

Chautauqua County Legislature
Organizational Meeting
Friday, January 2, 2026, 4:00 p.m.
“Live streamed on YouTube”
Legislative Chambers, Mayville, New York

Clerk Lee called the Organizational Meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. and announced a quorum. (Absent: Pavlock, Scudder)

Legislator Heiser delivered a prayer followed by the Pledge of Allegiance

Nate Harp, Assistant County Attorney: Good afternoon everybody and Happy New Year. For those who don't yet know me, my name is Nate Harp. I'm an Assistant County Attorney and I'm currently the Legislature's main point of contact in the County Law Department so I'm looking forward to working with everybody over the course of this next year. In just a moment I'm going to administer the verbal oath of office but the really important one is already sitting on your desks. So please, to all the legislators, don't leave tonight without filling that out and then Amanda, would you please stand up? Amanda Gallagher from our office has graciously offered to notarize all of these for us so see Amanda and she'll take care of that. So if you would all please stand and raise your right hand.

Swearing in New Legislators
Sandra Lewis,
Jason Merritt,
Vince DeJoy &
Robert Whitney
By
Legislature Parliamentarian Nathan Harp

Clerk Lee: We will now accept nominations for Chairman of the Legislature.

Legislator Gustafson: I nominate Pierre Chagnon as Chairman of the Legislature.

Legislator Vanstrom: I'll second that.

Clerk Lee: Are there any other nominations? Are there any other nominations? Hearing none, I will entertain a motion to close the nominations.

*MOVED by Legislator Bankski/SECONDED by Legislator Johnson to Close
Nominations – Unanimously Carried to Close Nominations*

Clerk Lee: The nominee is Pierre Chagnon. We will now have a roll call vote. Please indicate your choice for Chairman by stating the name of the nominee.

16 – Pierre Chagnon
1 – Abstain (Chagnon)
(Absent: Pavlock, Scudder)

Clerk Lee: Having received a required majority of the votes, I declare Pierre Chagnon to be the newly elected Chairman of the Chautauqua County Legislature for 2026 year. Congratulations and please come forward.

Applause

ACCEPTANCE SPEECH BY CHAIRMAN

Chairman Chagnon: If I can say a few words. I'll try to keep it to a few. I am honored and humbled to continue in the position of Chairman of the Chautauqua County Legislature. In this role I will continue to adhere to high moral standards and do my very best to demonstrate servant leadership. A servant leader shares power, puts the needs of the organization first and helps people develop and perform as highly as possible. Instead of the people working to serve the leader, the leader exists to serve the people. Good leaders view their role as an act of service, not an avenue for authority and attention. As we begin a new year, we welcome Vince DeJoy, Sandra Lewis, Jason Merritt, and Bob Whitney to the Legislature. In this new year I remain committed to refocus discussions centering on what is wrong, to discussions of what can be done to improve policies, programs, and procedures that need improvement. With dramatic changes in Federal and State funding and policies, my priorities will be: protecting the County property taxpayers from federal and state cost shifts and policy changes, protecting County essential services from federal and state cost shifts and policy changes and expanding partnerships to increase economic development, housing, and infrastructure investments. Thank you.

Applause

1st Privilege of the Floor

Chairman Chagnon: Okay, that brings us to the first privilege of the floor. Members of the public may comment on any subject relating to any local law, resolution or motion appearing on the agenda. Individual comments are limited to 3 minutes and comments representing a group shall be limited to 5 minutes. Is there anyone wishing to speak to the first privilege of the floor? Anyone for the first privilege of the floor? Seeing no one, I will close the first privilege of the floor.

(REPUBLICAN) DESIGNATE NEWSPAPER

We, the undersigned members of the Chautauqua County Legislature, and representing the Republican party, one of the two principal parties into which the people of Chautauqua County are divided, do hereby designate for the year 2026 the POST JOURNAL as the Republican newspaper to publish the concurrent resolutions, election notices and official canvas, all pursuant to Section 214, paragraph 1, of the County Law.

Signed: Chagnon, Johnson, Proctor, Penhollow, Heiser, Scudder, Dickey, Gustafson, Vanstrom, Harmon, Anthony, Pavlock

(DEMOCRATIC) DESIGNATE NEWSPAPER

We, the undersigned members of the Chautauqua County Legislature, and representing the Democratic party, one of the two principal parties into which the people of Chautauqua County are divided, do hereby designate for the year 2026 the OBSERVER as the Democratic newspaper to publish the concurrent resolutions, election notices and official canvas, all pursuant to Section 214, paragraph 1, of the County Law.

Signed: Bankski, Nelson, Larson, Buchanan

APPOINTMENT OF MAJORITY LEADER AND ASSISTANT

We, the undersigned being a Majority of the Republican members of the Chautauqua County Legislature hereby designate Legislator Jamie Gustafson as Majority Leader of the Chautauqua County Legislature for the year 2026 in accordance with Local Law No. 6-1969 adopted on the 2nd day of January 1970. And appoint, as Assistant Majority Leader, Legislator Lisa Vanstrom.

