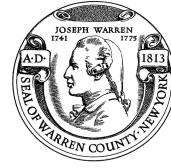


# Warren County Board of Supervisors

**ORGANIZATION MEETING  
FRIDAY JANUARY 8, 2021**



***Note: As per Governor Cuomo's Executive Order 202.1: "Article 7 of the Public Officers Law, to the extent necessary to permit any public body to meet and take such actions authorized by the law without permitting in public in-person access to meetings and authorizing such meetings to be held remotely by conference call or similar service, provided that the public has the ability to view or listen to such proceeding and that such meetings are recorded and later transcribed".***

The Board of Supervisors of the County of Warren convened at the Supervisors' Room in the Warren County Municipal Center, Lake George, New York, at 11:00 a.m.

Board called to order by Amanda Allen, *Clerk of the Board of Supervisors*.

Salute to the flag was led by Supervisor Conover.

Roll was called and the following members were present:

Bolton	-Ronald F. Conover
Chester	-Craig R. Leggett
City of Glens Falls	
Ward 1	-John Diamond
Ward 2	-Peter V. McDevitt
Ward 3	-Claudia K. Braymer
Ward 4	-Daniel F. Bruno
Ward 5	-Bennett F. Driscoll Jr.
Hague	-Edna A. Frasier
Horicon	-Sylvia L. Smith
Johnsburg	-Andrea Hogan
Lake George	-Dennis Dickinson
Lake Luzerne	-Eugene J. Merlino
Queensbury	-John F. Strough
	-Michael Wild
	-Brad Magowan
	-Rachel E. Seeber
	-Douglas Beaty
Stony Creek	-Frank E. Thomas
Thurman	-Susan Shepler
Warrensburg	-Kevin B. Geraghty

Supervisors Leggett, Diamond, McDevitt, Braymer, Driscoll, Frasier, Smith, Hogan, Merlino, Wild, Magowan, Seeber, Thomas, Shepler, and Geraghty were present at the meeting, while Supervisors Conover, Bruno, Dickinson Strough and Beaty attended via teleconference.

Mrs. Allen advised the first order of business would be the selection of a Board Chair for 2021. She advised that any Board Member could be nominated for the Chair and a second to a nomination was not required. She added any person nominated could decline the nomination if they so choose. She

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informed the floor was now open to nominations for the Chair.

Supervisor Geraghty nominated Supervisor Thomas. Supervisor Thomas apprised he was declining the nomination.

Supervisor Diamond nominated Supervisor Braymer. Supervisor Braymer indicated she was declining the nomination.

Supervisor Magowan advised he was nominating Supervisor Seeber. Supervisor Thomas seconded the nomination.

Mrs. Allen once again called for any other nominations for Chair, but there was no response.

Supervisor Braymer indicated as a result of she and Supervisor Thomas declining their nominations for the Chair of the Board she was hopeful the Board could tell they were supporting Supervisor Seeber for the position. She apprised it was important for her that the torch was passed carefully and with intention to a woman on this Board and to a Supervisor who represented the southern region of the County. She informed Supervisor Seeber would lead the Board forward with a bipartisan team in a bipartisan manner which was representative of the interests of the northern and southern portions of the County, as well as being open and transparent to all of the Supervisors to lead them in a manner that allowed them to work in the best interest of the entire County.

Supervisor Leggett nominated himself for Chair of the Board. He informed he had supported Chairman Thomas for the Chair position, who he believed had always been level headed, but individuals had used the fact that he was soft spoken as a disadvantage against his character. He stated individuals had also indicated Supervisor Thomas had not provided the Board with strong leadership; however, he noted, the Board members were all elected officials and if they observed any lapse that needed to be taken care of they stepped up and took over and filled that gap. He said they should not move forward with the notion that the direction should come from someone else, informing he was not a democrat or a republican, but rather a sitting Supervisor who served on the Board for the good of his constituents in the Town of Chester, as well as within the County. He remarked many individuals like to refer to the terms of up County and down County Supervisors, Democrats and Republicans, but in fact they were one body that came together to do the work. He mentioned he had the experience as a Town Supervisor who had chaired important Committees with over \$25 million worth of budgets which provided him with the ability to serve as the Chairman of the Board and he would appreciate their support.

