

Minutes for Buffalo Niagara Coalition for Open Government January 9, 2020

Meeting called to order at 6:30 p.m. Present: Paul Wolf, Joe Kissel, Mike Kless, Sonia Dusza, Maria Tisby. Richard Bertrand, Ed McKee, Janet Vito, Larry Vito, Michael Higgins, Robert Thill.

Meeting Minutes: The meeting minutes from November 7, 2019, were approved on a motion made by Rich Bertrand and seconded by Mike Kless.

Treasurer's Report: Janet Vito reported our account balance as \$1,081.78, as of 12/31/19. We Ed McKee made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report which was seconded by Larry Vito. Motion was unanimously approved.

Board Elections: Mike Kless made a motion seconded by Ed McKee to approve the following individuals as Board members for a 2 year term commencing January 6, 2020 and ending January 6, 2022: Michael Kless, Janet Vito, Larry Vito, Sonia Dusza and Maria Tisby.

Changing Our Name: After discussion of several different ideas a motion was made by Larry Vito seconded by Maria Tisby to change the organization's name to the New York Coalition for Open Government. Motion was unanimously approved.

Niagara County Financial Disclosure Forms: Mike Kless made a motion seconded by Richard Bertrand that will file a lawsuit against Niagara County regarding the denial of our FOIL request to obtain copies of financial disclosure forms from 2013 to 2018. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion made by Sonia Dusza, seconded by Mike Kless to retain the University at Buffalo Law School Civil Liberties & Transparency Clinic to represent our organization in a lawsuit against Niagara County. Motion passed unanimously.

Erie County IDA: Paul Wolf explained the communications he has had with the Erie County IDA, regarding our concern that delinquent IDA loans be handled in public and not through an executive session.

March Sunshine Week Event (March 15-21): Paul Wolf has contacted the new Executive Director of the NYS Committee on Open Government inquiring as to whether she would be willing to speak at our event regarding the Open Meetings Law. A response has not been received as of yet.

Review of 2019 & Goals for 2020: Janet Vito pointed out that one of accomplishments that should be added is that we convinced the Town of Clarence to add back to their meeting agenda hearing from the public. Paul Wolf reviewed proposed goals and projects for 2020.

Meeting Date & Time for 2020: There was discussion at our last meeting to possibly move our meetings to Tuesday nights. Paul Wolf spoke to library staff and was advised that Tuesday nights would not work. We will keep our meetings on Thursday nights at 6:30. We will typically meet

the first Thursday of the month, however our next meeting will be Thursday February 13th at 6:30, at the Williamsville Library, 5571 Main Street.

New Business: West Seneca Supervisor Gary Dickson has invited Paul Wolf to speak about open government to the West Seneca Town Board on Thursday January 23rd at 6:00 pm.

Ed McKee brought up putting together a roster of members for everyone.

Janet Vito pointed out that with our name changing we will need to change our bank account info, bylaws etc.

Joe Kissel will bring information to the next meeting regarding a video camera that he would like the organization to purchase so that we can tape and post online our meetings and events.

Adjourn: Janet Vito made a motion to adjourn seconded by Richard Bertrand. Meeting adjourned at 7:50 pm.