



# CCTVS (County, City, Towns, Villages, Schools)

Cortland, NY 13045

<http://www.cortland-co.org>

## Advisory Board

### ~ Agenda ~

Eric Mulvihill

Tuesday, June 13, 2017

6:30 PM

Room 304

## I. Call to Order

Attendee Name	Present	Absent	Late	Arrived
Co-Chair Sandra Price	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Chair Donnell Boyden	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

## II. Minutes Approval

- Tuesday, May 23, 2017

## III. Welcome/Introduction

## IV. Roundtable Discussion

- Action Item (ID # 4621)

Establish Recommended Proposals for Consideration and Submission for Shared Services Plan



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~ Minutes ~

Eric Mulvihill

Tuesday, May 23, 2017

6:30 PM

Room 304

### I. Welcome

### II. Call to Order

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Sandra Price	Co-Chair	Present	
George Wagner	District 15	Present	
Donnell Boyden	Legislative District 8	Present	
Eric Mulvihill	Clerk	Present	
Peggy Mousaw	Budget and Finance Director	Present	
Sandy Doty	Supervisor, Town of Willet	Present	
Andrew Fuller	Councilman, Town of Scott	Present	
Stephen Furlin	Supervisor, Town of Solon	Present	
Fred Forbes	Supervisor, Town of Homer	Present	
Mary Ann Discenza	District 6	Present	
Brian Tobin	Mayor, Cortland	Present	
Elizabeth Larkin	County Clerk	Present	
Hal McCabe	Mayor, Homer	Present	
Lloyd Sutton Jr.	Supervisor, Town of Truxton	Present	
Mack Cook	Cortland City Administrator	Present	

### III. Minutes Approval

1. Tuesday, May 09, 2017

### IV. Roundtable Discussion

1. Discussion Item (ID # 4552)

Shared Services Brainstorming Session

#### COMMENTS - Current Meeting:

Ms. Price called the meeting to order and everyone around the room introduced themselves.

Mr. Forbes discussed his recent attendance at meeting of the Association of Towns. He said this shared services plan falls entirely on the County Executive; in this case it's Chairman Boyden. Mr. Forbes said many counties are choosing to opt out of the shared services program and not submit plans due in part to the rapid turnaround required by the state. In some counties there is contention due to a lack of participation of Town Supervisors. Mr. Forbes discussed opting out, he then talked about the County taking over tax collections for the towns and Villages. He feels there is little cost savings to the towns to participate in shared tax collections and was unsure why the county would

want to get involved. Mr. Doty said residents paying their taxes to the town clerks afford them an opportunity to interact with their town officials. Ms. Larkin discussed her previous experience as a Town Clerk and tax collector. She said much has changed over the years towns are less of a social and community hub. Ms. Larkin also said many clerks offer irregular hours making it difficult for residents to pay their tax bills in a timely manner. She did agree that having the town clerks collect the taxes does allow for more local interaction.

Ms. Larkin suggested the sharing of local planning boards and zoning boards of appeal among the towns due to the difficulty of filling positions, but acknowledge most of those positions are unpaid and therefore would not render a costs savings as required by the plan. She said many of the towns already share out of necessity. Ms. Larkin wondered if towns could merge code enforcement officers. Mr. Forbes said many code officers already work for multiple municipalities. Ms. Larkin asked if municipalities could share health insurance, Ms. Price said many are already pooling insurance through the Tompkins County Healthcare Consortium. Ms. Larkin discussed the shared Cortland/Tompkins County records digitization grant that was awarded earlier this year. Her office is working with some towns to scan records so that they may be stored electronically. This shared service is saving the towns money and providing better access to records.

Mr. Forbes asked if there were anyway the county could takeover providing documents such as death certificates as sometimes town clerks can be difficult to access, particularly for individuals that do not reside in the county. Ms. Larkin said if registrar of vital statistic duties are transferred to the county they would fall under the Health Department. She felt some Town Clerks would be reluctant to diminish the duties of their office.

Ms. Mousaw discussed shared tax collection. She said many tax collectors collect at their homes which poses a security risk. In addition there are increasing concerns about the proliferation of counterfeit bills which local tax collectors may not immediately detect, the town or county would be shorted the funds if the individual could not be connected to the counterfeit payment. Ms. Mousaw discussed shared municipal bookkeeping, she felt a county-wide accounting office could be established that could handle many back-office functions.. She also believes county-wide assessing is another area that could be looked at for consolidation. Ms. Mousaw also mentioned establishing regional courts particularly in light of the new states mandated counsel at first arraignment requirements.

