



Onondaga County Legislature

JAMIE McNAMARA
Clerk

TIMOTHY T. BURTIS
Chairman

TAMMY BARBER
Deputy Clerk

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PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MINUTES – NOVEMBER 14, 2024 **MARK A. OLSON, CHAIR**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr. McCarron, Mr. Bush, Ms. Hernandez, *Mr. Garland
ALSO ATTENDING: Chairman Burtis, Mr. Romeo; also see attached

Chair Olson called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m., and the previous meeting's minutes were approved.

1. EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS (E911): Julie Corn, Commissioner; Sean Sparks, Public Safety Shift Supervisor

a. Resolution Authorizing a License Agreement with the Town of Cicero for the Use of the Pompey Radio Tower Site

- Town of Cicero Highway approached E911 to collocate their highway repeater on Pompey Tower Site
- Reviewed current loading on the tower, and it is well within limits
- Developed license agreement with annual rent of \$3,600 – fair amount to offset maintenance on tower, electricity used, E911 services (care and feeding)

Questions/Comments from the committee:

- Please clarify feeding
 - E911:
 - Visit tower sites at least once a month to ensure everything is adequate
 - Always looking for collocate issues; (i.e.) see something that might be a problem with state DOT repeater, will call their radio person to let them know they may want to look at it
 - NYS, DOT and Parks have repeaters at Pompey site currently
 - There are some repeaters at Pompey that have been there for decades - most arranged with Sheriff's Office
 - Would like to look at memorializing those and formalizing; working with Law to get that taken care of

*Mr. Garland arrived at the meeting.

- Law:
 - Will come to Legislature with another Local Law for Eagle Pointe Farms Pompey Communication Tower
 - Exercise option to purchase; negotiating with farm owner to get to reasonable outcome
 - Different communication tower in Pompey
 - Similar with town of Elbridge – superseding prior resolution to come to agreeable solution for everyone

A motion was made by Mr. McCarron, seconded by Ms. Hernandez, to approve this item. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.

2. SHERIFF: Chief Lisa Dell, Civil Department; Chief Maureen Murphy, Administration

a. Personnel Resolution

PURPOSE: Create a new Accountant I position within the Onondaga County Sheriff's Office.

OBJECTIVE/ WORK PLAN: *Our objective is to create a new Accountant I position within the Onondaga County Sheriff's Office.*

The creation of this position will enhance fiscal oversight, accountability and fiscal transparency. The position is proposed in response to a recent Onondaga County Comptroller's Office audit which recommended the establishment of this position.

FUNDING SOURCE: *With the approval of the legislature this position will be funded by the Onondaga County Sheriff's Office Operating Budget (101) and salary saving from unfilled positions.*

BUDGET: *Appointment authorized by this resolution will be funding by the 101 Operating Budget.*

October 30, 2024

Chairman Burtis:

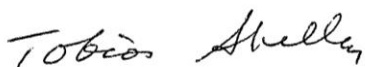
Per your request, allow me to provide the additional details on this position. This position is required to provide professional level accounting practice and procedural oversight to the accounts within the Civil Division of the Sheriffs office. Basic accounting principles and practice requires more than one person to have oversight of all accounts.

When I took office in 2023, one of my top priorities was to ensure the funds entrusted to my office were secure. I was made aware of previous financial audits which specified the need for more oversight of the Civil accounts, as well as the egregious theft of a substantial amount of money from these accounts. The audit performed after I took office (attached to the request) also listed the need for more oversight and specified the need for someone with a proper accounting background.

The Civil Division takes in and processes well over a million dollars each year, and proper fiscal oversight is critical to keep these funds secure. My Personnel roster does not currently have a title which will meet the needs of the office or comply with the requirements of the audit. I believe an employee qualified to hold this title will possess the necessary qualifications to provide critical oversight of these accounts.

If you would like any further information, please feel free to reach out to me.

Sincerely



Tobias Shelley
Onondaga County Sheriff

- Add Accountant 1 title to roster
- When Sheriff Shelley took office in 2023, asked County Comptroller to do audits of all fiscal accounts
 - Due to unfortunate incident that happened year before
- Audited all fiscal accounts, including civil account where vulnerability was
- After audit, recommendation to separate duties
- (i.e.) Person posting payments should not do disbursements
- Recommendation to hire someone with an accounting or financial background

Questions/Comments from the committee:

- Was this around the same time there was a meeting on grant writing and hiring outside people?
 - Similar to make sure they have proper credentialed personnel performing financial tasks
 - Prior to Sheriff Shelley, one person was in control of all of it, including grants and civil bank account
 - Full control over checks, posting payments, records management; permissions to everything
 - (i.e.) County Clerk has Accountant with no permissions to do transactions; strictly did bank reconcile

A motion was made by Mr. McCarron, seconded by Mr. Garland, to approve this item. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.

Sheriff Shelley presented the following information.

