

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
GENESEE COUNTY LEGISLATURE
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2022 AT 4:00 PM
OLD COURT HOUSE, 7 MAIN ST. BATAVIA, NY**

Attendance: Legislators Stein, Clattenburg, Dibble, Maha, Torrey, Deleo, Klotzbach, Hawley, Legislature Clerk Lisa Casey, County Attorney James Wujcik, County Manager Matt Landers, Assistant County Manager Tammi Ferringer, Deputy Treasurer Kevin Andrews, Board member of GFLRPC Richard Sutherland, Highway Superintendent Tim Hens, Alabama Supervisor Robert Crossen, Congressman Chris Jacobs, Legislative Director for Congressman Jacobs Derek Judd, Congressman staff Lynn, Carpi Clay Associates Laura Morgan and Julie Minerra, Howard Owens, Mike Pettinella from The Batavian and Brian Quinn from The Daily.

The Genesee County Legislature held a Committee of the Whole on Wednesday, February 23, 2022 at 4:00 p.m.

Legislature Chair Stein called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Legislature Chair Stein requested approval of the COW minutes from January 12, 2022. Motion by Legislator Dibble and seconded by Legislator Hawley, carried unanimously.

Legislature Chair Rochelle Stein spoke of water being the top issue the county faces. Requesting assistance from Congressman Chris Jacobs to do what he can to secure funding for the water infrastructure projects ahead. Over the next decade, Genesee County water is the No. 1 issue.

County Manager Matt Landers mentioned the County needs help and the assistance so it not being put squarely on the water users and the taxpayers of Genesee County.

Highway Superintendent Tim Hens stated there are four phases that are part of the countywide water project, the Phase 1 cost \$20 million, Phase 2 was \$23 million, Phase 3, which is currently being designed, is pegged at about \$85 million and Phase four, which is years down the road, is in the \$50 million to \$60 million range. Phase 3, will eliminate the need for the city water plant and also would produce an additional six million gallons of water. Concerned what the costs are going to be July 2022, let alone July 2032. The county is trying to break Phase 3 into smaller pieces and thinks it will benefit from an infusion of money into the Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Fund through the infrastructure bill that was passed last fall. The county will try to take advantage of all the water project funding at the state level.

County Manager Matt Landers indicated the county has lobbyists on the federal level. Lobbyists have been helpful in pointing the county to certain pots of money.

Legislature Chair Rochelle Stein stated the county has an environmentally threatened public water source right now, right in Tonawanda Creek. Wondering if there is an environmental bill that will be coming out to include in funding for public water supplies that are threatened due to a groundwater source, it would be helpful to the County and to have Congressman Jacobs

support for that. With funding for a change of water source, going from a groundwater to a lake water, the chemistry's different. Discussion of social justice for residents of the City of Batavia and throughout the County – where the County has moderate-income folks that can't afford to have the cost of having lead pipes changed out.

Highway Superintendent Tim Hens stated the 40-year forecast for water throughout the county was 10 million gallons. The county is using about 10 million gallons currently. Phase 3 and Phase 4, if the county were to get through those iterations, the county would have a 40-year supply to about 21.5 million gallons. The forecast has doubled from the original forecast. The growth of the water system has far exceeded the county expectations, not only for residential demand, but a few years back, agriculture realized that they saw tremendous benefits in milk production in the dairy farms. It was mentioned that cows drink probably eight times what the average human consumes in a day. Hens said one of the benefits the county has seen from the water project so far is economic growth. Food processing industry: the County has HP Hood, O-AT-KA. HP Hood right now uses over a million gallons a day and they have plans to expand. Tim Hens stated there are still areas that don't have water. Phase 2 of the water project is being done to increase the water supply in the County. There are district expansions going on in Byron, Bergen and Bethany that will basically consume all the new water that the County brings. Phase 3, not only does it bring more water to everybody in the County, but it also replaces over a hundred year-old water plant in the city of Batavia that is limited in what it can produce and is also threatened from not only low groundwater situation. There are conditions in the Tonawanda Creek that keep us from producing high-quality water all-year round.

Congressman Jacobs and his staff will scour departments within Washington, D.C., to find good fits for opportunities for this very important project. Water and broadband (internet) are “common needs” throughout his Congressional district that he continues to advocate for. Congressman Jacobs, a member of the House Agriculture Committee stated he is learning about the problems facing rural communities. He is hopeful this district will be in the majority next year and he will be in a better position to advocate as well.

Legislative Director for Congressman Jacobs, Derek Judd stated that there is low cost, long-term financing for water infrastructure in the works but advised legislators to be prepared for a long timeline when it comes to Congress-supported community project funding projects.

Congressman Jacobs stated to County Manager Matt Landers “should be proud” of the fact that Genesee County has developed a regional water supply in conjunction with the Monroe and Erie County Water Authorities and (with Niagara County in the future at the WNY STAMP site in the Town of Alabama). This is a “partnership” the County has with the City, towns and villages, and hoped that Congressman Jacobs would communicate their message to his colleagues at the nation's capital.

At 5:00 p.m. the meeting adjourned upon motion of Legislator Klotzbach seconded by Legislator Hawley, carried.