



# Onondaga County Legislature

**JAMIE McNAMARA**  
Clerk

**TIMOTHY T. BURTIS**  
Chairman

**TAMMY BARBER**  
Deputy Clerk

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## WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE MINUTES – OCTOBER 29, 2024 COLLEEN A. GUNNIP, CHAIR

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Mr. May, Ms. Abbott, Mr. Romeo, Mr. Ryan, Mr. Garland

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Mr. Knapp

**ALSO ATTENDING:** Chairman Burtis, Ms. Cody, Mr. Olson, Mr. Brown; also see attached

Chair Gunnip called the meeting to order at 10:40 a.m., and the previous meeting's minutes were approved.

### 1. **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT:** Dan Wears, Commissioner

#### a. **2024 Transfer Resolution (\$200,000)** (*Sponsored by Mr. Olson*)

- 2024 budget included \$200,000 in Legislative Contingency
- Requesting to move money into a project account to conduct EMS study
- Within county have 18 transporting agencies (BLS and ALS), 53 fire departments (BLS pre-hospital emergency care)
- Want to put together proposal and have outside consultant do study of entire system
- Study would start with dispatch
  - How different types of calls are dispatched; is county effectively using resources
  - Working within NYS DOH regulations
- Study would then go through all the way to transfer of patient care to hospital
- Study will include looking at staffing, call volumes, dispatch types, types of resources utilized
- Ultimately will make recommendations on how to improve the system within the county
- Goal to be transparent and work with all agencies involved
  - It has been discussed at EMS Advisory Board, Ambulance Directors Association
- Need buy-in to have a good study, as it will take participation from each agency to provide information and recommendations to consultant; consultant to put together the final report
- EMS system complicated with a lot of state laws and regulations mandated to follow

### Questions/Comments from the committee:

- If there is a recommendation for implementation, then the county is relying on the agencies to implement, correct?
  - Correct, County does not have regulatory authority over any EMS agencies or fire service
  - Need the buy-in from the get go, and there are agencies open to changes
  - Have to have outside company that does this with expertise to provide recommendations
- Are agencies coming to EM and showing a willingness to participate?
  - Some are, but it is more private conversation
  - Working on RFP
  - This should be continuum of recommendations, not all or nothing; one recommendation is do nothing
  - Will have to try to predict implications of each recommendation, and what that means if they were to do it
- Is EM referring to a better way to do things across all stakeholders (EMS, fire, etc.) when they say, “EMS system”?
  - Correct, system as a whole includes 911 to the hospital
  - Nurse Navigation had an impact on the system, so how does that play into it
  - Changed call type dispatches

- Historically have had ALS (Advanced Life Support) system for decades
  - Is it an appropriate use of resources to send an ALS to someone with a stubbed toe
- Working through call types and determinants of what type of resources are dispatched
  - Is that a recommendation? Or is it that more BLS ambulances are available?
- EM has changed call types to be able to recommend BLS unit to go to a call (i.e. stubbed toe)
- Takes medical doctors to sign-off for BLS (Basic Life Support) ambulance to an ALS call
- 5 different call levels through EMS – Alpha through Echo
  - Alpha – can they send more BLS ambulances, depending on call type
  - If it goes out as an Alpha, is that what it actually is
- Is there an appetite to get it this study done?
  - Yes, think there is
  - Figured out there is mutual aid, but is it because the home agency is not being staffed appropriately, or are they providing mutual aid too much that they do not have an ambulance for their own district
  - Has been an appetite and interest, with no direct negative impact
  - System is changing
  - State just passed laws to allow treatment in place; designed for reimbursement to agencies that do it
    - Not in play yet, but authorized now
    - Previously, (i.e.) a crew would answer a call, treat in place and leave; no reimbursement
    - Now those agencies will generate revenue when there is a refusal
    - Still figuring this out, and how it will be handled
- Was there discussion about a more internal or local effort?
  - Have talked about it; it is resources and expertise of those that do this all the time
  - Some agencies give EM data, but what to do with it
  - Do not know that EM has capacity do this, even with bringing in other people
  - Will help to have someone from outside look at systems, how they exist in other places, and make recommendations
- Is fostering relationships and cooperation part of this?
- What is the biggest lifesaving concern EMS wise in the county?
  - Biggest changes have to happen at state level; as state regulates it
  - (i.e.) if someone stubs their toe and demands an ambulance, the ambulance has to take that person; even with a trained professional saying there is nothing wrong that person
  - It is a drain on resources, but there is no way of avoiding
  - Last state EMS update on regulations was in 1980
- Medicaid also dictates
  - Treatment in place has changed, and state is opening avenue for reimbursement
- Once the data is gathered, what is EM going to do to share it?
  - EMS Advisory Board will be big part of that
  - Working on scope, and expecting selective contractor to participate in EMS meetings to have opportunity to provide feedback and recommendations
  - Contractor will also have to have draft for review to engage all stakeholders along the way
- Will this give recommendations for state changes?
  - Fully expect it to; everyone says the state needs to change
- Will this produce a public report?
  - Do not have answer to that; will depend on what it defines, and what is in it
  - Basic information will be shared
- Do inter-facility transfers fall into this?
  - They will as far as a resource perspective
  - Typically agencies taking crews off the road out of the 911 system to provide inter-facility transports
  - Some agencies do schedule them
  - Will make note to ensure it is in there

