

**ALLEGANY COUNTY BOARD OF LEGISLATORS
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE****ALLEGANY COUNTY
BOARD OF LEGISLATORS****March 12, 2018**

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 9:02 a.m. by Chairman Curtis W. Crandall

LEGISLATORS PRESENT: Chairman C. Crandall, G. Barnes, W. Dibble, B. Harris, S. Havey, J. Ricci, D. Root (10:45 a.m.), P. Stockin (Absent: J. Burdick, P. Curran, J. Hopkins, K. Graves, M. Healy)

OTHERS PRESENT: H. Bedow, H.B. Budinger, L. Christman, S. Decker, E. Graham, C. Jones, A. Mattison, B. Riehle, D. Roberts, M. Washer

DEPARTMENTAL PRESENTATIONS AND TOURS:**Clerk of the Board**

Clerk of the Board Brenda Rigby Riehle began by introducing her staff members to the Board and gave a brief description of their job duties.

Sarah Decker, Journal Clerk, received her Master's degree in Business Administration from St. Bonaventure University. She began working in the office on June 17, 2013, and will be celebrating her 5-year anniversary in June. Mrs. Decker's primary job responsibilities are as follows:

- Records and compiles the proceedings of the Board of Legislators
- Prepares and distributes resolutions and local laws according to legal requirements
- Prepares the Journal of Proceedings
- Maintains an index of local laws
- Maintains the official Board calendar
- Maintains Clerk of the Board ledger of accounts as well as several others
- Maintains and processes payroll records
- Processes Central Services chargebacks
- Assists with annual budget process
- Assists with insurance liability claims
- Oversees the office in the absence of the Clerk

Mrs. Riehle noted that Mrs. Decker's job is so much more than taking Board minutes, adding the preparation of the Journal of Proceedings is no easy task, and she does a great job at it.

Meghan Washer, Secretary to Clerk of the Board, received her Associates in Business Management from Alfred State College. Mrs. Washer began working in the office part-time on August 15, 2016, and became a full-time employee on April 17, 2017. Mrs. Washer's primary responsibilities include:

- Prepares and distributes meeting notices and agendas
- Takes, transcribes, distributes, and files minutes of meetings
- Prepares various types of correspondence
- Prepares other informational and confidential documents
- Assists with payroll records
- Establishes and maintains confidential and general office files
- Assists the Clerk of the Board with any needed tasks

Mrs. Riehle stated Mrs. Washer's one task of taking, transcribing, distributing and filing minutes for meetings is a full-time job in and of itself.

Deborah Roberts, Senior Account Clerk Typist, received her Bachelor's degree in Business Administration and Accounting from Bryant and Stratton, and began working in the office on September 11, 2017. Ms. Robert's job duties include the following:

- Purchases office supplies for the entire County
- Prepares and distributes County Directory and Village Supplement
- Maintains spreadsheets on drivers and vehicles
- Maintains records on all vehicles with the exception of Public Works
- Processes Legislators' expense vouchers
- Maintains files on contracts
- Maintains appointments files
- Responsible for toner rebate program
- Prepares and sends District meeting notices
- Substitutes for Journal Clerk and Mail Clerk

Mrs. Riehle stated the County Directory is an important project for our department that is completely prepared and printed in-house by Ms. Roberts.

Ellen Graham, Mail Clerk, has been with the County for 27 years, and first began as a part-time Mail Clerk for the Department of Social Services. Ms. Graham moved to the Clerk of the Board's Office in 1997, and became full-time in 2001. Ms. Graham's job duties include the following:

- Distributes incoming mail
- Processes outgoing mail
- Prepares invoices for monthly postage chargebacks
- Maintains Board folders
- Performs large copying jobs
- Assists others when needed

Mrs. Riehle stated Ms. Graham works with thousands of dollars' worth of postage every year, adding because the mail is a vital part of the County functioning, it can be difficult at times for Ms. Graham to schedule time off.

Brenda Rigby Riehle, Clerk of the Board, received her Bachelor's degree in Organizational Management from Houghton College. Mrs. Riehle began working with the County in 1992 as an Account Clerk Typist, and became Clerk of the Board in 1998. Mrs. Riehle is very active in the NYS Association of the Clerks of County Legislative Boards serving as Treasurer for seven years, first vice-president for two years, and president for two years.

