

NY COALITION FOR OPEN GOVERNMENT MEETING 10-13-22

Present on zoom; Axel Ebermann, Ed Schneider, Sonia Dusza, Amil Virani, Mary O'Malley, Robert Godlewski, Suzanne Kelly, Michelle Allen, Maria Tisby, Cory Morris, Paul Wolf, Alberta Roman-Recorder

Meeting called to order by Paul Wolf President at 6:34 pm with recording for members review on request.

Amil Virani introduced himself as a first time attendee. Amil resides in Long Island and has become our first member from Nassau County. Amil described how while recording his village board meeting, the Mayor demanded that he stop recording, which is a violation of the Law.

Meeting Minutes; Meeting minutes of September 8, 2022, provided.

Treasurer's Report; We have \$4,402.24 in our treasury. 74 paid members from 25 counties.

2022 Calendar; Yearly program calendar is provided for people to see where we are at.

Open Meetings Law (OML) Committee; Chair Joe Kissel absent. Paul Wolf reported 4 items discussed.

- Gathering information for a report regarding private caucus meetings held by governmental bodies at the local level. Paul expressed frustration with the poor response to several emails we have sent.
- Gathering information for a report as to whether towns across the state are posting meeting documents and meeting minutes.
- Recommended that the Board send a letter to the town of Islip regarding their deletion of public comments from their posted meeting video.
- Recommended the Board send a letter to the St. Lawrence School Board for their failure to hold a public hearing and regarding the sign up process they use for their public comment.

Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) Committee; Chair Maria Tisby reported that the Committee recommends that the Board support the

New York State Attorney General forming a mediation program to address Freedom of Information Law appeals. Maria made a motion seconded by Michelle and unanimously approved.

Public Relations/Education Group; Chair Michelle Allen reported:

- The group approved a mission statement
- The group requests that the Coalition's legislative priorities be posted on the Coalition's website, sent to other organizations like Reinvent Albany, the Committee on Open Government and to targeted legislators. John Fisher made a motion to do this, seconded by Alberta Roman and unanimously approved.
- The proposed nonpartisan policy was discussed and tabled for further discussion, as Paul will work on a revised policy.
- The idea of forming Regional Advisory Councils was discussed and Paul will reach out to specific individuals to see if anyone is interested in heading up a Regional Advisory Council as a pilot project.

National Freedom of Information Coalition Virtual Summit;

Twenty five dollars to sign up for this useful zoom event Oct. 18 to 20, 2022.

New Business; Paul mentioned that he has set up a meeting for members able to make the drive on Saturday November 5th to meet in person.

Amil Virani stated that it would be helpful for the Coalition to send a letter to Valley Stream encouraging them to complete Open Meetings Law training. Michelle made a motion to send a letter to Valley Stream, seconded by Maria Tisby and unanimously approved.

Mary O'Malley stated that she will be sending a letter to the editor regarding the misuse of federal funds for body cameras in the town of Vestal.

Cory Morris discussed the lawsuit filed against the town of Vestal regarding a FOIL request for body cam footage.

Meeting End; Motion to adjourn meeting made by Sonia Dusza and seconded by Maria Tisby. Motion carried at 7:49pm.