

**ALLEGANY COUNTY BOARD OF LEGISLATORS
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**

March 12, 2018

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 3:08 a.m. by Chairman Curtis W. Crandall

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

OTHERS PRESENT: J. Adams, P. Bishop (CGR, Project Director), T. Boyde, B. Budinger, S. Decker, K. Dirlam, S. Hanmer (CGR, Project Manager), K. Hooker, C. Knapp, B. Riehle, T. Ross, D. Spitzer

CGR Presentation

County Administrator Timothy Boyde introduced representatives from CGR who are working on Allegany County's Shared Services Project. Paul Bishop is serving as Project Director and Steve Hanmer as Project Manager.

Mr. Bishop began the presentation by saying that they don't have specific findings to share with the Board yet. He went on to say that this engagement is in response to the State's shared services initiative. They are in the process of gathering data from the towns and villages in the County. The goal is to find new opportunities for shared services and to also expand existing services. There are already a lot of shared services in Allegany County. Once a plan has been drafted, they will share it with the County Legislature and County staff in a timeframe that allow them to meet the August deadline. Towns and villages would need to agree to the plan for shared services.

CGR has already taken a look at the 2018 fiscal year budgets as well as capital asset inventory. They have met with over twenty chief elected officials from towns and villages within the County. They would like to extend the opportunity to anyone who might have additional information that would help them in the process. Mr. Bishop would like to establish focus groups rather than trying to include everyone from the towns and villages. One focus group would include individuals involved in water operations for their municipality. CGR would like the plan to be flexible to match the needs of the community.

Legislator Decker asked if it would be possible for Allegany County to share services with Cattaraugus County, Steuben County, or other neighboring counties, as part of this plan. Mr. Bishop said he doesn't see why that wouldn't work. Crossing into Pennsylvania for services would not work as far as New York State is concerned, but it may still be an opportunity for Allegany County. Legislator Graves asked if they were looking at all goods and services provided by the County. He wondered if they would include other organizations in the County. He used the Sheriff's Office as an example saying that both the County and State have a drug task force. He asked if they would be looking into things like this as well. Mr. Bishop stated that they are specifically looking at how the towns and villages are working with the County. He said he's not sure how that would fit in their scope, but they could potentially look at it.

In regards to their town and village engagement efforts, they have conducted over twenty interviews to date and have scheduled thirteen more interviews for today. Nineteen of the thirty-seven questionnaires sent out have been completed. Ninety-seven existing shared services have been identified along with twelve proposed services. Legislator Harris asked if they felt that the interviewees have sufficient understanding of highway matters or if they might need to speak with highway superintendents. Mr. Bishop said he intends to speak with some of the highway superintendents as well as fire chiefs. Legislator Burdick suggested that they speak with the Town Tax Clerks Association as well. Board Clerk Brenda Riehle asked if any of the towns or villages have opted out. Mr. Hanmer stated that the Village of Belmont and the Village of Richburg have opted out.

Although the County, and the towns and villages within the County, have a strong foundation of existing collaboration, the State is directing us to do more. Opportunities will be examined through three lenses. Potential for cost savings, potential for service enhancement, and potential for improvement in service sustainability will all be looked at. Some recommendations will have a potential for monetary savings while others will only offer opportunities to improve service or sustainability.

Mr. Hanmer identified some promising areas for shared services. Some items included in the list are: fire departments, highway operations, water operations, workforce sharing, utilities, code enforcement, animal control, centralized bulk purchasing, health insurance, workers' compensation, and town consolidations. Unfortunately, there are also obstacles to sharing and implementation. Current levels of sharing can limit the number of remaining areas in which to search. Recent efforts to cut spending reduces the amount of savings where sharing does make sense. Also, culture and identity can influence decisions more than what makes sense on paper

CGR will be working with different groups over the next couple of months. They will be meeting with highway superintendents and fire personnel as well as other focus groups. They intend to hold public meetings in June and August as well.

Legislator Barnes brought up the issue of consolidating towns. Each of our twenty-nine towns has a Supervisor, Town Board, Highway Superintendent, and other staff. Mr. Bishop remarked that not many look forward to change. It's a pretty good idea considering the scope of services offered. However, it might not be a huge savings to combine. For the surviving municipality there may be a tax advantage. Legislator Burdick asked if towns and villages are going to be mandated to participate. Mr. Bishop indicated they would not be required to participate. Legislator Graves asked if that would be true if a County-wide plan was developed. County Administrator Tim Boyde explained the process for approving the plan. Each chief elected official from the town/village has one vote. The vote for the County comes from him. The plan must be approved by the full body. Legislator Hopkins asked if the State could penalize them for not participating. Mr. Boyde stated that this is purely voluntary, and they will not be penalized. Legislator Harris wondered if the County would be required to come up with another plan in twelve months. If the State is going to continue to require this, should we hold back some of our ideas for the future? Mr. Boyde stated that we will have to look at how we can build upon this. Towns and villages are going to have to buy into this.

Executive Session

A motion was made by Legislator Decker, seconded by Legislator Root, and carried to enter into executive session at 3:51 p.m. to discuss the employment history of a particular employee. Immediately following discussion, at 4:39 p.m., a motion was made by Legislator Graves, seconded by Legislator Stockin, and carried to end the executive session and return to the regular meeting.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned on a motion by Legislator Graves, seconded by Legislator Stockin, and carried at 4:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah M. Decker, Journal Clerk/Deputy Clerk of the Board
Allegany County Board of Legislators