

**Herkimer County Legislature
Highways
Committee Meeting
Friday, February 5, 2021
Via Zoom
Follows County Planning & Development and Ways & Means**

Persons Attending:

Raymond Smith (Chairman, Highways)
Peter Campione (Highways committee member)
Mark Gaworecki (Highways committee member)
John P. Stephens (Highways committee member)
Robert J. Schrader (Highways committee member)
Patrick Russell (Highways committee member)
Vincent J. Bono, Chairman of the Legislature
James W. Wallace, Jr., County Administrator
Brandy Serow, Secretary to Co. Administrator
Lorraine Lewandrowski, Assistant County Attorney
Sheri Ferdula, Budget Officer
Steve Billings, Personnel Officer
Mark Nagele, Highway Superintendent
(Non Committee Members signed in)
Legislator Gregory Malta, Sr.
Legislator Bob D. Hollum
Legislator Raymond Johnson
Legislator William Keeler, Sr.
Legislator John L. Brezinski
Legislator Peter F. Manno
Legislator Kurt J. Ackerman
Legislator Ray Donley
Legislator Frederick J. Shaw, Jr.
Legislator William Weakley

Absent:

N/A

The meeting was called to order at 9:45 a.m.

Items Discussed:

HIGHWAYS:

1. Approve Annual Report of Highways
2. Other

Committee Vote Record:

HIGHWAYS:

Mr. Smith: "I only have one thing on my agenda. Approve the Annual Report of the Highway Department."

Item #1 – On motion of Mr. Schrader, seconded by Mr. Campione, Item #1 was voted on, approved and moved for Resolution. Unanimous.

Jim Wallace: "Is it okay if Mark updates us with the 12.5% he talked about? I think that is good news."

Mr. Smith: "That would be fine."

Mark Nagele: "We recently got a payment, well several payments from New York State for the 12.5% Federal funds. For the FEMA projects we had with the Halloween storm, FEMA will pay 75% and then the County was left on the hook for the remaining 25%. In the past the State had stepped in in the past storms and they are also stepping in on this storm and giving us 12.5% of that 25% County share. With all of the projects, that comes up to about \$400,000 that hopefully we will recoup from the State from the Halloween storm. So yes that is good news."

Mr. Smith: "Yes, very good news. Does anyone else have anything?"

Mr. Schrader: "What is the status on employment? Are you still having trouble with finding employees?"

Mark Nagele: "Yes. We are currently trying to hire. We have the ads out trying to get drivers and operators back. We haven't sent our letters out yet to last year's people that ended the season with us but I am expecting to be down again with drivers. We know several people have retired or are not wanting to come back. It will be a struggle again this year but to what extent I am not sure yet. As I mentioned, those letters have not gone out to the people that completed the season with us last year so we are not sure. They will be going out shortly."

Mr. Schrader: "Being that you are the boss over there, what is the biggest complaint of people leaving? Is it the pay?"

Mark Nagele: "I'm not sure it's really the pay. I think it's more that it is seasonal. People need jobs throughout the year so I think that's part of the complaint. They are just not full time so when we lay them off they go to either the towns or DOT and if DOT offers someone a full time job that's where they stay. That is part of the issue."

Mr. Schrader: "Okay so there are more parts to the equation than the pay?"

Mark Nagele: "Yes. I really think the full time is the main issue at this point. Pay would be second."

Mr. Schrader: "Okay. Thank you."

Mr. Smith: "Anyone else?"

Mr. Bono: "Mr. Chairman, Mr. Gaworecki wanted to ask, the Bridge NY webinar is scheduled for February 16, are you going to attend that and also, if so, if you could apply for the Bridge NY for the Hopson Road bridge?"

Mark Nagele: "Hopson Road Bridge is actually closed right now. It collapsed as part of that Halloween storm and that is one of our FEMA projects so we are already in the process of securing funding for that bridge so I don't believe it would qualify here under Bridge NY. My thoughts were, I know last time the Bridge NY came around, we submitted four bridges and six culverts and we did not get selected on any of them. This year I think we will just submit one or two bridges and maybe one or two culverts to try and narrow the amount that we are submitting and hopefully one of them will get selected but our bridges are all in pretty good shape now so basically the funds go to those County's that maybe haven't been maintaining their bridges as well as we have that are in dire condition and also the other thing that I noticed is a lot of the towns like the last go around, the Town of Frankfort and I believe the Village of Herkimer were awarded. Local municipalities down to the town and village level in Herkimer County would probably be in better condition to get those awards than the County would based on the condition of their bridges."

Mr. Bono: "Thank you."

Mr. Campione: "Mark, are we going to be resubmitting the culverts that we submitted last time?"

Mark Nagele: "What I am thinking of submitting is down by Owen D. Young School. That's one of the ones I want to submit because right now it is basically the size of a culvert but we want to make it into a bridge so it would be submitted under the bridge application. That is one of them I want to try and get on this program."

Mr. Campione: "Okay. Thank you."

Mr. Smith: "Anyone else?"

Item #2 – NA.

At 9:51 a.m., on motion of Mr. Schrader, seconded by Mr. Campione, the Highway Committee was adjourned.