Mrs. Riehle continued her presentation reading the Clerk of the Board's Office Mission Statement that is referenced below:

"The mission of the Clerk of the Board's Office is to serve as an administrative arm to the Legislature and to provide the necessary support services to enable the Legislature to accomplish its goals by:

- Serving as the official link to all other departments in the County, other entities, State and Federal agencies, the public, and the media.
- Providing a prompt, courteous, and knowledgeable response to any request for information or assistance.

- Clearly communicating and encouraging compliance with Legislative policies and procedures.
- Accurately recording, distributing, and archiving official Legislative documents.
- Professionally fulfilling our assigned responsibilities.

Mrs. Riehle indicated that her office is one that has become known for being a reliable group that others can call and ask for help on things they don't typically handle, adding it is something they pride themselves on.

Mrs. Riehle continued her presentation stating that one thing that differentiates her office from other departments is that not only do we work for the public, we work for the Legislators. Their primary allegiance and responsibility is to them. Mrs. Riehle went on to say there is a lot of behind the scenes work happening in her office to ensure meetings are running smoothly; her office staff are planners, researchers, advertisers, coordinators, and schedulers, and sometimes it's only when things go wrong that they are noticed most. Mrs. Riehle stressed to the Board that her office only has their best interest in mind, and can be depended upon assist the Legislators.

Mrs. Riehle read through both mandated and non-mandated responsibilities of her office and highlighted the following additional duties her office performs:

Appointments

The Clerk of the Board's Office maintains a separate file for each board, agency, committee, etc. In addition, an index card system is maintained to show at a glance when appointments expire, who serves on a particular board, term of office, etc. Her office notifies the proper person, committee, or agency when a particular appointment will expire, and they also process the appropriate paperwork to re-appointment individuals. Appointments are divided into three categories: appointments made by the Chairman of the Board, appointments made by the Chairman subject to Board approval, and appointments made by the Board.

Annual Reports

Mrs. Riehle's office notifies department heads regarding the deadlines for submission of annual reports as well as the format required. Annual reports are due in her office by January or February, and if requested, a schedule is prepared for department heads to attend a Board meeting to discuss their report. Mrs. Riehle and Legislator Harris briefly discussed how to obtain an outside agency's annual report that we provide funding to.

Audits

Vouchers from various departments are reviewed and processed in the Clerk of the Board's Office. A summary of all expenses is distributed at each Board meeting for approval.

Budget Process

Mrs. Riehle's office prepares the budget estimate forms for the department head meeting as well as the timetable and procedures for the budget process. They send out estimate forms to various agencies requesting their budgetary appropriation requests, and they ensure that the proper procedures are followed regarding the setting of salaries for County officials whose salaries must be set by local law. The tentative and final budget for distribution are compiled in the Clerk of the Board's office, and they also make sure that the legal advertising requirements associated with the budget process are met. Legislator Decker commented that he thinks Allegany County's budget process is rubbing off on other counties because

Cattaraugus County has released the beginning works of their budget, and they were a county who typically waited until after election.

County Directory

Every year Mrs. Riehle's office produces a County Directory that lists federal, state, and county representatives; standing committees; county and town officials; and federal, state, and county agencies and committees. Mrs. Riehle noted that the directory is a great resource and the process of developing it is great networking experience.

Insurance

Mrs. Riehle's office maintains a copy of all insurance policies and an index of said policies. They maintain a file on all claims brought against the County and track all expenses associated with each claim. They maintain files on all County property, vehicles, drivers, etc., and any time changes are made, they are to notify the insurance company. All reports of incidents and accidents are filed with the Clerk of the Board's Office, and the Clerk processes, reports, and tracks each claim according to the established policies and procedures.

