

NEW YORK COALITION FOR OPEN GOVERNMENT 11/10/22 Minutes

PRESENT; Sonia Dusza, Amil Virani, Mary O'Malley Suzanne Kelley, Michelle Allen, Maria Tisby, Janet Vito, Lawrence Vito, Pat Irving, Mary Lou Cebula, Steve Lyle, Paul Wolf. Alberta Roman, recorder.

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

Meeting Minutes; Meeting minutes of October 13, 2022 provided with motion to accept made by Maria Tisby and second by Michelle Allen. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report; Per Janet Vito, we have 80 members(from 26 Counties) with 10-31-22 balance of \$4,542.24 (\$140 in new dues). Motion to accept Treasurer's report made by Mary Lou Cebula & seconded by Pat Irving. Motion carried. \$20 dues due 3-1-23. (Celebrate #35 wedding anniversary of Janet and Larry.)

Board Elections; Our 12 board positions are for 2 year staggered terms. Six seats are up in Jan. 2023. The following board members' terms expire in Jan. 2023: Paul Wolf, Steve Lyle, Suzanne Kelly, Alberta Roman, Mary Lou Cebula and Joe Kissel. All board members except for Joe Kissel have expressed an interest in continuing to serve.

If you are interested in filing the expected vacant board seat, please send an email to paulwolf2@gmail.com expressing your interest with a copy of your resume. The Executive Committee of the board will consider the applicants and make a recommendation to the board at Jan. 2023 meeting. The Coalition board makes the decision on filing board seats, as in a self-perpetuating board model.

At the January meeting the board will also address the appointment of the following officer positions: President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary. Our current officers are:

President- Paul Wolf

Vice President-Joe Kissel

Treasurer-Janet Vito

Secretary- Alberta Roman

All of the current officers have expressed interest in continuing to serve except for Joe Kissel. If you are interested in serving as VP, please send an email expressing your interest with a copy of your resume to paulwolf2@gmail.com.

Calendar; 2022 calendar included on pgs. 6-7 in agenda. We will be creating 2023 Calendar at upcoming meetings. We will talk about in committee meetings.

NY Committee on Open Government Letters; 2 letters are included in pages 8 to 12. One suggests The New York Coalition for Open Government Mandate live streaming of local government meetings in their annual report and require State agencies to require state agencies to prepare an annual Freedom of Information report. The other addresses concerns and suggests live streaming of local government meetings be required “to the extent practicable” as law states.

Attorney General Letter; Letter to Attorney General James by Paul Wolf included in agenda pages 13&14 requesting assistance with 2 issues;

1. Creation of an Open Gov. Unit to assist the public with Open Meeting Law and Freedom of Information Law issues.
2. As part of an Open Gov. Unit, establishing a mediation program to assist the public as an alternative to pursuing litigation.

Paul has a zoom call with AG office sched for next week on this issue...no press conference at this point.

Valley Stream Letter; This letter by Paul Wolf is addressed to Mayor Fare included in agenda pages 15 & 16 regarding our member being demanded to stop recording a village board meeting...a violation of OML. Also addressed was the lack of posting agenda items as required by law. The letter offered to provide OML training and so far no response. Member will talk with a local reporter.

Legislative Priorities; Legislative priorities for 2023 are included in Agenda packet from pages 17 to 25 in detail and are centered on reforms to OML and FOIL laws. This is posted on our web site and elsewhere.

Open Meeting Law Committee; Chair Joe Kissel absent. Paul Wolf reporting on gathering information for report regarding Private Caucus Meetings held by Gov. bodies at the local level is in progress. Also in progress is gathering information for a report reviewing towns across NY State as far as whether meeting documents and minutes are being posted on line. Paul will send out and hold Press Release at end of Nov.

Freedom of Information Law Committee; Report by Chair Maria Tisby re discussion of Town of Vestal issue where police body cam video was not avail. to a member. Also discussed FOIL scorecard/checklist for tracking FOIL appeals.

Public Relations /Education Group; Report by Chair Michelle Allen re proposed non-partisan policy (which is included in agenda on page 27) for board discussion. Someone can run for election, be elected and be on the Board. What a board member does on their own time is not restricted as long as not associating the statements/actions with the Coalition.

A motion was made by Steve Lyle to accept policy and seconded by Michelle Allen. Motion passed 6-3 with Pat Irving, Janet Vito and Larry Vito being opposed.

Also discussed was forming Regional Advisory Councils; For first formation, a group around Albany is suggested. A training on zoom is proposed for Jan 26 for people participating in Albany area.

New Business; Our Canandaigua meeting face to face was a big success. An internal list serve program is being explored to reduce and make amount and style of notification of emails individualized.

Next Meetings; Open Meetings Law Committee Nov. 17th@4pm

Freedom of Information Law Committee Nov. 17th@1 pm

Public Relations Education Group Dec. 1@3pm

NY Coalition for OG Board Meeting Dec. 8 @6:30pm

Motion to adjourn meeting by Sue Kelly and second by Michelle Allen.

Motion carried and meeting ended at 7:55pm.