Ms. Larkin brought up joint purchasing as a topic of discussion. Ms. Price said the Highway departments already take advantage of shared salt purchasing. Ms. Mousaw said the county could provide a Minority and Women Owned Enterprise compliance officer for the Towns and Villages.

Mr. Tobin said it appears the group is looking at the same house from different sides. From the City's perspective road paving, law enforcement, and paid fire service are all city services that benefit the towns and villages. He pointed out that many of the city's paid firefighters also volunteer in the town fire departments where they reside. He said personnel costs and training cost substantially contribute to the city tax burden. He discussed how the shared property assessor between Cortland, Homer, and Virgil has worked well.

Ms. Mousaw suggested shared requests for proposals for municipal road projects; she

believes it could generate better pricing.

Mr. McCabe said he believes combined purchasing would be helpful. He said it would be useful to know when the City and County are going to make capital purchases such as heavy equipment in order to command better pricing on the municipal level. He questioned whether the county could share its website template with the municipalities in order to save money and establish continuity of web presence. He asked if there has been any consideration of county-wide county enforcement. He advocated in favor of county-wide assessing, shared book keeping. He said police is the largest expense in the Homer Village budget.

Mr. Furlin discussed the county's shared tax collection software being utilized by the towns and villages. He said the town clerks essentially collect the town portion of the tax levy in January from February to May the towns are collecting the county's money. Mr. Furlin expressed frustration over the shared services process and the various roadblocks to meaningful consolidation. He suggested elimination of the City and Village police departments.

Ms. Mousaw suggested consolidating collective bargaining agreements; she said union agreements are the biggest stumbling blocks to shared service and consolidation.

Mr. Cook said eight communities that are in the Tompkins Health care consortium will be eligible to opt into either the Cortland or Tompkins County shared services plan. He said any new communities that join the healthcare consortium by September 1<sup>st</sup> would be considered new shared services for the purpose of this shared services plan submission. Mr. Cook said many counties around the state are putting together plans and not focusing on the dollar for dollar reimbursement from the state. He suggested reaching out to Dr. Warner at Cornell University to discuss plans and gather information. He said logistically counties cannot comply with the proposed timetable and many are rolling to 2018 to provide a more comprehensive approach. Ms. Price suggested inviting Dr. Warner to a shared services meeting. Ms. Discenza said many ideas have been discussed and she wondered if they should be prioritized in order to build consensus. She also suggested sending the ideas to the state to provide feedback.

Mr. Sutton said he has a hard time accepting the shared services concept. He believes the goal of the program is to eliminate municipalities. He questioned if the group was considering consolidating municipalities. Many of those present said it was not the goal of this group to merge municipalities. Mr. Tobin said this shared services program seems geared toward larger counties with many levels of local government. Mr. Fuller said his town already shares many services and he does not believe there is great deal of savings to be achieved.

Mr. Doty said many communities have unique needs and he agreed with Mr. Fuller many towns already share services. He discussed joint purchasing; he referenced the former county central purchasing department and felt that it provided a useful service to the towns for the acquisition of office products. He requested that the State representatives representing Cortland County come to a meeting and identify what items or services can be shared.

Mr. Wagner asked what the communities would do with the money they save from any shared services proposals, he believes the savings will be spent elsewhere. Mr. Wagner suggested the County submit a bare bones plan to satisfy the state requirement. He believes this whole program is

geared toward downstate where the actual waste is.

Mr. Mulvihill said he appreciates the group’s frustration with the state and the seeming futility of this exercise but he believes this group has an opportunity by participating in this program. He agreed with Mr. Cook’s assessment of identifying potential shared service opportunities and letting the savings follow after. Mr. Mulvihill said anytime local government can streamline service or improve the product our shared constituents receive that we should pursue that opportunity. In the end we may not save a lot of money but if the taxpayer winds up with a better level of service we will have done our jobs. Mr. Wagner said he believes everyone is already looking at operating more efficiently.

The group discussed the property tax cap, unfunded state mandates, Medicaid costs, and changes in healthcare.

Ms. Price announced the next meeting is June 13<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM.

Meeting adjourned at 8:50 PM.

**RESULT:            COMPLETED**

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of May 23, 2017 6:30 PM (Minutes Approval)