Signed: Chagnon, Johnson, Proctor, Penhollow, Heiser, Scudder, Pavlock, Dickey, Landy, Gustafson, Vanstrom, Harmon, Anthony

APPOINTMENT OF MINORITY LEADER AND ASSISTANT

We, the undersigned being a Majority of the Democrat members of the Chautauqua County Legislature do hereby designate Legislator Robert Bankski as the Minority Leader of the Chautauqua County Legislature for the year 2026 in accordance with Local Law No. 6-1969 adopted on the 2nd day of January 1970. And appoint as Assistant Minority Leader, Legislator Thomas Nelson.

Signed: Bankski, Nelson, Larson, Buchanan

RESOLUTIONS:**1-26 Appointing Clerk of the Legislature**

Legislator Larson: Mr. Chairman, thank you. Olivia has been a wonderful help to me these last 2 years and I'm very happy to anticipate another full year here with her service to all of us, thank you.

*RES. NO. 1-26 – R/C Vote: 17 YES; 0 NO; 2 Absent (Pavlock, Scudder) –
UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED*

2-26 Appointing Secretary to the Legislature

*RES. NO. 2-26 – R/C Vote: 17 YES; 0 NO; 2 Absent (Pavlock, Scudder) –
UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED*

3-26 Confirm Appointment – Public Defender

Legislator DeJoy: I would just like to say a word on behalf of Mr. Barone. He's been a very good friend of mine for well over 50 years and growing up on the south side of Jamestown, I considered Ned Barone as a role model, a scholar, a good athlete and just a good person and most important he's a good father but he is an amazing attorney and I'll just never forget just one thing that I recall. It was a Saturday afternoon in Chautauqua Institution, after the season closed in October and I was walking with my girlfriend. We stopped at the Chautauqua book store and there was Ned Barone doing research on a person that I thought was probably one of the most despicable defendants he had to defend but that's his job and he's very good at it. So, I am so glad that he has bipartisan support here in the Legislature and I just want to say thank you Ned Barone, for all the years of service to our County.

Legislator Penhollow: Mr. Chairman, with the utmost respect, I would ask that we amend this resolution to go from a one year appointment to a two year appointment.

MOVED by Legislator Penhollow, SECONDED by Legislator Larson to amend to a 2-year appointment.

Chairman Chagnon: So, we have a motion to amend resolution 3-26. Is there any discussion, questions or comments on the motion to amend? Hearing none, would the clerk please call the roll on the motion to amend resolution 3-26?

RES. NO. 3-26 – R/C Vote: 4 YES; 13 NO (Anthony, Bankoski, Buchanan, DeJoy, Gustafson, Harmon, Heiser, Johnson, Lewis, Merritt, Proctor, Vanstrom, Chagnon); 2 Absent (Pavlock, Scudder) – MOTION TO AMEND FAILS

Chairman Chagnon: Okay, are there any other questions or comments on resolution 3-26 as presented?

Legislator Johnson: Mr. Chairman, should this have passed, I would have voted “no” on the appointment, given that its for 1 year and passed that way, I will vote “yes”.

Chairman Chagnon: Thank you. Any other questions or comments on the resolution? Hearing none, would the clerk please call the roll?

RES. NO. 3-26 – R/C Vote: 17 YES; 0 NO; 2 Absent (Pavlock, Scudder) – UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED

4-26 Designation of Official Newspapers – 2026

RES. NO. 4-26 UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED (Absent: Pavlock, Scudder)

5-26 Delegate Authority to Chairman of Legislature to Correct Errors on Tax Rolls and to Provide Refunds and Credits of Taxes Pursuant to Section 554 and 556 of the Real Property Tax Law

RES. NO. 5-26 - UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED (Absent: Pavlock, Scudder)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman Chagnon: And that brings us on our agenda to announcements. Are there any announcements from the legislators for the good of the order?

Legislator Vanstrom: Yes, I’m very excited. The announcement for the Green Tie Affair just came out the other day and I think its February 22 at 5 o’clock at the Celoron Harbor Hotel. Thank you. It’s a great event and I hope everybody can lend themselves make a donation or participate.

Chairman Chagnon: For the benefit of?

Legislator Vanstrom: The 4-H. Thank you, Chautauqua County 4-H.

Chairman Chagnon: I just wanted to get the plug in, Emily. I’ll make an announcement. I’m just going to reinforce what Nate said that be sure you sign your oath of office in front of Amanda so she can notarize it before you leave tonight.

2nd PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Chairman Chagnon: I will open 2nd privilege of the floor where members of the public may comment on any subject. A member of the Legislature may speak on any subject. Individual comments are limited to 3 minutes and comments representing a group shall be limited to 5 minutes.

Chairman Chagnon: Is there anyone wishing to address the 2nd privilege of the floor? Anyone to address the 2nd privilege of the floor? Then I will close the 2nd privilege of the floor. And I am now looking for a motion.

MOVED by Legislator Anthony, SECONDED by Legislator Larson and duly carried the meeting was adjourned. (4:20 p.m.)

Respectfully submitted and transcribed,
Olivia L. Lee, Clerk of the Legislature/Kristi R. Zink, Deputy Clerk/Secretary to the Legislature