



Onondaga County Legislature

JAMIE McNAMARA
Clerk

JAMES J. ROWLEY
Chairman

TAMMY BARBER
Deputy Clerk

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ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION COMMITTEE MINUTES – JANUARY 21, 2023 JULIE ABBOTT, CHAIR

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ms. Cody, Ms. Kuhn

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mr. McBride, Mr. Garland

ALSO PRESENT: see attached list

Chair Abbott called the meeting to order at 1:35 p.m. *The minutes of the previous meeting had been distributed, and there were no objections to waiving the reading. There were no corrections to the minutes, and the minutes were approved.*

1. **OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENT:** Mary Beth Primo, Deputy Co. Executive; Jesse McMahon, Director **a. Confirming Appointment of Jesse McMahon as Director of the Office of Environment**

- Jesse is immensely qualified for the position with a Masters from Vermont Law School in Environmental Law and Policy (*Resume On file with the Clerk*)
- Prior employment with Aldi's and Novelis centered around environment
- For the record, no relation to County Executive J. Ryan McMahon, II
- Currently residing in Oswego County
- Purchase offer recently accepted for home in Onondaga County

Good afternoon,

I would like to say a few things about myself, my resume and my experience.

I grew up in Baldwinsville and graduated from CW Baker High School.

My undergraduate studies took me from SUNY Cortland, out to the University of Wyoming, and back to SUNY Cortland to graduate with a degree in Geology and Environmental Science

I began working as a Commercial Underwriter in Insurance in 2010, and realized that I would need to go back to school to work in the field I had originally intended.

I graduated with a Masters of Environmental Law and Policy from Vermont Law School in 2016.

I know Central New York well, as I have lived from Cortland, to Marcellus, to Oswego, and now am happy to find myself settling back in Baldwinsville.

In my nearly 15-year career I have spanned the Environmental professional spectrum from large scale project management, energy and greenhouse gas calculations, renewables, permitting, remediation, compliance, and sustainability.

As you all are aware, we have all of that here at the County and I am beyond excited to be a part of moving the County forward in the ever-changing environmental arena.

Thank you.

Questions and Comments:

- From an Agricultural family. What excites you about this job and what are you hoping to improve upon or continue to support in terms of environmental issues?
 - Started undergrad in Secondary Education in Earth Science to be an educator

- Enjoy Earth Science, particularly the science part of getting outside
- Realize the science along with policy changes the decisions that are made
- This position allows the ability to serve, see the policy, and form projects based on what the public wants
- Exciting to make and be a part of larger decisions that will change the direction the county is going
- Bringing sustainability, circular economics, and recycling into public sector is important
 - Working with Ag culture and OCRA will be very important moving forward
- Would you be interested in moving forward with the sustainability plan the county has in place?
 - Yes, not only sustainability but also the climate action plan which has not been looked at since 2017
 - CLCPA (New York’s Climate Leadership & Community Protection Act) has changed a lot of goals
 - On the department radar to come back around to make sure it aligns with what the state is looking at under CLCPA
- What is your experience with water issues as they relate to Micron and also the required Environmental Review (wetlands)?
 - Novelis had a fresh water intake that went directly into Lake Ontario; it was aging and had to be replaced
 - Worked through the permitting for project
 - Moving forward with Micron and working/supporting Ms. Harty at WEP in understanding what that will look like
 - SEQRA side – bringing in CLCPA and understanding environmental justice, disadvantaged communities, and air emissions will need to be considered when looking at any new SEQRA resolutions going forward
- How did you find out about the job?
 - Travis Glazier recommended the job through a conversation on LinkedIn
- Position was posted on Indeed and LinkedIn
- Had 2 internal applicants, 3 external applicants
- Jesse more qualified than the other candidates
- Interview committee consisted of Ben Yaus (Law Department), Dan Kwasnowski (SOCPA), Isabelle Harris (Strategic Initiatives), Mary Beth Primo (Physical Services)
- How many staff in Office of Environment; will you be looking for more staff?
 - 1 direct report and 1 or 2 interns
 - Responsibility has expanded in the department; will need more staff
- Onondaga Lake still an issue
 - Council on Environmental Health started due to issues with Onondaga Lake; went dormant when Russ Nemecek left, then COVID; and recently started back up again
 - Notice the Legislature leaning on the Council on Environmental Health due to all the issues of Onondaga Lake
- Is the Council on Environmental Health a Committee?
 - Yes, and it is a committee of the county
 - Committee Members include: Representative from Otisco Lake Preservation Association, Onondaga Lake Partnership, Engineers, Syracuse City school teacher
 - Various groups of people present at meetings with actual information and discussion
 - Examples: Mark Berger will present about Soil and Water; Rich Abbott from City of Syracuse Water Department; Upstate Fresh Water Institute etc.
- Office of Environment does not have a large department
 - They are administrators who figure out policy, where they should fund, what needs to be done, and finding people that can do the job
 - Jesse has been on board for 3 weeks and reaching out to different people and groups, having meetings
 - Dereth Glance is new Interim DEC Region 7 Director

A motion was made by Ms. Cody, seconded by Ms. Kuhn, to approve this item. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.

b. A Local Law Regarding Residency for the Director of the Office of Environment**Questions/Comments from Committee**

- When is house closing date?
 - No later than April 28, 2023

A motion was made by Ms. Kuhn, seconded by Ms. Cody, to approve this item. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



TAMMY BARBER, Deputy Clerk
Onondaga County Legislature

ATTENDANCE

COMMITTEE: ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

DATE: FEBRUARY 21, 2023

NAME (Please Print)	DEPARTMENT/AGENCY
MARY Beth PRINCE	CE
Jesse McMahon	Office of Environment
Ben Yaus	LAW
Darcie Lesniak	Leg
Jim Beebe	Leg
Tammy Barber	Leg