to Tectonics introductory letter they have provided more than 35 years of professional engineering and project management services for telecommunication, wireless and broadband projects nationwide including throughout New York State however, as we learned not so much in the North Country.

So what types of broadband data is the regional planning collecting and analyzing? They will be collecting data that is related to terrestrial broadband service availability within the five county region which is Essex, Warren, Washington, Hamilton and Clinton counties. Tectonic will be

planning and engineering for fiber based and fixed wireless solutions with the understanding that they are working in our beloved Adirondack Park.

Last Thursday at the Lewis Town Hall Supervisor Monty and myself we joined in on the first organizational and introductory remote meeting with Tectonic and the variety of stakeholders from the five counties. Jim and I, we were the only elected officials on the call with other counties apparently using their Economic Development Directors or GIS specialists to represent their counties. In the short term, remote meetings will be held weekly to establish a working relationship with Tectonic and our local broadband needs and to verify what they are working on is actually meeting our local needs. Eventually these meetings will move to monthly. The focus of this work is on mapping to strengthen the broadband serviceable location fabric and not necessarily focusing on physical deployment and expansion. The definition of fabric in this context is a data set of all locations in the United States and its territories where fixed broadband internet access service is or could be installed, that's the definition of that. The fabric allows broadband availability data filers, the FCC and other stake holders to work from a single standardized list of locations from the broadband data location. The FCC has contracted, the Federal FCC has contracted with CostQuest Associates to create this nationwide fabric and CostQuest is based out of Cincinnati and Seattle. A strong local fabric or data map will yield stronger opportunities for Essex County to receive BEAD funding. BEAD stands for Broadband Equity Assess and Deployment programming which was part of the bi-partisan infrastructure law signed by President Biden in November of 2021, which allocated among many things nearly \$42.5 Billion dollars to expand high speed internet access by funding and planning infrastructure deployment and adoption programs in all fifty states. With each state receiving at least \$100 million to be dispersed to the New York State Connect All Office. In actuality, New York State Connect All has been allocated over \$664,000 million dollars from the infrastructure law. So Tectonic will want to communicate in the coming months with you. With our local officials on this board who are most aware of where broadband needs exist. Many of our communities have pockets of underserved or unserved locations that are not well mapped or are incorrectly mapped at the State and Federal levels. Tectonic plans among many things on creating a county strategic plan for Essex County which will based on local broadband initiatives in your towns. Personally, I don't think any of the companies that responded to the RFP have ever been to Essex County in any meaningful way so I speculate that their depth of knowledge about how difficult our telecommunication life is is marginal at best but hopefully I'm wrong. Also with the allocation of the vast amount of money at the Federal and State level I still have my reservations about how the money will be allocated to actually meet our local needs where we will see an actual difference made for our constituents who need adequate broadband for any number of reasons public safety, socialization, entrepreneurship, education, just to name a few. If you remember the Cuomo administration announced nearly 10 years ago, \$500 million dollars in monies for broadband funding in New York State and much of that was squandered on satellite providers.

GILLILLAND: And electric companies.

HUGHES: Thank you. Hopefully with the regional planning board's leadership we will see better returns on this current investment. So your involvement fellow supervisors on a communication standpoint is critical if you still have broadband deserts in your communities. You have constituents who rely solely on Star link or satellite providers like Hughes net, no affiliation and cellular companies like Verizon to access the internet then you have broadband deserts. If you have constituents that rely on DSL connectivity that should be considered underserved and you'll want to participate in this effort with Tectonic. If you wish to opt out of any potential future conversation opportunity with Tectonic because your town is A-Okay you're good to go let me or Jim know and we'll remove your name from the contact list Tectonic has requested to assist in

their product work. So I thank you very much for your time this morning. There's a lot there and with that, I will turn it over to Mr. Monty for any follow up or we can take questions if you have them. Thank you for your attention.

MONTY: Just briefly I know we've been here a while. It was a very interesting meeting. I've been knee deep into broadband since I've got elected here and the biggest problem we have is the inaccuracy of the fabric because what the State connect all office has does not match up anywhere near what the FCC has and if you check with the providers that we have in our area what they say are provided and what even the state or the FCC have does not match up so what I believe the goal here is to get accuracy on what we have and don't have and when we're talking about connectivity and hooking some places up you've got to take into account the fact that your providers aren't going to run two miles up the road for one home. That's not feasible but if you have pockets where they can connect multiple homes that's what we want to know, that's what they want to hear about those pockets and like Ken said we're going to start meeting monthly to gather information anybody that's interested we're going to add everybody unless you tell us no. If you tell us no then we won't have you added to the list to be on these calls. I think it's not costing Essex County a dime in the investment because the Northern Borders is paying for it but I think it's a great opportunity for us to bring better broadband to your communities. Thank you.

STANLEY: So this effort is to check the validity and accuracy of the served and unserved in Essex County essentially?

MONTY: Essentially, yes.

HUGHES: And to improve upon that process.

STANLEY: Thank you.

DOTY: Do you guys know the limit of density? Like when Spectrum comes in you have to have seventeen people per mile yet there's got to be some kind of an equation so we can figure out some of our desert areas that are even practical.

