

## **NY COALITION FOR OPEN GOVERNMENT MEETING 9-8-22**

**Present on zoom;** John Fisher, Lawrence Vito, Janet Vito, Suzanne Kelly, Michelle Allen, Maria Tisby, Charles Lane (reporter, new attendee), Steven Lyle, Cory Morris, Paul Wolf, Alberta Roman-Recorder

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

**Meeting Minutes;** Meeting minutes of 8-11-22 approved on motion made by Janet Vito and seconded by Maria Tisby. Motion carried.

**Treasurer's Report;** Motion to accept made by Alberta Roman and seconded by Michelle Allen. Motion carried. As of 9-8-22 balance is \$4,362.24.

**2022 Calendar;** Yearly program calendar is available on pages 7-8 of agenda packet for people to see where we are at.

**Open Meetings Law (OML) Committee;** Chair Joe Kissel absent. Paul Wolf reported 3 items discussed. First, email sent to County Legislatures about private caucus meetings. Initial response-of 50 sent- 6 responded; after second request 6 responded; 20% success rate. Second, on page 11 is legislation by Sen. Kaplan re mandating live streaming meetings and maintaining for 5 yr minimum. Discussion to request longer preservation time by John Fisher. Motion made by Michelle Allen to support 5 year minimum preservation law filed by Sen. Kaplan. Seconded by Maria Tisby. John Fisher, while not a board member noted his objection to supporting the Kaplan bill as he believes recordings of meetings should be obtained longer than 5 years, Motion carried. Third, the Committee is gathering information for a report regarding the posting meeting minutes and documents. We will do a study of Town compliance with new law and members will be asked to participate.

**Freedom of Information Law(FOIL) Committee;** Chair Maria Tisby reported discussion on how Non-Disclosure Agreements are used to keep information from public.

**Public Relations/Education Group;** Chair Michelle Allen represented us very well at TV show in Syracuse and link was sent out to this event. Committee is

working on shortened mission statement. Discussed drafting legislation priorities letter that we could have other good government sign on to. Discussed condensing non-partisan policy (sourced from League of Women Voters Buffalo /Niagara) at length and the idea that limiting elected officials from Board would limit talent. Regional Advisory Council was discussed honing in on what they would do and creating some pilots. Request was made for Board to review.

### **Group Letter to Government Regulating State Agencies;**

Reinvent Albany approached Coalition to sign on letter which we did( included in packet) requesting Gov. Kathy Hochul to go a step further than simply requiring state agencies to prepare a transparency plan. In addition to having a plan state agencies should be required to do an annual report about FOIL requests, how long to process and what were denied. At Federal level, agencies must submit such a report to the Department of Justice; there is no similar requirement at the State level.

### **Should we purchase a Coalition Zoom Account?;** Paul Wolf

bought up issue of 149 dollars a year for 100 people or 199 dollars will accommodate up to 300 people. Meetings have been on Paul's private account. Motion made by Steve Lyle and seconded by Michelle Allen to purchase business zoom account. Motion carried.

### **National Freedom of Information Coalition Virtual Summit;**

Twenty five dollars to sign up for this useful zoom event Oct. 18 to 20, 2022.

**Cory Morris filed a FOIL Lawsuit;** Mary O'Malley new member was denied access by Vestal Police to video of trespasser on her property. Cory Morris is trying to get as many attorneys as possible to handle lawsuits like these. Waiting for response from Town of Vestal, Broome County.

**New Business;** Next Thursday Paul Wolf invited to speak to Niagara County Clerks Association about FOIL and OML. A group from Moldova (near Romania and Ukraine) wants to hear from us about OML and FOIL. Invited by International Institute on Sept 20 at 9 am. Paul sent out an email about in-person meeting in Victor in November and later another meeting nearer NYC. Michelle Allen willing to create kick start donations for community investment in FOIL& OML cases.

**Next Meeting; NY COG Oct.13 @6:30pm OML Sept.15 @ 4pm**

**FOIL Sept.22 @ 1pm Public Relations/ Ed Oct.6 @ 3pm**

**Meeting End;** Motion to adjourn meeting made by Maria Tisby and seconded by Steve Lyle. Motion carried at 7:31pm.