

Minutes
Administrative Services Committee
February 17, 2026, 5:00 p.m., Legislative Chambers
Livestreamed on YouTube
Gerace Office Building, Mayville, NY

Members Present: Scudder, Anthony, Vanstrom, Heiser

Others: Chagnon, Lee, Guillory, Nelson, DeJoy, Woodard, Zafuto, Carlson, Makowski, Quattrone, McClennen, Dennison, Lyons, Proctor, Meleen, Mike D., Engstrom

Complete video of meeting can be viewed on YouTube

Chairman Scudder called the meeting to order at 5:10 p.m.

Approval of Minutes (01/20/26)

MOVED by Legislator Anthony, SECONDED by Legislator Heiser to approve the minutes

Unanimously Carried

Privilege of the Floor

Chairman Scudder: Is there anyone here today that would like to speak to us about anything on our agenda?

Chairman Nelson: *Unintelligible*

Chairman Scudder: Oh, you've got to come down.

Legislator Nelson: Hi, Tom Nelson. Um, 21 Hunter Street, Jamestown. I'm a legislator for District 13 and I'm here to speak about Resolution 17-26, which I strongly oppose. Um, this was the resolution that would, uh, amend the rules and regulations for the County Legislature. Um, first I think that it unnecessarily restricts free speech while public comment is not unlimited, courts have consistently held that when a government body opens a public forum, it cannot impose restrictions that are broader than necessary. This amendment narrows speech by limiting comments to matters of the legislature—that the legislature deems within its authority which invites content-based and viewpoint-based exclusions. Residents should not have to be legal experts in the state law or the County Charter to speak at their Legislature. Secondly, there's vague languages that I think invites arbitrary enforcement. Terms like, "relevant to the powers and duties and/or responsibilities of the County Legislature are subjective and open to interpretation. The vagueness gives the presenting officer broad discretion to cut off speakers. Potentially, based on disagreement, rather than relevance. Third, public comment is one of the few direct avenues residents have to speak to their elected officials, narrowing the scope and increasing enforcement discretion will discourage participation, particularly by residents who are already feeling marginalized or unheard, a Legislature should not—should be encouraging, I'm sorry, civic engagement, not erecting procedural barriers. Fourth, there's no evidence that has been presented that public comment has disrupted legislative operations or prevented the

Legislature from conducting business. Without a clear problem to solve, this rules change appears unnecessarily punitive, raising the concern that it is—it's aimed at silencing uncomfortable or critical speech, rather than improving efficiency. Number five, content-based restrictions on speech in a limited public forum face heightened scrutiny under the First Amendment. The Amendment increases—this amendment increases the County's exposure to legal challenges while simultaneously undermining public trust by signaling that criticism is unwelcome. And, finally, public comment is not meant to be convenient or comfortable. It exists precisely so residents can raise issues that may be unpopular, broad, or critical. Limiting speech to what the Legislature already believes is within its authority reverses the purpose of public comment, turning it from a democratic safeguard into a managed formality. Thank you.

Chairman Scudder: Thank you. Anyone else to speak to the privilege of the floor? Come on down.

Legislator DeJoy: Good evening. Vince DeJoy, 98 Forest Avenue, Jamestown. Uh, County Legislative District—uh representative for District 9. I, too, am here to, uh, to speak on the—the same, uh, amendment, uh, of the rules as, uh, Legislator Nelson just commented on and, uh, and I've, it's my firm belief that this Legislature should think long and hard before restricting, um, open and free speech. I think, uh, it upholds core Democratic principles by allowing the public to speak. Uh, 'cause local government exists to serve the people, not just to con—conduct, uh, procedural business allowing open comments affirms that every resident has a voice not only to those who fit neatly within uh, agenda categories and democracy is strongest when government listens and is, uh, or, as Legislator Nelson mentioned even to uncomfortable or unconventional, uh, perspectives. It builds public trust and transparency. Restricting speech can create the perception that officials only want to hear supportive or convenient viewpoints. Open privilege of the floor signals that the Legislature is confident, transparent, and accountable to the people. Trust in government grows when citizens feel that they're generally heard, rather than managed. So, again, I am opposed to restricting it, other than, you know—if, the comments are made, uh, that are inappropriate, uh, but just perhaps they may not be relevant, but they should still be heard and I just, uh, appreciate you taking the time to, uh, listen to my comments. Thank you very much.

Chairman Scudder: Okay, thank you. Anyone else to speak to us?

