

## **Minutes for Buffalo Niagara Coalition for Open Government January 4, 2018 meeting**

Meeting called to order at 5:35 p.m. by Paul Wolf. Present: Ken Foit, Richard Bertrand, Ed McKee, Joseph Kissel, Janet Vito, Lawrence Vito, Brian Nowak, Tom Frank, Jim Tricoli, Brian Hellner, Kathleen Marando, Jonathan Manes.

**Meeting Minutes:** Ed McKee made a motion to approve the minutes from the November 2, 2017 meeting, seconded by Jim Tricoli. Minutes unanimously approved.

**Board of Director's Positions:** The one year terms of Jonathan Manes and Mike Kless expire in January of 2018. Both have expressed an interest in serving a two-year term. Neither were present for the meeting. The filling of these positions will be tabled until the next meeting. Ed McKee stated it would be helpful to have a list of the Board Members and Officers posted on the Coalition's website.

**Treasurer's Report:** Treasurer Ed McKee reported BNCOG's balance as \$433.36. There were no expenses since the last meeting. Jim Tricoli made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report seconded by Paul Wolf. Treasurer's Report unanimously approved.

**Lockport Housing Authority:** Richard Bertrand said the Authority held executive sessions for 26 meetings in a row. Following up on the concerns raised by Richard Bertrand, Paul Wolf sent a letter to the Lockport Housing Authority and to the Mayor of Lockport requesting a meeting. A response has not been received to either letter. Paul Wolf, mentioned that the Mayor of Lockport appoints the Housing Authority members and one appointment was coming up in April. After a discussion it was decided to send a letter to the Lockport City Council, requesting that any appointments to the Housing Authority not occur until our open government concerns can be addressed. Having our members attend a Lockport City Council meeting may be something we do as well to draw attention to this issue.

**2017 Review:** Paul Wolf reviewed the accomplishments we achieved in our first year of existence. We created a Board of Directors, established by-laws, created a website and Facebook page. We released three reports regarding local government websites, FOIL compliance and Executive Sessions all of which received great publicity. We held a successful event in September with the League of Women Voters featuring Robert Freeman, which 79 people attended. From November to the beginning of January we increased our Facebook followers from 48 to 93.

**Goals for 2018:** Paul Wolf handed out a list of possible projects to undertake in 2018. Paul suggested that we follow up our 2017 local government website evaluations with an updated report documenting the changes local governments have made to their sites since our report. Paul also suggested following up our 2017 Executive Sessions report to see if local governments have corrected how they do Executive Sessions.

Other projects listed for discussion were doing a report regarding: Budget Hearings, Consent Agendas, Financial Disclosure Forms, Public Expression at meetings, Getting Items on the Agenda at meetings, Candidate Open Government Questionnaire, Reviewing the websites of Authorities, Planning Boards, Zoning Boards and School Districts.

Jim Tricoli stated that he liked the idea of addressing Budget Hearings and Financial Disclosure Forms. Jonathan Manes suggested sticking with what has been successful for us by reviewing the websites of Authorities or School Districts. Jonathan also suggested requesting the FOIL logs of local governments to see how FOIL requests are being completed timely.

Paul Wolf stated that based on the discussion had he will put together a calendar of projects for 2018 to discuss at the next meeting.

**New Business:** Paul Wolf stated that he has been in touch with the graphic arts program at Daeman College. An instructor there was interested in having the students assist with creating a logo for us. Paul will follow up with the instructor as the Semester gets under way.

**Adjourn:** Meeting was adjourned at 6:30 pm.