

**JOINT MEETING OF ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE/LABOR RELATIONS & EMPLOYEE  
SERVICES COMMITTEE  
AUGUST 4, 2022  
Minutes**

**Committee members present:** Chairman Billy Fried, Ted Cushing, Tom Kelly, Russ Fisher and Steven Schreier.

**Call to order:** Chairman Fried called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. in the County Board Room of the Oneida County Courthouse. The meeting has been properly posted and mailed in accordance with the Wisconsin Open Meeting law and the facility is handicap accessible. Fried welcomed the Broadband Committee of the Oneida County Economic Development Committee.

**Approve agenda:** Motion by Cushing/Kelly to approve today's agenda with the order of items at the Chair's discretion. All aye; motion carried.

**Approve minutes:** Motion by Kelly/Schreier to approve the minutes of July 26, 2022. All aye; motion carried.

**Public Comment:**

- David Riebe – Minocqua Resident – Riebe stated that he has had difficulty in getting internet at his residence. Riebe stated that he has attempted to get internet through all of the existing service providers, however, the service is lacking and makes internet access difficult. Riebe would like to see Oneida County move forward with the broadband project.
- Richard, OCEDC Broadband Committee stated that he has worked with Milwaukee and other areas trying to find solutions to broadband issues and that without broadband it is difficult to attract and keep small businesses.

**Bug Tussle Broadband proposal and discussion with the Oneida County Economic Development Counsel** – Fried gave an overview of how this project came to the Administration Committee and stated that the goal of this committee has always been to get this topic to the County Board. Fried gave an overview of the actions that have been taken in the last few months. Pete Otis expressed frustration with the amount of time that has been spent discussing this. Discussion regarding bond insurance. Steve Schneider, Hilbert Communications, explained bond insurance and reported that bond insurance helps to lower the interest rate, however, it does not protect the county. Schneider gave an overview of the first broadband project that was completed in Fond Du Lac County in 2012 and is in the process of being updated. Schneider stated that the bonds are absolutely a risk to the County, the risk is that Bug Tussle may fail as a company. The County needs to look at the company and determine if the company is worth taking the risk on. Schneider reported that Oneida County has a first lien on the equipment and the assets. Schneider reported that Hilbert Communications assets are worth 300 million dollars and the County will have access to those assets. Schneider reported that Hilbert Communications recently acquired Northwoods Connect and that is included in the assets for Oneida County. Schneider reported that they have turned away counties if they don't feel they can be successful in those counties. Schneider stated that they feel Oneida County is a great fit and they see a lot of potential in Oneida County. Otis reported that Bug Tussle will be adding First Net to all of the towers which will help with emergency services communications. Fried agreed that the technology is sorely needed in the County, however, the committee also needs to look at the risk. Schneider reported that this is a huge step for Oneida County and Bug Tussle has the resources to help with broadband. Kelly and Cushing expressed the need for broadband in Oneida County for

students, resorts, businesses looking to work from home, etc. Discussion regarding next steps. Fried stated that there are two resolutions that will need to be passed, the first one is non-binding and the second resolution is binding. Discussion regarding the resolutions and the timing of those two resolutions. Schneider stated that if Oneida County approves the first resolution between August-November we would be included in the next bond issuance which looks like it would occur in February. Discussion regarding how this will impact the PSC Grant that has been approved. Verdoorn recommended that the first resolution is passed by October which will help with the PSC grant approval and applications. Schreier expressed a desire to see the first resolution taken to the county board asap so that there isn't a risk of losing the grant approval. Schreier thanked the Economic Development Board for their work on this project. Fisher agreed that this should move forward and thanked Schneider for coming and speaking today. Cushing would also like to see this move to the County Board in September. Schneider recommended that there be an informational meeting for the County Board prior to the resolution being presented. Discussion regarding having an informational meeting at the August 16<sup>th</sup> County Board meeting with the resolution going to the September County Board meeting. Schreier would like to see all of the information that was provided by Bug Tussle made available to the full county board and to any community members that may wish to look at it. John Sweeney, IT Consultant for the Oneida County Sheriff's Office, stated that he has worked on First Net nationwide and believes that will be a great asset to Oneida County if this comes to fruition through Bug Tussle.

10:23 a.m. – Recess

10:29 a.m. – Return from Recess

**Resolution to Amend the Stipend paid to Citizen Members and the Board of Adjustment**

- Fried reviewed the proposed resolution and the changes to the stipend. Motion by Cushing/Fisher to approve the resolution to amend the stipend and forward to the County Board for approval on the consent agenda. All aye; motion carried.

**Resolution to insist upon the prohibition of the use of private donations for the purpose of election administration** - Motion by Schreier/Cushing to forward this to the County Board for approval as a consent agenda item. Schreier would like to see this sent to all of the municipal clerks prior to the county Board meeting. All aye; motion carried.

**Resolution to amend Oneida County Ordinance section 1.30 of the Oneida County Code**

– Fugle reviewed the resolution and the reason for the recommended changes. Fugle stated that this will remove the 23 pages of code that currently set records retentions schedules. Motion by Fried/Schreier to approve the resolution to amend Oneida County Ordinance section 1.30 of the Oneida County code. All aye; motion carried.

It is anticipated that a motion will be made, seconded, and approved by Roll Call Vote to enter into Closed Session pursuant to Section 19.85(1)(g) Conferring with legal counsel for the governmental body who is rendering oral or written advice concerning strategy to be adopted by the body with respect to litigation in which it is or is likely to become involved (Topic: Opioid Settlement). It is anticipated that the Committee will return to Open Session by Roll Call Vote to consider the remainder of the meeting agenda.

Motion by Cushing/Schreier to go into closed session at 10:37 a.m. Roll call vote; Fisher, aye; Cushing, aye; Fried, aye; Kelly, aye; Schreier, aye. 5 aye, 0 nay, motion carried.

Motion by Cushing/Kelly to return to open session at 10:56 a.m. Roll call vote; Fisher, aye; Cushing, aye; Fried, aye; Kelly, aye; Schreier, aye. 5 aye, 0 nay, motion carried.

Announcement of action taken in Closed Session, if such announcement will not undermine the need for the closed session.

No action taken while in closed session.

**Public comment/communications:** None

**Dates and items for future agenda/meetings:** The next administration committee meeting will be held on August 9, 2022 at 9:30 a.m. Future topics: Broadband, Review budget schedule.

**Adjourn** – Fried adjourned the meeting at 10:57 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Tracy Hartman, Recording Secretary  
Oneida County Clerk