- Section of General Municipal Law stating that if someone transfers from one agency to another in less than 3 years, agency gaining has to pay a percentage of wages
 - Lost member to Norwich PD with less than 3 years, so Norwich will owe county a percentage of money
 - Person from Cortland County coming to Onondaga County with less than 3 years; will have to pay Cortland
 - State Police exempt from this rule
3. **LOCAL LAW:** Christopher 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**
- Local law gives county ability, through contract with Verra Mobility, to install stop-arm cameras on school busses
 - Camera will capture events necessary to administer violation fine to registered owner of vehicle
 - Program up and running in several counties across state
 - 90% rate of one-time offenders; proven to reduce violations of people passing buses, which results in safer community and transport of kids
 - 5th school district came on board since Ways & Means – Jamesville Dewitt
 - MOUs out to North Syracuse, Baldwinsville, Liverpool, East-Syracuse Minoa and Jamesville-DeWitt
 - Once the local law is passed, will enter into agreements and look at timeline of installation of cameras

Questions/Comments from the committee:

- Is the goal to be operating by next year's school year?
 - Security:
 - Shooting for September 2025 start of school year
 - Have pilot run with these districts to get better idea of volume or potential violations and revenue
- There was a question of fee structure not being stiff enough, but this is state law; have to stick with it
- 90% are not repeating, but 10% is still too high for second offenders
- Are the drivers getting the ticket, or the owner of the vehicle?
 - Security:
 - Similar to red-light or construction cameras, it is an administrative fine, so the registered owner is sent the fine
 - There are stipulations within the law allowing the registered owner to go after the operator
- Will this be considered a moving violation with points?
 - Security:
 - No moving violations; strictly administrative fine
- Why is this not coming under state jurisdiction?
 - Law:
 - NYS did this as a pilot program on the county's, completely county run
 - Not sure if state is using counties as local pilot to see if state administration would work
 - This might be prelude to state program
 - Odd to have county or local municipality administer it; state may take over in the future
 - Legislation sponsored by Assemblyman Magnarelli
- Buses are regulated by Section 377 of Vehicle and Traffic Law - local law enforcement enforces those laws
- All regulations for school buses or passing a school bus are enforced locally
 - Law:
 - Yes, this law provides that

- (i.e.) if a Sheriff sees someone pass a school bus and writes ticket, they are not double ticketed
- How would the county, villages and towns implement this?
 - Law:
 - Speculating there was not an appetite statewide; allowing opt in to see if there is an appetite
 - This is second renewal of 5 year period
 - What the state does at the end of the 5 years, cannot tell
 - Got enough traction to be renewed
- Is the revenue from the fines being collected by the towns?
 - Law:
 - Under this model, revenue is collected by County
 - 55/45 split with Verra, which is competitive split through RFP (some others were 70/30 county)
 - By law, local school district cannot have a single cost or expense; no cost to locality
 - Benefit county is providing
- How are fines collected if someone does not pay?
 - Law:
 - Violation, so points are not an issue
 - Security:
 - About 72% of people pay fines
 - Debt collection process for debt owed
 - Can either use Verra Mobility, for an additional fee, to collect debts, or county pursues on its own
 - Law:
 - Verra does not go to court; someone from Law Dept. to go to town or city court to deal with every challenge
 - Hard to argue; hoping there will be less challenges, but anticipate a decent amount of people questioning it
 - Security:
 - Right now ~5% going to court on these; courts have upheld the fines in all cases
- Change (to local law) since Ways & Means under Section 8A – added that the Legislature be part of reporting process
 - Law:
 - Not 100% confident every local court will provide the information, but will include if provided
 - Security:
 - Part of Verra Mobility is that they produce a report
- This is very similar to state vehicles on I81 with automated system issuing fines
- Do not think anyone has problem with concept, but there are questions with the details
- If Verra Mobility is willing to handle the billing, it would be good to not add more layers to county government
 - Security:
 - Only anticipation is that the county does not know what the volume will look like
 - Right now there is 1 person processing it
 - Will have better understanding what revenue and costs will be after 1st year

REQUEST: List of counties doing this program

- Is there a list of counties, or data, that can be provided?
 - Security:
 - Yes, have some; Oneida, Albany
 - Law:
 - Broome, Dutchess, Monroe, Nassau, Niagara
 - Security:
 - 7 counties currently up and running
 - Will look at how long each county has been doing it
 - Projecting 40,000 tickets in the first year, then slow decline and plateau at ~20,000 range
 - Will need to see what the plateau will look like for stability of program

