

Minutes for Buffalo Niagara Coalition for Open Government November 1, 2018

Meeting called to order at 5:38 p.m. by Paul Wolf. Present: Janet Vito, Larry Vito, Joseph Kissel, Mike Kless, Ed McKee, Gary Dickson, Patty Stephens, Jacob Sloan, Dennis Garland.

Meeting Minutes: Mike Kless made a motion to approve the minutes from the September 20, 2018 meeting, seconded by Larry Vito. Minutes unanimously approved.

Treasurer's Report: Ed McKee reported our account balance as \$904.17. Janet Vito made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report seconded by Mike Kless. Treasurer's Report unanimously approved.

Board Vacancies: Jim Tricoli and Brian Hellner resigned their Board positions and officer positions. Mike Kless made a motion to appoint Gary Dickson from West Seneca to Tricoli's vacant Board seat for the balance of the term ending in January 2019. Ed McKee seconded the motion which was unanimously approved.

Gary Dickson made a motion to appoint Ed McKee from Amherst to Tricoli's vacant Vice President for Erie County seat for the balance of the term ending in January 2019. Larry Vito seconded the motion which was unanimously approved.

Joe Kissel made a motion to appoint Janet Vito from Clarence to McKee's now vacant Treasurer position for the balance of the term ending in January 2019. Larry Vito seconded the motion which was unanimously approved.

Larry Vito made a motion to appoint Richard Bertrand from Lockport to Hellner's vacant Vice President for Niagara County position for the balance of the term ending in January 2019. Ed McKee seconded the motion which was unanimously approved.

We still need to find a person to fill Mr. Hellner's vacant Board seat, preferably a Niagara County resident.

Becoming a 501(C)(3): In order to move forward with becoming a tax exempt corporation there is paperwork that needs to be signed by Paul Wolf as President, Ed McKee as Vice President and Richard Bertrand as Vice President. Paul will work on this item.

Review of September 26th Speaker Event: Everyone agreed that the event went well and that the location and facility worked for us. We need to keep speakers in mind to do a similar event next year.

Joe Kissel mentioned doing some type of fun fundraiser event to attract more people and to raise money. Perhaps something featuring music/bands.

Executive Sessions Report/FOIL Log Report

We received good coverage regarding our Executive Sessions report from Channel 4 News and several local papers. It was disappointing that the Buffalo News who covered this report last year with a front page article did not cover it at all this year. Paul Wolf discussed submitting a My View article to the News editorial page.

The Lewiston Town Supervisor stated some critical remarks regarding our efforts in a news article. Paul Wolf forwarded an email response to the Supervisor and Lewiston Board members.

Our next report will be regarding FOIL, which Paul has to finish drafting. The goal will be to do a press conference some time in November.

Website/Logo: At a cost of \$60 we have purchased the logo design discussed at previous meetings. A copy of the logo on letterhead was passed around.

Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority (BMHA): A recent article in the Buffalo News indicated that in an effort to improve communication with the Buffalo Common Council, the BMHA will begin filing their meeting minutes with the Council. While seeking to improve communication with the Council is a good thing, how about posting meeting agendas and minutes online to improve communication with residents and the public at large?

Janet Vito made a motion that a letter be sent to the BMHA encouraging them to post their meeting agendas and minutes online, seconded by Gary Dickson, motion approved unanimously.

Buffalo Police Body Cameras: The Buffalo Police Advisory Board, Partnership for the Public Good and the Buffalo News have called for public discussion/input regarding the police departments policy and use of body cameras.

Mike Kless made a motion that we send a letter to the Police Dept. in favor of public discussion input regarding body cameras, seconded by Larry Vito, motion approved unanimously.

University at Buffalo Council Meetings: Jacob Sloan discussed the problems that occurred at a recent UB Council meeting. Members of the public were prevented from attending the meeting due to the room size, a motion to allow members of the public to speak was not properly addressed.

Mike Kless made a motion to send a letter to the UB Council about how their last meeting was conducted, seconded by Joe Kissel, motion was unanimously approved.

Voting Rights Forum: On November 28th our organization is sponsoring a Voting Rights Forum with several other organizations.

Partnership for Public Good (PPG) Community Agenda: The PPG has a yearly process where community organizations can submit ideas for PPG affiliated organizations to work together on. The top ten ideas as approved at a meeting where members vote, sets the agenda for 2019.

Paul drafted a proposal seeking to amend the Open Meetings Law to require:

- 1) That public bodies must provide an opportunity to hear from the public at their meetings;
- 2) Mandating that meeting agendas and documents must be posted online prior to a meeting;
- 3) Mandating that meeting minutes must be posted online
- 4) Providing enforcement authority to the Attorney General or some other entity, to address violations of the law.

Ed McKee made a motion to approve the PPG proposal, seconded by Mike Kless, motion passed unanimously. Janet Vito mentioned having our members turn out at the PPG meeting to support our item. Paul will make people aware of the meeting date.

New Business: Joe Kissel raised the idea of purchasing T-shirts to wear at events and obtaining a banner as a backdrop for events. Joe will look into pricing for these items.

Adjourn: Meeting was adjourned at 6:45 pm., on a motion by Janet Vito, seconded by Larry Vito. Next meeting will be January 3, 2019, 5:30 pm at the Williamsville Library.