

NY Coalition for Open Government 1-13-22 Meeting Minutes

Present; Janet Vito, Lawrence Vito, Axel Ebermann, Gary Dickson, John Fisher, VirginiaMFichera, Joe Kissel, Sonia Dusza, Michelle Allen-Gregory, Marni Halasa(new member from NYC), Casey Jones, Patricia Irving, Sue, Robert Godlewski, Maria Tisby, Paul Wolf, Alberta Roman

Meeting called to order on zoom; at 6:35 pm by President Paul Wolf

Meeting Minutes from 12-9-21; Submitted by Alberta Roman available in meeting packet. Mike Kless named in error in packet and corrected to Mike Franklin on web site posting. Motion to accept made by Sonia Dusza and second by Maria Tisby with approval. Motion carried to accept minutes.

Expand the Board of Directors from 11 positions to 12; One Board Member, Mike Kless, did not seek re-election. Two Members have expressed interest in Board positions. Motion made by Sonia Dusza to expand Board by one to 12 and seconded by Joe Kissel with approval. Motion carried to expand Board positions to 12.

Board Elections; The following Board Members are recommended by the Executive Committee for a two year term:

Sonia Dusza Janet Vito Lawrence Vito Maria Tisby

Patricia Irving-new Michelle Allen- Gregory-new

Motion made to accept recommendation of Executive Committee for Board Members for two year appointment made by Sonia Dusza and seconded by Joe Kissel with approval. Motion carried. This expands Board representation to Upstate NY and near Long Island.

Treasurer's Report; Now we have 66 members from 22 NY Counties. Janet Vito submitted written report in meeting packet with \$3,593.12 on 12-31-21. Motion made to accept Treasurer's report by Alberta Roman and seconded by Maria Tisby with approval. Motion carried.

2021 Accomplishments; Biggest accomplishment was 2 bills passed by NYS Legislature changing(OML)open meeting law, impacting local communities

for better, growth in membership, facebook and twitter followers increased. Last January we had 21 members and now 66. From 2 counties, we have grown to having members from 22 counties. People/public have recognized the Coalition as a source of information about FOIL/OML.

2021 Requests for Help; We are doing work that needs to be funded. We assisted 101 people who called Paul for help/information. Paul polled Members and narrowed down to 3 projects from 12.

2022 Calendar; This will be included in each packet going forward as a road map for the year with what we want to accomplish. January is the time the report below came out. February is reserved for planning Sunshine week with draft opened, and planning April annual meeting featuring Governor candidates. March is Sunshine week. Perhaps we can do a program with Connecticut representative about a law that has consequences. Including best practices and “pushing out” reports to more people was mentioned.

Report on the County Board of Elections; This report has been done for some time and release has been delayed to Jan. There has been good media coverage to this press release. Only 53% of County Boards of Election comply with FOIL. An editorial in Daily Gazette in Schenectady that spoke to enforcement. We have been hammering away with no consequence. We need some entity with some power to promote compliance. This will be our mantra. Connecticut has such a law.

Article regarding New Year Resolution for Transparency and Letters sent to Dunkirk School Board, Town of Ulysses, City of Tonawanda, City of Niagara Falls; These are included in meeting packet and are essentially about failures to comply with OML. The issue of allowing public comments came up. California mandates public comment time.

Open Meetings Committee the 3rd or 4th Thursday of the Month at 4 pm; First meeting Thursday 1/20/22.

Chair-Joseph Kissel

Members-Susan Kims, Casey Jones, Janet Vito, Caitlin Curtin, Susan Laurilliard, Michelle Allen-Gregory, Ron Fraser, Susanne Kelly, Paul Wolf

Freedom of Information Committee the 3rd or 4th Thursday of the Month at 11am; First meeting Thursday 1/27/22.

Chair-Maria Tisby

Members-Joseph Kissel, Casey Jones, Mark Mahoney, John Fisher, Jonathan Reiss, Mike Franklin, Axel Ebermann, Sonia Dusza, Paul Wolf

New Business; There was discussion around what OML and FOIL should look like as there is big variation from State to State presently. Committees to work on this issue.

Next Meeting Feb 10, 2022 @6:30pm on zoom; Meeting ended 7:31 pm on motion by Maria Tisby and seconded by Lawrence Vito. Motion carried.