- Is it the understanding that the county will use the revenue to keep the program going, but as everyone learns about it, is the revenue expected to go down?
 - Security:
 - Believe from revenue projections in other areas, program should be self-sufficient
 - Too soon to say firmly
 - When county is up and running and hits plateau with steady stream of revenue, then can discuss what to do
 - Law:
 - Once add more districts, whole new group of people not familiar with this
 - Will have buildout period when adding as many districts that want in
 - Initial period is posting signs (~every 100 locations) informing of school bus law; initial expense
 - Some of Mr. Reidy's time for reviewing and attorney time
 - Initial costs can be made whole by initial revenue, then as tickets go down, there is less attorney time, less review time – hope that it all levels out
 - Verra takes revenue off tickets, so less tickets means less revenue; not flat fee; percentage based
 - Security:
 - 5 districts to start with
 - Will have good idea towards end of school year
 - May add another 5 districts and get another peek and another plateau
- Is the 30-day warning period required by law?
 - Law:
 - Signage by law and an informational program
 - It is not required
 - Security:
 - Looking at coordinated effort with schools for public relations campaign
 - Company provides information for PSAs and notification
 - Looking at signage initially and cost
 - Law:
 - 30 days built into law; saw it on the one discussed internally
 - Way of complying with informational period without hitting people with tickets right off
 - It is one month, but it is optional
 - If Legislature not a fan, can remove the 30-day period
- Signs being made through County DOT, so it is internal
- Once the county is 2 years down the road and know the costs/revenue, is there a provision to reuse that money towards (i.e.) traffic safety, education programs or offsetting STOP-DWI costs?
 - Security:
 - Discussions will have once have better idea of what revenue will look like
 - Will have discussion on where best utilized in community
- What is the life span of the cameras and technology?
 - Security:
 - Cannot tell, but all of it is included with contract with Verra
 - County does not own any of it
 - Verra pays for maintenance using the revenue from the program
 - Law:
 - Productive meeting with school districts and bus operators, who were pleased with how Verra filled gaps, how things were attached
 - Idea is that when camera is removed, there is no damage and cameras can be periodically updated
 - Security:
 - Verra will restore the busses as close to whole as possible

- If (i.e.) North Syracuse School District wants control at the local level (school district covers part of the towns of Clay, Cicero, Salina and village of North Syracuse), those municipalities may not have jurisdiction over fences, correct?
 - Law:
 - Yes, that is correct
 - Security:
 - There is also jurisdictions like Bishop Ludden, Bishop Grimes, or the STEAM School
 - If (i.e.) North Syracuse were to break off and the county did not pass this, then the next district coming in would have to do this on their own; or the county would pass a local law which would supersede local jurisdiction
 - Either the county is in or out
 - Law:
 - State law says if the county acts it would supersede; how else would they operate a program with each individual
 - Village jurisdiction is the village boundaries, so they cannot enforce any law outside of their jurisdiction
 - Other part is signage – (i.e.) the village would have to sign every road in and out of the village, and every village or town would have to as well
 - Obligations of signage, going to court, someone reviewing – staff and time would be done on individual jurisdiction basis
 - It is an option for localities, but it is one or the other
 - Lot of local expense, burden and limitations jurisdictionally
- There are kids that get picked up on buses from different districts
 - Security:
 - Happens a lot where a bus goes from one to another (i.e.) BOCES
- District lines also cross county lines (i.e.) Central Square and Brewerton
 - Law:
 - If outside, county would be limited to county line
 - Security:
 - (i.e.) JD buses one kid to Oneida County; got clarification on legal jurisdiction
- In that case, the bus would not stop except at the school in Oneida County; any violation for pickup would occur within the county lines
 - Security:
 - Only exception is kids getting bused from one district to another, but that is still within county boundaries
- Talking about safety of a child and the grace period; agree with signage, but after that the person should receive the fine
- Not a new law, as it can be an actual officer issued ticket
 - Law:
 - If the general consensus is to take it out, can scrub the provision

The Committee agreed to remove the provision for the 30-day grace period from the local law.

- Was there an RFP for the third-party company?
 - Yes, did RFP before, but never executed the contract; valid RFP in competitive procurement
 - Received 2 or 3 responses; 1 did not respond
- Agreement with the company is 3 years with 2 year option
- Is the county starting with districts that provide their own transportation?
 - Security:
 - Just happened to work out that these districts all own their own fleet
 - If they did not, it would be an added person to the MOU (vendor of bus)
- Would there be an additional fee or charge working with the bus vendor, as the county would be modifying their fleet?
 - Law:
 - No, but there could be interesting contract provisions that could come into play
 - No cost to company, but may have more issue with things coming out of their bus

- Would not be a great look if the vendor did not want this
- Anticipate more negotiation if private bus company involved
- Is the county letting school districts (contracting with a third party) know that this is available?
 - Law:
 - Started with a couple, then JD reached out – open enrollment
 - Using this time to get good district comments on MOU
 - Want to get single MOU that every district could live with including caveats if there is a private bus company
 - If districts are interested, the county will take all inquiries
- Great program that is promoting safety of kids

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



JAMIE McNAMARA, Clerk
Onondaga County Legislature

ATTENDANCE

COMMITTEE: PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

DATE: NOVEMBER 14, 2024

NAME (Please Print)	DEPARTMENT/AGENCY
Sean Spinks	E911
JOHN BOXTON	
Maureen Murphy	Sheriffs
Lisa Doll	Sheriffs
Julie Coon	E911
Isabelle Harris	CE
Mike Nesci	CE
Chris Reidy	CE
PAUL DANIELLI	CE
Esteban Gonzalez	E911
PASSINO, Shelley, Newton	OCSO
Darcie Lesniak	Leg
Jason Dean	Finance
Armel Leghrie	Comptroller
Tim Beebe	Leg.
John DeSantis	Leg.
Steve Morgan	CFO
Joe Frateschi	Leg.