

Minutes for Buffalo Niagara Coalition for Open Government November 12, 2020

Meeting called to order at 6:35 p.m. by Paul Wolf. Present: Janet Vito, Larry Vito, Joseph Kissel, Sonia Dusza, Kate Lepold, Alberta Roman, Steven Lyle, Richard Bertrand, Maria Tisby.

Meeting Minutes: Sonia made a motion to approve the minutes from the October 8, 2020 meeting, seconded by Larry Vito. Minutes unanimously approved.

Treasurer's Report: Janet Vito reported our account balance as \$1,357.92 as of 10/31/20. We have 21 paid members. Sonia made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report seconded by Larry. Treasurer's Report unanimously approved.

Niagara County Lawsuit: Paul reported that language regarding an order to be submitted to the Judge has been agreed to. Once the Judge signs the Order, Paul will submit it to the Niagara County Legislature and request that it be placed on their meeting agenda. The issue of attorney fees still has to be addressed.

Legislator Amy Paulin Amenments to the Open Meetings Law: The bills legislator Paulin has drafted so far have been submitted to the NY State Committee on Open Government. Hopefully the Committee will add their support to these bills. As more bills get filed, Paul will advise.

Reschedule FOIL Training: Hoping to have a new date in January for holding the FOIL training originally scheduled for September, which had to be cancelled.

SUNY Board of Trustees Chancellor Appointment: Paul had follow-up communications with the Government Justice Center (GJC). GJC is interested in filing a lawsuit focusing on the Open Meetings Law violations and not trying to overturn the Chancellor's appointment.

North Tonawanda Niagara Reporter Contract: It appears that the North Tonawanda City Council is not moving forward with their improper contract to pay the Niagara Reporter \$2,000 per month through a no-bid contract.

Mount Vernon: In September we released a report documenting the lack of open government in Mount Vernon, a city of 65,000 people outside of New York City. Paul had a Zoom meeting with several interested Mount Vernon residents and two City Councilmembers.

Erie County Covid-19 Transparency: We issued a press release encouraging Erie County to release more Covid information to the public. Other WNY counties provide information regarding nursing home clusters and Erie County does not. The Erie County Legislature unanimously passed a resolution in support of more transparency.

New Business: Maria talked about the difficulty she has been having in obtaining information regarding Erie County election inspectors.

Adjourn: Meeting was adjourned at 7:23 pm., on a motion by Maria, seconded by Sonia. Next meeting will be December 10th, 6:30 pm via Zoom.