



## *2025 Annual Report – Narrative Department Report Legislative Clerk/County Auditor*

The Office of the Legislative Clerk and the County Auditor remained committed to delivering the highest standard of public service through efficiency, transparency, and accountability. Despite a year marked by transitions and staffing challenges, the office maintained continuity of operations, strengthened internal controls, enhanced financial oversight, and streamlined administrative processes to support sound fiscal management and effective legislative governance to be in compliance with statutory obligations.

### *Legislative Clerk:*

Serving as Chief of Staff to the Legislature, the Legislative Clerk provides comprehensive administrative and legislative support to ensure the effective operation of legislative functions, including, but not limited to, coordinating legislative meetings, maintaining official records, managing legislative documentation, publishing legal notices, and ensuring compliance with all statutory requirements prescribed by County Law and Open Meetings Law.

The Legislative Office experienced a year of transition and measurable progress in 2025. Despite staffing challenges, the Legislative Office maintained continuity of operations, fulfilled all statutory requirements, and maintained organizational efficiency, transparency, and fiscal oversight.

### *Legislative Activity:*

The Clerk of the Legislature prepared materials and provided support for the following Legislative meetings:

- 12 Regular Legislative Meetings
- 6 Special Legislative Meetings
- 7 Public Hearings
- 24 Legislative Worksessions

Additionally, the Clerk of the Legislature reviewed, processed, recorded and posted the following Legislative documents:

- 501 Resolutions
- 15 Recognition Resolutions
- 20 Proclamations
- 3 Local Laws

All meeting notices, agendas, minutes, including the 2025 Journal of Proceedings, and legal notices were posted and published in a timely manner to ensure public transparency and accessibility.

# Office of the Legislative Clerk

Ronald E. Dougherty County Office Building 56 Main Street Owego, NY 13827



☎ 607 687 8240 📠 607 687 8232 🌐 [www.TiogaCountyNY.gov](http://www.TiogaCountyNY.gov)

**Cathy Haskell** Legislative Clerk

## ***Legislation:***

The Clerk of the Legislature worked with Senator O'Mara's and Assemblyman Friend's office requesting State Home Rule Legislation for the continuation of the County's two-year extension of additional 1% sales and compensating use tax for December 1, 2025 – November 30, 2027. This process continued with the Legislative Clerk working with our assigned counsel from NYS Department of Taxation and Finance and County Attorney to successfully complete the County's Two-Year Sales Tax Extender legislation, securing continuation of the additional 1% sales and compensating use tax and ensuring revenue stability. The Legislature adopted this resolution on September 16, 2025.

The Legislative Clerk prepared the following local laws for the County Attorney's review and Legislature introduction and adoption. Local laws were filed with the Department of State, County Clerk, and posted on the County's website:

- Local Law No. 1 of 2025 – Establishing Salary of the Office of County Treasurer
- Local Law No. 2 of 2025 – Authorizing 12- & 13-Year-Old Licensed Hunters to Hunt Deer with a Firearm or Crossbow During Hunting Season with the Supervision of an Adult Licensed Hunter.
- Local Law No. 3 of 2025 – Opting-out of the Requirements of the New York Short-Term Rental Law for Establishing a Short-Term Rental Registry.

## ***Governance:***

In partnership with the County Administrator, the Clerk of the Legislature co-facilitated a new Policy Review Committee composed of deputies and mid-management staff for the purpose of updating policies to strengthen governance and internal controls. Several policies were reviewed, updated, created and adopted by the Legislature. The Legislative Clerk is responsible for updating and maintaining the County's Employee Handbook and notifying departments of any adopted policy changes.

## ***Onboarding – New Legislators and Department Heads:***

The Clerk of the Legislature, along with the County's Executive Team, conducted the following Newly Elected Legislator and Appointed Department Head Orientations:

- Legislator Ray Bunce – District #6 Legislator
- Legislator Andrew Aronstam – District #5 Legislator
- Director of Veterans' Service Agency Dennis Mullen
- ITCS Chief Information Officer Brandon Clark

The Clerk of the Legislature is responsible for updating and preparing the orientation binders.

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## ***Long-term Strategic Planning/Succession Planning:***

The Clerk of the Legislature added the long-term FY2027-2028 Objective of hiring a 2<sup>nd</sup> Deputy Legislative Clerk in the County's 2025 Strategic Plan update to maintain workforce continuity, and long-term succession planning. The staffing challenges that began in August 2024 through 2025 further reinforces the strategic objective for additional staff in the Legislative Office.

## ***Budget Preparation/Management:***

The Clerk of the Legislature is responsible for preparing and monitoring the Legislative Office budget in accordance with the County's procurement policies, financial guidelines, and annual budget directives and 2025 ended with no budgetary concerns.

## ***Office Renovations:***

The Legislative Office, in collaboration with Buildings & Grounds, commenced a renovation project redesigning workspaces with building and installation of new desks, office doors, front counter and service window to improve confidentiality, security, access. Project completion anticipated in Q12026.

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## ***County Auditor:***

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### ***Fiscal Oversight:***

The County Auditor is charged with fiscal oversight of the County's Accounts Payable transactions and vendor management and ensuring compliance with auditing standards prior to payment authorization.

In 2025, 9,116 accounts payable invoices totaling \$31,605,185.04 were audited, which is an increase of 391 invoices and \$5,778,602.55 from 2024.

In 2025, 2,180 purchase card transactions totaling \$567,804.89 were audited, which is a decrease of 267 transactions and \$30,104.85.

