

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
GENESEE COUNTY LEGISLATURE
OLD COURTHOUSE LEGISLATURE CHAMBERS ROOM
Wednesday, August 19, 2020 3:00 PM**

The Genesee County Legislature met on Wednesday, August 19, 2020 at 3:00 PM at the Old County Court House Legislature Chambers, Batavia, New York.

Legislature Chair Stein called the meeting to order at 3:00 PM for a discussion with Congressman Chris Jacobs pertaining to infrastructure needs, broadband high-speed internet and water.

Prior to the Congressman's arrival, Pavilion Town Supervisor Rob LaPoint expressed concern about a traffic issue near the school. A petition requesting some mitigation has over 1,000 signatures. He plans to attend a future Traffic Safety Board meeting and has spoken with highway superintendent Tim Hens.

Congressman Jacobs was introduced to Legislators and Administrators. He explained that he requested to be assigned to the Ag Committee and that request was honored. He met with Farm Bureau leaders and plans to host an Ag roundtable to get timely updates from members of the Ag community. He is going to Washington later this week to vote on a bill pertaining to the United States Postal Service. He stated that if there is not a COVID stimulus bill presented this month he thinks something will be presented in September. He explained that NYS Governor is holding \$3 billion in Federal stimulus CARES ACT funds and the governor needs to be pressured to release the money so it can get to its intended recipients.

County Manager Matt Landers explained that Genesee County is one of a handful of Counties in NYS that is responsible for Town and Village bridges in addition to County bridges. He also stated how Genesee County has shared revenue from sales tax with towns and villages which has placed an additional burden on the County. Several bridges are in need of major repairs and mitigation and have been given a red flag.

Highway Superintendent Tim Hens shared historical information regarding how bridges are defined by federal and state governments and that Genesee County maintains all structures over 5 feet in size. He reported we have 95 bridges over 20 ft in span and 60% of those bridges are on town roads. Over half of the bridges in the county are deficient and in need of replacement sometime soon. He has worked on maintaining and repairing as much as possible to ensure safety and use however, the number with red flags is increasing and the previous repairs are no longer adequate. Bridges were designed and built to last between 50-75 years; most Genesee County bridges are over 65 years old. Mr. Hens explained how we are competing for federal and state dollars with larger, higher volume bridges and any assistance he can provide will be appreciated. He stated that he is a past president of NACE and has had the opportunity to participate in congressional hearing. The pandemic has caused a decline in sales tax which is the local contribution/funding source for bridge repairs/replacement. Mr. Hens explained that recently, the county declined federal grant monies because he was able to complete the project for less than the county share had they accepted and it was completed in about 7 weeks. A

typical federally funded project is typically 18 months. The process involved with accepting federal dollars is what drives the cost up.

Legislature Chair Stein identified how important broadband internet is to our communities especially moving forward with remote teaching and hybrid models where students spend some time in the classroom and some time at home using the internet. Because there are portions of communities with no internet those families are at a disadvantage.

Chair Stein identified how the county has begun the process of laying a “spine” of a water system and we are approaching the next phase. Some communities have expanded water districts and are providing municipal water however some communities are unable due to the high cost. USDA has been a good partner and provided grant funding with various projects. County Manager Matt Landers explained how most rural counties have villages and hamlets with their own water system. Genesee County began the process of planning and executing the development of a county-wide water system several years ago. The County works closely with Monroe County Water Authority and the City of Batavia. When the system was designed there was little knowledge of how much cows liked and thrived on municipal water. Demand for water is increased with growing businesses such as O-AT-KA and Hood. Highway Superintendent Tim Hens further explained how our water system is unique and that he has been contacted by other counties within NYS and nationwide. Our countywide water system is complex and consists of many agreements with municipalities, NY Thruway Authority, Monroe County Water Authority and Erie County Water Authority. Mr. Hens indicated that any and all assistance from the Congressman is welcome. Future additions and expansions will be costly and with our sales tax revenue on the decline due to the pandemic, our local funding of water is impacted.

At 3:45 pm the meeting adjourned upon motion of Legislator Yunker seconded by Legislator Maha, carried unanimously.