Karen Engstrom, town of Chautauqua and I'm speaking for the Chautauqua Energy Watch and in the—to let you know why we come. Chautauqua Energy Watch tries to provide as much information as we can to this body. There is a lot of information that you would not otherwise see. So we spend as much time as we can researching. We offer two studies today that are by local experts on energy. One is by Don Rice from Ripley who worked with Boeing on the, uh, problems of battery energy storage systems on aircraft. The other is Christine Martin who's got a well-known energy blog. Uh, only Mr. Scudder has the actual printed copies. The others will be emailed to you. Uh, and they're very recently issued. So we know, as you very well know that we have many concerns about battery energy storage systems that are being, uh, put forward as proposals throughout out county. That's not just citizens, it's also trustees and we've been going to a number of town board meetings and all of those trustees are so far as we can tell are concerned about protecting their communities from this, uh, these many, many proposals. And so what we're seeing around the state is that there are laws written by counties, by metropolitan centers, and by townships that do address this issue. Included in those laws are such

requirements that I listed here. The requirement that no PFAS or PFOS, forever chemicals, be in the components of battery energy storage system. This is just a very positive responsible environmental thing to require. The town of Chautauqua does that. Number 2 is to require that all the components in these renewables be recycled because they are made of very valuable parts and they should not be wasted by relegating them to toxic waste dump—dumps. Niagara County has that solar law and that is a template for battery energy storage, it's a template. It can be done. Number 3, require that all components be manufactured in the United States because of the quality issues that we see coming from China. The fact that they do contain PFAS and PFOS. If it's a solar or if it's a wind and it comes from there, it contains PFAS. And for security reasons, we don't want all of our components coming from a country that may no longer be ready or willing to provide the components that we need. So we see a number of issues regarding the safety of battery energy storage system. They're highly flammable. They release toxic gas. They contaminate water. They're very costly and they are very short-lived. And they also only hold energy for 2 to 4 hours, plus they lose 30% of whatever energy they collect. 30% is lost by battery energy storage systems. So, we know Wall Street wants these, but our communities do not. And we hope you'll take some of these examples to heart and be able to use them. I will send them to you in emails. It's certainly not necessary to have battery storage if we use reliable, affordable, and dispatchable energy, which we already have. Thank you. *Unintelligible*. Thank you.

Chairman Scudder: Thank you, Karen. Anybody else?

Hello, my name is Mike D. I'm from Silver Creek. This is totally extemporaneous and I can't even spell that word. First commentary on the—to pick up on where Karen was on last on wind and solar. This is an economic disaster that's going to destroy our state economy. I don't need to speak long on this. Just look at what it's done to England and Germany, the two world leaders in the technologies. They are emptying out their countries, deindustrializing and destroying themselves. I believe the best thing our county can do is resist any—any in any way that we can, okay? There's the health issues, but there's also the economic disaster issues. Show me all of our employment for all that we've done out there. Show me the employment that we have because of wind and solar and best, alright? I can show you a lot of companies that don't want to come here because the price of electricity. Mine's just doubled. Most people's has. Alright? If you allow this to happen, then you're just—you're just going to destroy the state and people are going to keep going to Tennessee and to Kentucky and wherever they're going. Alright. Now, with regard to the first issue which was, uh, speaking on topics. Well, I could go off right now on what New York state's doing, on what, I could go off on what's happening in New York City, I disagree with Mamdani a hundred percent. I could go off on a hundred topics and talk all my time about those topics and you can't do anything about it as a—as a legislature. So, where is the line drawn when we say, "Well, it has to be appropriate." Who—how do you draw the line that's appropriate on this? Somewhere you have to because you can't let somebody come down here like me and talk for 5 minutes about how much I dislike Mamdani, okay. Otherwise, we'll do that. There's a reason that the Legislature wanted that. Now, I'm pretty Libertarian and I want free speech. I'm 100% for free speech. I'm 100% also against wasting the Legislature's time. So, I won't waste your time with speaking about those subjects. But I do implore you, do everything you can to stop this net-zero thing. Net-zero is impossible. It can't be done. We're going to destroy ourselves. And there's no—there's no excuse for anybody in here to not understand that. And if you can contact me directly, I will spend hours discussing it with you. Thank you.

Chairman Scudder: Anyone else? Seeing no one else, we will close the privilege of the floor.

Local Law Intro 1-26 (Print 3) – A Local Law Amending the Chautauqua County Charter

Discussion Item Only- Action taken at full Legislative Meeting

Local Law Intro 2-26 – A Local Law Providing for a Management Salary Plan for County Officers and Employees—*Presented by Debbie Makowski, Director of Human Resources*

Discussion Item Only- Action taken at full Legislative Meeting

Local Law Intro 3-26 – A Local Law Providing for a Management Salary Plan for County Officers and Employees: Director of Real Property Tax Services III and Director of Human Resources-- *Presented by Debbie Makowski, Director of Human Resources*

Discussion Item Only- Action taken at full Legislative Meeting

Tabled Resolution – Adopting County Real Property Tax and Special District Charge Exemptions for Primary Residence of Certain Veterans with Service Related 100% Disability (*Tabled at the 01/20/26 Administrative Services Committee meeting*)—*Presented by Pierre Chagnon, Chairman of the Legislature*