Journal of Proceedings

The Clerk of the Board's Office prepares the annual Journal of Proceedings to have printed and bound. The proceedings include officers of the board, legislators, county officials, standing committees, members of boards and agencies serving in that year, session minutes, annual reports, mortgage tax apportionment tables, workers' compensation budget and cost apportionment table, legislators' compensation table, county budget, tax tables, salaries of town officers, summaries of town budgets, general index, and numerical listing of resolutions. Mrs. Riehle sends out bid specs to area printers, and the Ways & Means Committee typically reviews the bids in November and selects a printer. Chairman Crandall noted what a great resource the Journal of Proceedings are for them, and while it's much easier to do things online, it's nice to have a paper copy to reference as well. Mrs. Riehle stated some counties have quit printing them which she sees as a disservice. Legislator Harris asked how many copies are printed. Mrs. Riehle stated we had between 45 and 50 printed, which is a big cutback from previous years.

Legislators' Compensation Table

At the beginning of every year the legislators' compensation table showing the salary earned and expenses reimbursed for each legislator during the prior year is completed. We used to be required by law to publish this table in the official newspapers in February of every year. Mrs. Riehle noted that on January 1, 2000, legislators went from a per diem salary to an annual salary, and while the requirement to publish the table is only for per diem salary, Mrs. Riehle's continues to provide the information to the media.

Resolutions

Mrs. Riehle's office receives pre-filed resolutions from the County Attorney's office by close of business one week prior to the following week's Board meeting. They are put into order, assigned intro numbers, and then mailed to the legislators. These pre-filed resolutions are made available to the public on the Thursday prior to the Monday board meeting, and the Clerk of the Board's Office assigns a final resolution number to each adopted resolution, and then distributes to the necessary people, agencies, etc. Mrs. Riehle and Legislator Harris

briefly discussed the process of a legislator wanting to draft a resolution to bring before the Board for consideration.

Break

At 9:52 a.m., the group took a small break and reconvened at 10:00 a.m.

ACCORD Corporation

ACCORD Executive Director Lesley Christman attended the meeting and discussed with the group what ACCORD's role is within the community. ACCORD is the Community Action Agency of Allegany County going back to 1972 and a one housing program, and were named Community Action Agency of Allegany County by the Legislature in 1986. They exist as result of a 1964 Declaration of War on Poverty by Lyndon B. Johnson during his first State of the Union Address and was deployed through the Economic Opportunity Act which created Community Action Awareness. ACCORD is very diverse in their scope of services that are offered, which can result in their definition being different to individuals based on their specific need.

Mrs. Christman stated that ACCORD has approximately 130 employees with more than 100 employees who work full time and earn a full benefits package. They are currently operating out of eleven locations, and they provide 22 low-income apartments that are located in Cuba, Belmont, Friendship, and Belfast. ACCORD also leases commercial space to four for profit and three non-profit entities located in Cuba and Belmont, and they also operate an 8-unit homeless housing facility in Almond. In 2017, ACCORD served approximately 6,000 constituents. Chairman Crandall asked if all of their funds are federal. Mrs. Christman indicated that 90 percent are federal; however, they do receive some state funding, and also have a contract with the Land bank. Mrs. Christman continued that they also have a state program that provides a child service referral program where parents can call and inquire about a trustworthy daycare. ACCORD also handles registrations for individuals looking to start up a new daycare center.

Legislator Harris asked about the setup of ACCORD's Board of Directors, and how members are appointed. Mrs. Christman stated if they have a vacancy, they reach out to see if there are interested individuals, and then the Board votes on their appointment. The Board is made up of nine members; three elected officials, three individuals who are receiving ACCORD services, and three at-large members. Mrs. Christman noted that no employees are allowed to be on the Board as the state does not allow it, and it is viewed as a conflict of interest.

Housing

Mrs. Christman briefly discussed ACCORD's housing services, stating they are or have delivered over \$3 million in rehabilitation and/or repair services to low-income, elderly, and disabled residents so they can continue to live in safe and sustainable housing. ACCORD works closely with the Department of Social Services to help serve residents at risk of homelessness in addition to providing transitional housing to homeless families and individuals.

Community Ops

ACCORD is a licensed domestic violence victim services provider and work closely with Probation and the Sheriff's Office to enhance victim safety. ACCORD recently received a grant to administer a pilot program for lethality reduction that helps to identify someone that is high risk of being a homicide victim. They receive funding through the Department of Social Services as well as through the New York State Office of Children and Family Services, and have a strong program in place.