- What is the sense of buy-in from other departments?
  - Depends on recommendations that come out of it and level of support for the individual recommendations
  - 2 extremes of doing nothing, or the county taking over; not recommending either of those
  - Different agencies will have more interest in consolidating than others (different resources, call volumes, revenue)
- As far as recommendations, will EM be coming back to the Legislature before a policy is made?
  - Will have to if county is implementing something
  - County does not have ambulance agency
  - Will come back in financial perspective
- Is there any appetite at state level to make changes?
  - Yes, been number of pushes, some within budget with significant changes, but none have made it through
  - State did full report on the state system as whole

*A motion was made by Mr. May, seconded by Ms. Abbott, to approve this item. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.*

## **2. COUNTY LEGISLATURE:**

### **a. 2024 Transfer Resolution (\$50,000) (Sponsored by Mr. Burtis)**

**REQUEST: List of everything that has been done to be provided by Clerk**

*A motion was made by Mr. May, seconded by Ms. Abbott, to approve this item. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.*

## **3. LOCAL LAW:** Chris Reidy, Director of Security; Ben Yaus, First Chief Deputy County Attorney

### **a. A Local Law in Relation to Establishing a Demonstration Program Imposing Owner Liability for Failure of an Operator to Stop for a School Bus Displaying a Red Visual Signal and Stop-Arm (Sponsored by Mr. Olson)**

- This local law is putting liability on owners of vehicles that pass school busses
- Albany, Oneida and Broome counties have implemented this
- Onondaga County issued RFP and is in contract agreement with Verra Mobility, who operates system for Oneida and Broome counties
- Program will hopefully reduce incidents of people passing school buses that could lead to injuries of children
- Looking at pilot program to start with 4 districts: Baldwinsville, Liverpool, North Syracuse and East Syracuse-Minoa
- All 4 districts expressed interest in the program
- In process of having MOUs (Memorandum of Understanding) in place with Verra Mobility, county and school districts
- Once those are in place, will move forward with company fleet sizes and implementation timing
- Shooting for 2025/2026 school year
- Verra Mobility takes care of equipment, installation, oversees program, handles capturing of evidence for fines
- Once video captured passing stopped bus, that video will go to county to approve or deny violation based on evidence
- Verra Mobility will issue fine to owner of vehicle and fine will come back to county
- Based on Verra Mobility numbers, looking at 90% accumulation of 1 time fines
- Will have impact on community with stopping this from occurring

### **Questions/Comments from the committee:**

- Nothing more upsetting than someone passing a school bus when loading or unloading children
- Would like to see it go back to the Public Safety Committee for vetting
- Already have questions about the first 4 or 5 items for clarification, deeper dive on funding, accountability
- This puts the onus on the owner of the vehicle versus violator