AP invoices and purchase card transactions that did not meet auditing standards were rejected for the respective departments to correct prior to County Auditor approval.

The County Auditor provides a monthly Accounts Payable Update report to the Legislature as part of the Legislative Support Committee agenda.



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## *Legislature:*

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2025 was a notable year for leadership transitions, retirements, and organizational change.

The Legislature welcomed newly elected District #6 Legislator Raymond Bunce who was sworn-in at the First Special & Organizational Meeting of 2025, in addition to that, incumbent Legislators Flesher, Roberts, and Standinger were sworn-in for their new three-year terms. Democratic Election Commissioner Wahls and Republican Election Commissioner Johnson were also re-appointed and sworn in for new two-year terms.

Legislator Sauerbrey was appointed and sworn-in as Chair of the Legislature serving her twelfth one-year Chair term. Legislator Monell was appointed and sworn-in as Deputy Chair of the Legislature serving his third one-year Deputy Chair term.

### *Retirements/Transitions:*

The Legislature experienced significant turnover along with long-standing Department Heads retiring from public service.

District #5 Legislator Mullen resigned from his position on May 2, 2025 to assume his newly appointed role as Director of Veterans' Service Agency effective May 3, 2025 where he will continue his public service to Tioga County and was recognized by the Legislature at the May 13, 2025 Legislature meeting.

Andrew Aronstam, who was on the November 2025 General Election ballot for District #5 Legislator position, was appointed by the Legislature on June 10, 2025 to serve until December 31, 2025 and subsequently elected for a new full three-year term commencing January 1, 2026.

Legislator Barbara Roberts ran unopposed for the position of County Treasurer in the November 2025 General Election and was recognized by the Legislature at the December 9, 2025 Legislature for her 4 years of serving as District #3 Legislator. Legislator Roberts resigned as of January 1, 2026 to assume her new role as County Treasurer on January 2, 2026 for her newly elected three-year term.

Legislator/Chair Sauerbrey retired as District #2 Legislator on January 1, 2026 after 20 years of public service, including 12 years serving as Chair of the Legislature. Chair Sauerbrey was recognized for her dedicated years of service at the December 9, 2025 Legislature meeting.

Commissioner of Social Services Shawn Yetter retired on December 12, 2025 after 35 years of dedicated service to the Department of Social Services.

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County Treasurer McFadden retired on December 31, 2025 after 32 years of dedicated service to the residents of Tioga County.

Public Defender Thomas Cline retired on December 31, 2025 after 12 years of dedicated service to Tioga County.

All three Department Heads were recognized by the Legislature at the December 9, 2025 Legislature meeting.

### ***Staff/Legislator Recognitions:***

The Legislature recognized and presented recognition resolutions and/or retirement service plaques to three Legislators, one elected official, and eleven employees for their 18 – 36 years of dedicated service to Tioga County.

### ***Chair Appointments:***

In addition to the Chair of the Legislature establishing the annual Legislative Standing Committees, the following appointments were announced in 2025:

Legislator Brown – Tioga Co. Soil & Water Conservation District Board – 1/1/25 – 12/31/25  
Legislator Monell – Tioga Co. Soil & Water Conservation District Board – 1/1/25 – 12/31/25  
Legislator Flesher – Tioga Co. Local Development Corporation Board – 4/1/25 – 3/31/28  
Legislator Bunce – Tioga Co. Property Development Corporation Board – 9/16/25 – 12/31/26  
Legislator Aronstam – Public Access Law Library – 10/1/25 – 9/30/27  
Legislator Ciotoli – Tioga County Industrial Development Agency – 1/1/26

Due to staff retirements and transitions, the Chair of the Legislature appointed search committees comprised of Legislators and staff for the following positions:

- Director of Veterans' Service Agency
- Coroner
- ITCS Chief Information Officer
- Commissioner of Social Services
- Public Defender
- District #3 Legislator

### ***In Remembrance/Moment of Silence:***

The Legislature observed moments of silence in honor of a former Legislator, retired and current staff, long-standing community volunteer, and municipal official who passed away in 2025, recognizing their service to the residents of Tioga County.

- Former District #3 Legislator James E. Woodruff, Jr.
- Long-standing Community Volunteer Kenneth Franklin Easton
- Retired Motor Vehicle Examiner Patricia Zorn
- Medical Director of Tioga County Mental Hygiene Dr. John B. Bezirgianian
- Town of Newark Valley Supervisor Stuart L. Yetter, Jr.

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## *2025 Challenges:*

Throughout the majority of 2025, the Legislative Office operated without a Deputy Legislative Clerk resulting in the Clerk of the Legislature assuming full operational responsibility. Despite the significant staffing vacancy, the office maintained uninterrupted continuity of operations and successfully fulfilled all statutory obligations, deadlines, and reporting requirements.

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## *2026 Goals*

The Clerk of the Legislature established the following goals:

- Provide comprehensive training and onboarding for the new Deputy Legislative Clerk to ensure operational efficiency, continuity, and accuracy.
- Deputy Legislative Clerk to attend I4A professional development program.
- Continue professional development for Legislative Clerk through attendance at the New York State Association of Clerks of County Legislative Boards (NYSACCLB) annual conferences and maintain professional certification.
- Continuation and implementation of Policy Review Committee recommendations that strengthen, enhance, and modernize County policies.
- Update and maintain Legislative Office Procedures manual to reflect current practices, statutory requirements, and internal controls.
- Preparation of Local Laws for Hotel/Motel Occupancy Tax and Legislator Staggered Terms.

Respectfully submitted,

***Cathy Haskell***

Clerk of the Legislature/County Auditor