Youth Services

ACCORD also has a three-year contract with the New York State Office of Children and Family Services to provide afterschool programs to elementary and middle school children. They also received a grant from the Ralph Wilson Jr. Foundation which helps keep their Teenage Advisory Board in place. This Board is a County-wide program that provides leadership training and opportunities to high school students. They hold a yearly Youth Summit, and this year's will be held at Houghton College with over 200 students expected to attend.

Legislator Barnes asked what their total budget is and how many employees they have. Mrs. Christman stated they have approximately 130 employees, 100 of which are full-time, and their budget is approximately \$8 million. Legislator Barnes commented that it appears between ACCORD and the Department of Social Services, there is a lot of overlap. Mrs. Christman stated ACCORD primarily helps the individuals who don't qualify for Social Services but are still struggling to make ends meet. When an individual comes to ACCORD, they are always referred first to Social Services; however, there are times where there are long waiting lists, or they don't qualify for benefits.

Legislator Stockin asked Mrs. Christman to highlight their food distribution program. Mrs. Christman stated they provide emergency food boxes to families when they are in need. The distribution center at the ACCESS Center in Belmont, NY, and they also work in partnership with Foodlink and host mobile markets throughout the County. Mrs. Christman thanked the Board for allowing her to attend and discuss ACCORD and encouraged them to visit their website at www.accordcorp.org.

Workers' Compensation

Workers' Compensation Executive Secretary Heather Bedow attended the meeting and discussed the Allegany County Mutual Self Insurance Plan which is also known as the Workers' Compensation Plan. Mrs. Bedow administers the plan, and she is the only employee of the department. Mrs. Bedow began working in this position in January 2018. Prior to working at the County, Mrs. Bedow began her insurance career at Allegany Co-op Insurance Company in Cuba, NY, and most recently worked at Richardson & Stout Insurance Agency in Wellsville, NY.

The Workers' Compensation Plan covers all of the employees of the 29 towns, villages, fire departments, emergency management services, County employees, as well as the Soil and Water District within the County. The members consist of 28 towns, 10 villages, 32 fire departments, 5 volunteer ambulance corps & all County departments. There were approximately 3,020 members in 2017, and all members of the plan are required to complete a pre-employment physical. Each town, village, and the County pay an apportionment to be covered by the plan, and these calculations are started in May for the following year. The formula for the apportionment is based on 1 percent real property valuation, 20 percent experience, and 79 percent total annual payroll. Mrs. Bedow's current operating budget is \$900,000. Mrs. Bedow continued that POMCO has been the Third Party Administrator for the plan for the last five years, and they are located in Syracuse, NY. They are paid \$25,000 annually, and the current contract is set to expire on April 30, 2018. Mrs. Bedow briefly discussed her job duties noting she is hoping to start up safety meetings again next year for our fire departments.

Office for the Aging

Those in attendance for the March 12 Department Tours travelled to the Office for the Aging Building at Crossroads in Belmont, NY. Anita Mattison, Coordinator of Services and Deputy Director, attended the meeting along with Office for the Aging Director Madeleine Gasdik. Following introductions, Ms. Gasdik began discussing with the group the following programs and services they offer:

Health and Nutrition

Senior Luncheon Centers: Luncheons for senior citizens and their caregivers are offered in Alfred, Belmont, Bolivar, Canaseraga, Cuba, Fillmore, Friendship, Wellsville, and Whitesville where they can enjoy a delicious, nutritious meal, companionship, activities, and entertainment. Ms. Gasdik noted that the Wellsville Luncheon Center is open the most frequently.

Meals-on-Wheels Program: Home-delivered meals are available for individuals who are unable to safely prepare meals due to illness or frailty, lack the knowledge and skills to prepare meals, or lack support of family, friends, or neighbors. Ms. Gasdik stated their Meals-on-Wheels Program has grown considerably; however, their funding has not. There are currently 23 routes; 10 have paid drivers, and the remaining are volunteer drivers. Ms. Gasdik indicated that the new agency they contract with is expected to open a kitchen in Allegany County.

Nutrition and Counseling: A Registered Dietician is available for consultation and assistance with special diet programs, restrictions, and nutrition related questions. Ms. Gasdik stated that their Registered Dietician recently retired; therefore, they cannot make any changes until they get a new one on staff.