Left on Table to Die

Res. No. 17-26 – Amend Rules and Regulations of the Chautauqua County Legislature (*Referred To Administrative Services Committee at the 01/28/26 Legislature meeting*)—*Presented by Pierre Chagnon, Chairman of the Legislature*

MOVED by Legislator Vanstrom, SECONDED by Legislator Anthony to Postpone Indefinitely - *Unanimously Carried to Postpone Indefinitely*

Res. No. 18-26 – Affordability Act of 2026 (*Referred to Administrative Services and Audit & Control Committees at the 01/28/26 Legislature meeting*) —*Presented by Kitty Lyons, Finance Director*

Failed with Legislators Anthony, Heiser, Vanstrom, and Scudder Voting “No”

Res. No. 19-26 – Amend Senior Real Property Tax Exemption (*Referred to Administrative Services & Audit & Control Committees at the 01/28/26 Legislature meeting*)
—Presented by Kim Meleen, Real Property Tax Director

Failed with Legislators Anthony, Heiser, Vanstrom, and Scudder Voting “No”

Proposed Resolution – Amend Capital Project Accounts—Jamestown Community College
—Presented by Kathleen Dennison, Consultant to JCC for Finance & Administration and Karen Fuller Markham, Interim Vice President of Finance & Operation at JCC

Unanimously Carried

Proposed Resolution – Amend 2025 Budget for Year End Reconciliations – Information Technology—Presented by Sam Zafuto, Deputy Director of Finance

Unanimously Carried

Proposed Resolution – Cyber Information Sharing and Collaboration Agreement—Presented by Sam Zafuto, Deputy Director of Finance

Unanimously Carried

Proposed Resolution – Amend 2025 Budget for Year End Reconciliations – County Clerk
—Presented by Sam Zafuto, Deputy Director of Finance and Greg Carlson, County Clerk

Unanimously Carried

Proposed Resolution – Amend 2026 Budget for the Departments of County Clerk and Motor Vehicles—Presented by Sam Zafuto, Deputy Director of Finance and Greg Carlson, County Clerk

Unanimously Carried

Proposed Resolution – Amend 2025 Budget for Year End Reconciliations – County Attorney
—Presented by Sam Zafuto, Deputy Director of Finance and Emily Woodard, County Attorney

Unanimously Carried

Proposed Resolution – Authorize Transfer of a Tax Foreclosure Property to Jamestown Urban Renewal Agency (JURA)—Presented by Pierre Chagnon, Chairman of the Legislature

Unanimously Carried

Proposed Resolution – Amend 2025 Budget for Year End Reconciliations – M Health Insurance Fund—*Presented by Kitty Lyons, Finance Director*

Unanimously Carried

Proposed Resolution – Amend 2025 Budget for Year End Reconciliations – Department of Finance and Miscellaneous Department—*Presented by Kitty Lyons, Finance Director*

Unanimously Carried

Proposed Resolution – Amend 2025 Budget for Year End Reconciliations – Unified Courts—*Presented by Kitty Lyons, Finance Director*

Unanimously Carried

Proposed Resolution – Amend 2025 Budget for Year End Reconciliations – Energy Fund—*Presented by Kitty Lyons, Finance Director*

Unanimously Carried

Proposed Resolution – Amend 2025 Budget for Year End Reconciliations – CS Liability Insurance Fund—*Presented by Kitty Lyons, Finance Director*

Unanimously Carried

Proposed Resolution – Amend 2025 Budget for Year End Reconciliations – Human Resources BENE Health Insurance Benefits—*Presented by Debbie Makowski, Director of Human Resources and Sam Zafuto, Deputy Director of Finance*

Unanimously Carried

Proposed Resolution – Standard Workday and Reporting Resolution—*Presented by Debbie Makowski, Director of Human Resources and Sam Zafuto, Deputy Director of Finance*

Unanimously Carried

Proposed Resolution – Setting the Salary for the Certified Peer Specialist—*Presented by Debbie Makowski, Director of Human Resources and Trish McClennen, Deputy Director of Mental Hygiene*

Unanimously Carried

Proposed Resolution – Reallocating Salary Grade for Crime Scene Analyst—*Presented by Debbie Makowski, Director of Human Resources and Jim Quattrone, Chautauqua County Sheriff*

Unanimously Carried

Proposed Resolution – Amend 2025 Budget for Year End Reconciliations – Legislature—*Presented by Sam Zafuto, Deputy Director of Finance and Olivia Lee, Clerk of Legislature*

Unanimously Carried

Discussion – 2025 Assigned Council Year-End – *Presented by Sam Zafuto, Deputy Director of Finance*

Other –

MOVED by Legislator Anthony, SECONDED by Legislator Heiser to adjourn

Unanimously Carried (7:00 p.m.)

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