



## Allegany County Shared Services Meeting Minutes August 27, 2019

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- 1) Call to Order – The meeting was called to order at 5:30 pm. Director of Planning, Mr. Dirlam, announced the agenda and requested those who had not yet done so to sign in at the back of the room. He also identified the other handouts provided – Rotella Grants information on upcoming grant opportunities, minutes from the April 2019 meeting, copies of the final Shared Services Plan from 2018 that was presented and approved by New York State, and some information on dissolving or joining town governments.
  
- 2) Roll call of all present – Ron Staedt, Town of Alma Supervisor; Ron Truax, Town of Clarksville Supervisor; Gus Weber, Town of Andover Supervisor; Tyler Shaw, Environmental Health Director for Allegany County; Michel Cox, Town of Caneadea Supervisor; John Meehan, Village of Almond Mayor; Kim Howe, Town of Independence Deputy Superintendent; Lori Ballengee, Public Health Director for Allegany County; Debbie McDonnell, County Administrator; David Jennings, Town of Belfast representative; Andrew Mowrer, Olean Times Herald Reporter; Michele Miller, Village of Cuba Mayor; Carissa Knapp, Allegany County Attorney; Darwin Fanton, Town of Wellsville representative; Phil Stockin, District I Legislator; Jeri Reichman, Town of Independence Supervisor; Jon Gorton, Town of Grove Supervisor; Vicki Middaugh, Village of Wellsville representative; Terry Schmelzer, Village of Belmont Mayor; Lee James, Town of Cuba representative; Russ Hall; Town of Friendship Supervisor; Casey Jones, Transformation Initiative; Terri Ross, Treasurer for Allegany County; Patty Graves, Town of Wellsville representative; Bill Shuler, Town of New Hudson Supervisor; Bill Dibble, District III Legislator; Michelle Denhoff, Planning and Development Specialist for Allegany County; Kier Dirlam, Director of Planning for Allegany County; Richard Tobe, New York State Director of Special Intergovernmental Projects; Suzan Tobe; Liz Burakowski New York State Deputy Director of Upstate Revitalization
  
- 3) Review of previous efforts – Director Dirlam referred to the April 2019 minutes and gave a recap of the process to date. CGR was hired in 2018 and met with most of the communities and Allegany County representatives to create the initial plan so that the projects included were only things that Towns and Villages might be interested in pursuing. That was completed in October 2018 and approved.
  - a. There was a meeting held in April 2019 with minimal participation from members and basic concerns of sharing services and how to continue pursuing them. At that time, it was unclear how to demonstrate savings.
  - b. A session on converting street lights to LED and installing EV charging stations was held with a third party to show the benefits of conversion and how it can be made possible, regardless of the number being converted. Those interested in receiving the presentation may contact the Planning Office for a copy.
  - c. The Rotella Grants handout gives detailed information on upcoming grants that are outside of the CFA process. Director Dirlam stated that the Planning Office does have a contract with Rotella who would provide the grant writing service for a standard fee based on the contract if contacted through our office.

