

Minutes
Public Safety Committee
September 17, 2025, 4:00 p.m., Legislative Chambers
Livestreamed on YouTube
Gerace Office Building, Mayville, NY

Members Present: Niebel, Bankoski, Proctor, Carle, Landy

Others Present: Chagnon, Lee, Swan, Makowski, Vanstrom, Ihrig, Harp, Enlow

Complete video of meeting can be viewed on YouTube

Chairman Niebel called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Approval of Minutes (8/20/25)

MOVED by Legislator Bankoski SECONDED by Legislator Carle

Unanimously Carried

Privilege of the Floor

Karen Engstrom: Karen Engstrom, Township of Chautauqua, and Chautauqua Energy Watch. The installation of Battery Energy Storage Systems in our communities is a public safety issue. Towns and landowners are being approached by developers to install BESS – which is encouraged by the State that is now sponsoring solicitations from the developers. Residents and towns are alarmed about this because of the costs, the dangers and the loss of control of their communities. First, when real energy is operating, there is no need or justification for battery energy storage. Hydro, dual cycle gas, nuclear are on demand, affordable, reliable, tried and true. There are many questions that must be answered before BESS installations go forward in our community. First of all, evacuation plans. Do we have evacuation plans? We know that in Ripley at the State level citing board hearings the fire plan was an evacuation of a radius of 7 miles in the case of a thermal runaway fire or explosion which BESS has exhibited in many places in New York State and the big one recently in Moss Landing in California. How will evacuation of the schools and the nursing homes and the universities and the community that is so close to these proposed installations. How will that be handled? Will mutual aid firefighters receive training? Are mutual aid fire companies onboard with this situation that they will be facing? We know it takes days sometimes to extinguish a thermal runaway fire and it uses a lot of resources and a lot of water. And that water goes into our watershed. What becomes of the materials that they are made of at the end of their very short life? And who is going to pay for them? Is it true that BESS shuts down as do solar and wind if the grid fails? I've spoken to a grid operator and he says "yes" it is not a backup system at all – it shuts down like everything else. And how is the large price tag going to be reflected in our energy bills? I've provided a list of the many dangers – the fire and explosions, the toxic gas released, the water contamination, the high cost, the life span aging, the inefficiency, the hazardous materials, the inability to dispose of them because they are toxic waste. Our state is imposing these things on us and we have some quotes from our

local politicians. Mr. Langworthy and State Senator Borrello both stated that these proposals are an assault on our residents and our quality of life. The state does force elected into choosing between economic incentives and the safety and security of their constituents. Renewable energy is not an industry. It is documented that one-third of the cost comes from the Federal government and almost fifty percent from the state and local subsidies. So, renewable energy is not competitive. It is simply a government program designed to enrich a coalition of developers and the industry as well as speculators. So, I bring your attention to the insurance statement on the back of the hazards which indicates that it will not be insured and there is also a couple of pieces of legislation and recommendations for the towns. And I hope you will help our little towns. Because, I've been to five of them recently, and they are very desperate for any kind of advice and help that they can have. So, thank you. From the county. Because you know so much more than they do. They really are not well informed.

Proposed Resolution – Setting the Salary for Digital Forensic Investigator – *Presented by Debbie Makowski, Director of Human Resources/Compliance Officer and Sam Zafuto, Deputy Director of Finance*

Unanimously Carried

Proposed Resolution – Authorize Acceptance of the Victim Assistance Program Funding for 2025-2028 – *Presented by Sam Zafuto, Deputy Director of Finance*

Unanimously Carried

Proposed Resolution – Amend 2025 Budget for the Chautauqua County Department of Emergency Medical Services-Fly Car & Ambulance Services – *Presented by Sam Zafuto, Deputy Director of Finance*

Unanimously Carried

Proposed Resolution – Amend 2026 Budget for OES and Authorize Acceptance of FY2022 Technical Rescue and Urban Search and Rescue Grant– *Presented by Sam Zafuto, Deputy Director of Finance*

Unanimously Carried

Proposed Resolution – Authorize Execution of NYS Office of Homeland Security Funding Grant Explosive Detection Canine Team FY 2022– *Presented by Reilly Enlow, Fiscal Supervisor for the Sheriff's Department*

Unanimously Carried

Proposed Resolution – Authorize Execution of New York State Governor’s Traffic Safety Committee Grant for the Police Traffic Services Program FY 2026–
Presented by Reilly Enlow, Fiscal Supervisor for the Sheriff’s Department

Unanimously Carried

Proposed Resolution – Authorize Regional Partnership Agreements with Municipalities for the Tactical Team Program– *Presented by Reilly Enlow, Fiscal Supervisor for the Sheriff’s Department*

Unanimously Carried

MOVED by Legislator Bankoski, SECONDED by Legislator Proctor to adjourn

Unanimously Carried (4:25 p.m.)

Respectfully submitted and transcribed,
Olivia L. Lee, Clerk of the Legislature/Nancy Quattrone, Senior Stenographer