

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

Meeting called to order at 6:35 p.m. Present: Paul Wolf, Sonia Dusza, Maria Tisby, Janet Vito, Larry Vito, Michael Higgins, Richard Bertrand, Mike Kless, Gary Dickson.

Meeting Minutes: The meeting minutes from February 13, 2020, were unanimously approved on a motion made by Mike Kless and seconded by Rich Bertrand.

Treasurer's Report: Janet Vito reported our account balance as \$1,364.16, as of 2/29/20. Larry Vito made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report which was seconded by Richard Bertrand. Motion was unanimously approved.

Niagara County Lawsuit: Mike Higgins provided an update regarding our lawsuit against Niagara County regarding financial disclosure forms. The case has been assigned to Judge Caruso and will be heard in Niagara Falls. The original scheduled court date was changed at the County's request. We are waiting to hear about a new date. Once a date is set, Paul will notify everyone as we would as many members as possible to attend.

Erie County Water Authority & Off Track Betting: The Coalition sent a letter to the Erie County Legislature requesting them to do more to publicize the available Water Authority and OTB appointment, so that more applications will be received. Paul Wolf spoke to the Erie County Legislature about our concerns.

March 19, 2020 Sunshine Week Event: Kristin O'Neill cancelled coming to our March 19th event, due to Coronavirus concerns. We will try to do this event again in September.

County Leg/City Council Report: Our next report will be to compare how City Council's and County Legislatures handle hearing from the public at their meetings. This will be our first report to include local governments outside of Erie and Niagara County.

New Business: Mike Kless raised the issue of Mayor's and County Executives charging people to attend State of the City/State of the County addresses. Such public events should not be used for fundraising or to charge the public. This could be a project to do next year.

Janet Vito mentioned doing a report on reviewing the transparency of charities and non-profit organizations.

Mike Kless raised the issue of special taxing districts as something to look into in the future as far as transparency.

Maria Tisby brought up the issue of a private company utilizing a town logo. Paul Wolf explained that some local governments address this issue in their code and some do not.

Adjourn: Mike Kless made a motion to adjourn seconded by Rich Bertrand. Meeting adjourned at 7:15 pm.

Next meeting will be April 9th, 6:30 pm at the Williamsville Library.