Exercise Classes: Growing Stronger classes are exercises designed to improve bone density, muscle strength, balance, mobility, and flexibility. Classes are offered for those 55 years and older in Andover, Angelica, Belfast, Belmont, Bolivar, Canaseraga, Cuba, Fillmore, Friendship, and Wellsville. Legislator Harris asked what kind of participation they have. Ms. Gasdik stated the Wellsville class has close to 20 participants so they have had to split the classes into two.

In-Home Services

Caregiver Support: Caregivers occasionally need a break to reduce the stresses associated with caregiving. Office for the Aging offers home care services provided by a trained aide to allow the caregiver to run errands or take a much needed rest.

Expanded In-Home Services for the Elderly Program (EISEP): This program offers nonmedical assistance to individuals who need help staying at home. These services can include bathing, dressing, shopping, laundry, and housekeeping by a trained aide. This is a cost-share program based on monthly income, and contractors include Jan & Bev's or Willcare.

Handyman: Minor home repairs are provided to homeowners through a volunteer Handyman Program. The handyman's labor is free, and the homeowner pays for the cost of materials. If a repair is major, they will be referred to another agency for assistance. Ms. Gasdik noted they do not take away business from other County businesses. The common services their handymen are providing are changing light bulbs, smoke detector batteries, mowing lawns...etc.

Friendly Visiting and Telephone Reassurance: A daily phone call or a weekly visit is provided by volunteers for socialization and a health and safety check.

NY Connects Information and Referral: Office for the Aging is the primary resource for information and services that improve the quality of life for all individuals. They offer unbiased person-centered information and assistance to help you connect with the long-term services and supports needed to help loved ones remain safe in their home and community. Ms. Gasdik indicated that two years ago NY Connects was privatized, and the County is looking at an \$8 million budget cut because the funds are being given to the Independent Living Centers.

Health Insurance Information & Assistance: Free and objective information is provided on Medicare, Medicaid, prescription plans, long-term care insurances, and other options. A monthly training on Medicare is offered at their offices and educational programs are available to groups in the community.

Ms. Gasdik and Ms. Mattison briefly discussed the following miscellaneous programs offered through Office for the Aging:

- Legal Services
- Alzheimer's Support
- Loan Closet
- Personal Emergency Response System
- Tax Counseling
- Home Energy Assistance Program
- Transportation

For more information on these services please visit their website at <http://www.alleganyco.com/departments/office-for-the-aging>.

Office for the Aging Budget

Ms. Gasdik continued her presentation with a discussion on their budget. Ms. Gasdik indicated they don't know until the beginning of the year what their funding from the state will be. Currently, the federal government provides 20 percent of their total annual budget year, the state provides 28 percent, and the County provides 31 percent. The remaining 21 percent of Ms. Gasdik's budget is funded through other sources. Ms. Gasdik noted that without the 31 percent contribution from the County they wouldn't be able to offer many of the services they do now. Legislator Harris asked if they receive contributions from clients. Ms. Gasdik stated they send out a letter every month indicating to the client how many meals they received and offer a suggestion as to what they could donate back to the agency. Ms. Gasdik listed out every cost center they have in their budget, and stated they are beginning to look at their 2019 Budget. Legislator Harris asked if they first put federal and state revenues in the budget and then see where their shortfall is that the County picks up. Ms. Gasdik stated they look at what they need to keep things going. Their grants are not increasing but their services are, and every day she fears having to start a Meals-on-Wheels waiting list. Legislator Harris asked for the reason in pay increases for the site managers. Ms. Gasdik stated that minimum wage recently went up, and they also try to give them an additional \$.25 cent raise.

Ms. Gasdik showed the group an example of a blizzard box that provides three shelf stable meals for clients. Ms. Gasdik noted that so far in 2018 they have had to cancel meals approximately four times due to weather, and these boxes have been very helpful. Ms. Gasdik also handed out helpful items that are provided to their seniors including an emergency medical information envelope and forms, health care proxy form, Yellow Dot Program sign up form, ruler, rape whistle, and hand sanitizer.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:07 p.m. on a motion made by Legislator Root, seconded by Legislator Decker, and carried. Following adjournment, Ms. Gasdik provided the group a tour of her office building.

Respectfully submitted,

Meghan Washer, Secretary to Clerk of the Board
Allegany County Board of Legislators