- d. Although there is some discussion in the plan of dissolving villages into towns, there is not much appetite for that here. There was previously some interest in merging towns together so a handout on that process has been provided as well.
- 4) Ms. Debbie McDonnell – Director Dirlam introduced Ms. Debbie McDonnell, who has recently taken over the position of County Administrator from Tim Boyde. Ms. McDonnell spoke and stated her thanks to the Planning staff for taking over this function. She continued with her background in economic development and financial investments. She then stated how important shared services are and how sharing services, big or small, can bring a lot back to communities. She also thanks the State representatives for attending today.
- 5) Guest speaker – Richard Tobe, Director of Special Intergovernmental Projects was introduced to the group. His wife and Elizabeth Burakowski, Deputy Director of Upstate Revitalization were also present in supportive roles. Mr. Tobe gave a very in depth discussion on the NYS Governor’s Shared Services Initiative, discussing things that were done in 2017, 2018, and things that will be done moving forward. During the earlier phases of this process it was determined that there may be some laws or regulations that are preventing some of the potential shared services from taking place. His suggestion was to contact the State and tell them about it. They are willing to work on things on a case by case basis, but if they are unaware of the interest in a certain idea, it will remain unpursued. Examples included Counties assuming the role of planning and zoning for communities, and combining county jails - using one as a jail for both Counties and the other for a special use (i.e. raise the age housing).
- a. The money that was put aside by the Governor for the \$1/\$1 match incentive is just now being rewarded so there are plenty of opportunities to seize the savings. However, a reminder was given that the incentive should be the service itself and the money municipalities are saving. The Rockefeller Institute has produced two studies on the plans and over 560 projects were presented. Four Counties have gone through the process fully, Cattaraugus County being one of them.
  - b. The law was amended in April 2019, removing deadlines and making the timelines slightly more flexible but extends the plan requirements to 2019, 2020 and 2021. This will require the panels to vote on producing a new plan, creating amendments, or determining no need for a plan in the upcoming year. Each year the panel is required to convene with at least two (2) public meetings and three (3) public hearings, in addition to a vote on whether or not a new plan will be submitted.
  - c. NYS has also determined that it will not be the deciding entity on who gets the match back. The savings must be submitted by the County on behalf of the panel, when received the panel then determines which participating community(ies) will receive the funds. This is done through use of “schedule c” which is part of the package of materials.
  - d. Mr. Stockin asked how long can projects be drawn out? Specifically, several communities reached out to the electric companies requesting information related to the LED lights. Mr. Tobe said, unfortunately, that is the glitch in the law, as reimbursement must be done in the twelve (12) months following the plan. Our plan was adopted/approved in 2018 so savings must happen in 2019. Work is being done to change the legislation so that savings will occur twelve months after project start time rather than approval of the plan.
  - e. Ms. Howe from the Town of Independence asked how an isolated town like their own is expected to come up with a plan to share services when other communities are so far away. Mr. Tobe responded that the law asks you to try, and he understands how difficult it is for rural communities to do so. He then gave some smaller examples of changing

heating options for offices or asking staff to clean their own offices rather than hiring it out. It is about the spirit of trying.

- f. Director Dirlam asked if there was a possibility to share services with border towns in other Counties. Mr. Tobe said that while there were no plans that included such projects, they are allowed. The only rule is that both counties must have the same project in their plans, submitted in the same year.
  - g. Mr. Hegarty from the Town of Almond asked if a town or village is eligible to receive savings on a project even if they voted no on the plan. Mr. Tobe responded that they are – the money is disseminated by the County and it will be the entity deciding who receives the match. The State is only interested in proof of shared service and dollar amount that was saved in the process.
- 6) Shared Services 2019 – Director Dirlam asked anyone that has been working on a shared service project to voice it so that the County can follow up on cost breakdown and savings later.
- a. The Village of Cuba and the Village of Belmont joined the Code Enforcement Consortium
  - b. There is a new Assessment Consortium in the lower half of the County that includes Andover, Alma, Wellsville, Willing, Friendship and Amity
  - c. The Town of Caneadea, Village of Cuba and Town of Grove contacted utilities earlier this year regarding LED lighting but have not heard from them. Mr. Tobe did say that if it is the utility company holding the progress up the State may be able to advocate on our behalf.
- 7) Shared Services 2020 – Director Dirlam then asked if anyone has ideas for packaging a new plan. There were no projects discussed but there was comments regarding the strength of our current plan and how it could be improved by adding timelines for each project (short or long term efforts and anticipated money saved).
- 8) Timeline – According to the current timeline, the Shared Services panel has now held two public meetings. There is still a need to do three public hearings and make a vote of whether or not to submit a new plan but we need to collect some shared service ideas before moving forward.
- a. Ms. McDonnell asked if all communities have considered conversion to LED lights? She stated that in her experience it shows a huge rate of return and there are programs available that will allow municipalities to borrow money for conversion all at once rather than doing one at a time. Something else to consider may be doing a bulk purchase for street paving. It would allow for better scheduling at a reduced rate and would only require one project bid for all streets, allowing for more time in the schedule. We are all serving the same tax payers, think about ways to advance your communities faster. Think broader, be creative, more open. Are there things that you'd like to do with the County as a partner?
  - b. Mr. Stockin asked if the cost savings converting to LED lights outweighs the installation expense, regarding lights and fixtures, etc? He thinks that might be why some communities haven't done it yet because they are unsure of maintenance cost.
- 9) Adjournment – At the close of the meeting Director Dirlam asked panel members to check emails and provide us the correct contact if needed, as more information will be sent out soon. The public hearing that was previously scheduled for September 26<sup>th</sup> is cancelled and will be rescheduled at a later time. The meeting was adjourned at 6:45 pm.