MONTY: As far as I know I don't believe there is because if you talk to several providers what Charter tells you, what SLIC tells you, what Verizon tells you is different. Everybody is different and the problem is the major providers don't want to divulge their information, your smaller providers are more than willing to give you the information you need the major providers, they don't want to do it actually they refuse to do it.

DOTY: So in essence, this mapping doesn't solve all the problems?

MONTY: No but I think it's a good first step because what they are trying to do is get some accuracy because if you go and look at any of these, the fabric that already exists there is so many inaccuracies on it it's unbelievable and they have places being covered allegedly by I'll just use Charter/Spectrum that are mostly easement but Charter/Spectrum is claiming them. I could go on for hours in what they did in my town but I complained enough and banged my head on the desk enough so that they admitted that they weren't served even though they were saying they were served.

HUGHES: And just to follow up on that part of the RFP says Tectonic will prepare and collect non-disclosure agreements with the associated ISP's Internet Service Providers, power utilities,

municipalities, counties and others in order to gain information on the existing and near term services and plans with each service provider.

GILLILLAND: Mr. Hughes can you send that out, what you wrote to the board?

HUGHES: Absolutely.

GILLILLAND: Thank you. Any further questions?

McNALLY: I want to thank Mr. Hughes and Mr. Monty on this work but in ten years I've seen these maps come out everyone has their own map and at one time we were 98% covered through that was ten years ago so we know how accurate that was but I think the key point here is they have to be involved with us when the phone rings and you get the opportunity to get your case heard and you get an actual correct map out there I think this is the time that you've really got to spend the time and get it done because I've seen different issues with things like this where supervisors don't step up and they don't get the information out, this is our opportunity it's not costing us anything and I think it's important that you make sure that you give them the data that they need. Where the funding is coming from, who knows but at least we'll get on that list.

HUGHES: Chairman, I don't want to upset the apple cart but I do have a question about the twelve on the floor rule. Is there any interest in removing that from our proceedings?

MANNING: No. If you look at any parliamentary guide, Robert's Rules of Order what things are done, I think Tommy brought it up I didn't want to say anything at the time generally it's a two-thirds vote but twelve happens to be two-thirds of eighteen so we use the twelve as a short hand method and myself position is and I can get you some information on this, is that because resolutions that are brought from the floor are usually last minute and they haven't had been fully vetted or fully debated the people that invented Robert's Rules of Order, Robert and his protégé determined that this should be a little bit of control so that's why it is a 2/3 vote to get it onto the floor that's my guess. It is ambiguous throughout parliamentary proceedings.

GILLILLAND: I would make one comment on that, in that we encourage anybody any department head who has to bring business to come through the committee process in which then the whole committee process particularly for a resolution that maybe controversial, that may pit small towns against large towns those kind of things as you and I know small towns are in a different negotiating position than large towns and this board, in our experiences have not had that but in the past there has been those issues so if you want to go against something through the committee process, the ways and means process where your vote is one vote one community through ways and means per person on the board and then they go to weighted vote to jump through all those hoops for a resolution I think the twelve to allow it on the floor is a proxy for that and if something that comes up at the last minute that is controversial that would pit one side of the board against each other then that becomes a proxy to stop something, that maybe stop what the majority wants, that's my opinion. Anything else?

MONTY: One quick thing if you don't mind it's my yearly talk about the United Way briefly. I put on everyone's desks a campaign for the 2024 United Way. As most of you know I'm on the Board of Directors at the United Way and I'm also the campaign director for Essex County on our actual fundraising campaign and I'm putting a challenge out to the Essex County Board of Supervisors to donate. We've been doing this. I'm very lucky we now have Angie Allen on the Board of Directors at United Way which is very, very fortunate and Angie and myself have been going



around to departments and talking about this and we would love to come to your town if that's something that you would like us to do. I personally donate a portion of my salary from the county to the United Way specifically into one of the thirty-one partner agencies that are listed in that paperwork. 100% of your donation goes to that partner agency there's no administrative fees taken out or anything so I would like to challenge us because we go to these departments and we ask our employees, each one of our employees to donate to the United Way and I'm a firm believer if I can't lead the way and show them that I'm doing it I don't have the right to ask them to do it. So I'm asking you to get on board the train and donate to the United Way even if you've done so in the past every year you have to resubmit to the Personnel Office to have this as a payroll deduction. You don't necessarily have to do it as a payroll deduction you can do it as a one-time deduction so that's entirely your choice and I would be glad to take any questions. Since I've been on the board of directors at the United Way I think we draw a greater presence to Essex County they've stepped up on just about every disaster we had in helping people all over Essex County. We just took care of a situation in a community in the southern part that a family's stove went out Christmas Eve, we got it done for them within in time enough for them to cook Christmas dinner. I'm very pleased with what goes on there and I encourage you and if you have any questions pertaining to United Way or knowing someone in need, get a hold of me, please, get a hold of me. Thank you.

STANLEY: I would just like to support Mr. Monty because my first couple months in office we had a flood in Jay and we had 25 families displaced in February and United Way actually led the long term recovery effort and they are just a call away. They are there to help anybody in any of our communities at a moment's notice and there's probably been no better organization to help people in need than the United Way.

GILLILLAND: Thank you. Is there any other business to come before this board? If not, we are adjourned. Thank you very much.

As there was no further discussion to come before this Organizational meeting it was adjourned at 11:23 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Garrison, Clerk  
Board of Supervisors