- How much of this is attributed to the law that was passed (brought forward by Assemblyman Magnarelli)?
  - Law:
    - RFP went out in 2020
    - Contract has not been executed, but will be based on the RFP now
    - Was set to sunset in 2024, but has been renewed
    - This is a recitation of state law; wrote this and familiar with it
    - State has had 4-5 years and made some amendments; courts are familiar
    - Models state law
- Did the state law put it back on school districts or municipalities?
  - Law:
    - It is a local opt in, so this local law is needed to enact the program
    - Once county acts, it is for the whole county, except for the city; city has their own program
    - State law runs through December 2030; more counties signing up, but cannot predict what the state will do
    - Once the state sunsets (authorization), the county's would as well
- The county, not the schools, has to do this, and the schools buy-in, correct?
  - Law:
    - Yes, local municipalities can, but negotiating and working with school districts to take the onus
    - County contract with Verra Mobility
    - Schools cannot have any charges or expenses under this program – built into statute
    - County enters into MOU (3 party agreement) with school district
    - MOU allows county to install cameras on bus; if there is a third-party bus company, they would also be involved
    - In process of redlining agreement with school districts that have signed up so far
    - MOU also allows use of the camera on the bus and transmittal of the information
    - Verra does the initial review of the photos, the tickets, the collection, and Mr. Reidy (or county officer) will review the photos/videos as well – will ensure pedestrians are not shown, faces are blurred and violation is true
    - Fees collected are the county's, and Verra invoices for services separately
- Is this operating on violations, so there is no funding put into it?
  - Law:
    - Yes, that is the idea
    - In first 1.5 years of roll out with this signage program, Broome County made \$400,000
    - Some administrative expenses, but it has gone up from there with admin costs going down
    - Idea is safety and self-sustaining
  - Security:
    - Anticipating spike with roll out, then decline to steady stream
- Is this putting the county at risk for liability if something goes wrong?
  - Law:
    - Mirrored state law
    - People in area more likely to make legal stink
    - There will be an attorney roll, since county has to take violator to court if they do not pay the fine
    - Some attorney cost and expense
    - Court case hard to win with 5 years including revisions to meet evidence judges are looking for
  - Security:
    - Has been challenged in Suffolk and other areas
    - It has withheld legal standards; no successful overturning of it
    - Red light cameras have been in existence for long time; similar thing – owner responsible
  - Law:
    - The owner can sue the driver, but that is not the county's realm; that is civil action
- What percent of owners have kids driving?
- i.e. With license plate reader, it seems to be good to get people, but people were photographed accidentally
- Need to be a little more pragmatic

- Surprised it is in the county’s purview; is it the law that gives county power to do this?
  - Security:
    - Was brought up to Sheriff and DA, who declined initially
    - County’s coordinate it no matter what law enforcement entities approve or deny
  - Law:
    - Sheriff’s Office is issuing tickets, but what are the chances a Sheriff is there when someone runs that stop sign
    - If a Sheriff is there, it is ticketed by the Sheriff, and the person is not double fined
    - Some county’s use the Sheriff to review the footage, but it does not have to be
    - For DMV’s red light program, there are DMV officials that do it
    - Anyone trained can read the videos
- Are there any (school) districts doing this and already have cameras?
  - Law:
    - City has a program
  - Security:
    - Spoke with Syracuse PD, and they are still in the process; at City Hall
    - In the county, these will be the first schools
- There are schools that contract bus services, so how would that work?
  - Security:
    - Implementing program with 4 districts that all own their own fleet; no issue with contracted fleets
    - Would have to amend MOU agreement and add vendor that provides the bus services

Committee discussed talking to Chairman Burtis about sending this to the November Public Safety Committee.

**4. ONONDAGA COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY:** Dawn Marmor, Executive Director  
**a. Authorizing an Intermunicipal Agreement with the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry for a Federal Work-Study Community Service Program at Onondaga County Public Libraries** (*Sponsored by Ms. Cody*)

- Libraries would like to offer tutoring after school and during early evening hours at 6 city branches
- Free drop in support for students in grades K-12
- Subjects include reading, writing, science and math
- Would like to offer at Beauchamp, Betts, Paine, Petti, Soule, and White branches

*A motion was made by Mr. May to approve this item.*

**Questions/Comments from the committee:**

- Where does SUNY ESF come in?
  - Approached by them, as they have community program placing work study students within community
  - They have students working at the Y, and it is natural fit for libraries, who have students needing help
  - Benefit for their school subjects, but also allows grade school students to interact with college students in the city

***Mr. Ryan seconded the motion. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.***

The meeting was adjourned at 11:21 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



JAMIE McNAMARA, Clerk  
 Onondaga County Legislature

ATTENDANCE

COMMITTEE: **WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE**

DATE: **OCTOBER 29, 2024**

NAME (Please Print)	DEPARTMENT/AGENCY
JOHN BOLTON	
Dan Wears	EM
Arne Leghin	COMPTROLLER
Larry Van Wie	COMPTROLLER S
Dawn Marmore	LIBRARY
Reni Battelle	Library
MARK ANDERSON	OCPL
Tom Tokusz	
<del>Glenn Skind</del>	FLPB
Brian Reeves	AFLPB