Supervisor Seeber voiced her appreciation of the support she had received in the room today not only by the Supervisors, but also the communities that elected them which she felt was the tie that bound all of them. She stated they were present today because they all had something to offer their communities and each other and collectively they could do better and be stronger. She advised she was not only appreciative of the County's Republican party and its Chairman, but also the County's Democratic party and the Democrat's who were serving as members of the Board, as she recognized that they were not defined by the political parties they were affiliated with and were in fact all individuals who took an oath to serve their communities. She informed she was standing before them today as an individual who had been a local, State and Federal advocate her entire life and had been a member of the Board of Supervisors, as well as a County employee and was someone who called all of the members of the Board and spoke the truth. She added she reached out and communicated and she was submitting to them that they had a different manner in which to lead this Board in a non-bipartisan fashion. She said those were not just words because the County's electorate did not elect them to make easy decisions, abstain from votes or clash with one another, but rather they elected

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them to make the difficult decisions and represent diversity and do what they promised the voters which was to put them first. She informed in the national landscape she believed their community and Country was tired of this and she was asking them for the opportunity to be their Chair and work closely with all of them and ensure none of them were left out and that they communicated and supported one another in a professional, respectable manner. She indicated the nominations here today and the support behind that spoke to their ability to work together and to lead this Board and she was humbly asking for their support this morning.

There being no further nominations, Mrs. Allen called for a roll call vote, explaining that each Supervisor should indicate whether they were voting for Supervisor Seeber or Supervisor Leggett to serve as Chair. Following the vote it was determined Supervisor Seeber would serve as Chairwoman, receiving 756 votes (*Supervisors Conover, Diamond, Braymer, Bruno, Driscoll, Hogan, Dickinson, Merlino, Wild, Magowan, Seeber, Beaty, Thomas and Geraghty*) while Supervisor Leggett received 244 votes (*Supervisors Leggett, McDevitt, Frasier, Smith, Strough and Shepler*).

Mrs. Allen requested that Supervisor Magowan escort Supervisor Seeber to the front so she could subscribe to the Constitutional which would be administered by Pam Vogel, *County Clerk*.

Chairwoman Seeber subscribed to the Constitutional Oath, as administered by Mrs. Vogel, following which a round of applause was given.

Chairwoman Seeber stated today she was asking them to come together collectively as a Board for their communities. She said she was respectively requesting that they table the Rules of the Board to provide her with the opportunity to meet with each Supervisor and reform their leadership structure, the Committees and how they worked together to operate better. She asked for them to allow her to have an additional week to allow them to have the opportunity to discuss and determine where all of their interests would be and how they could come together as a County and a community. She advised she was aware typically after a new Chair was selected they proceeded with discussing the Rules of the Board; however, she noted, she believed they had all acknowledged today that changes were required which she hoped they could work on as a group and she asked whether anyone would like to make a motion to table proposed Resolution No. 1 of 2021, *Adopting the Rules of the Board of Supervisors*. The necessary motion was made by Supervisor Magowan, seconded by Supervisor Hogan and carried unanimously.

Chairwoman Seeber apprised she was looking forward to a new beginning as they started 2021 with a strong foundation and a path forward for all of them to represent their communities and the citizens of Warren County.

Proceeding with the agenda review, Chairwoman Seeber called for the reading of resolutions. Mrs. Allen announced that a motion was needed to approve proposed Resolution Nos. 2-3, neither of which was subject to a roll call vote unless one was requested and they could be approved in a collective vote. The necessary motion was made by Supervisor Geraghty, seconded by Supervisor Magowan and carried unanimously.

Chairwoman Seeber asked Don Lehman, *Director of Public Affairs*, whether any public comments had been received and Mr. Lehman replied in the negative, adding that Ginelle Jones, *Director of Public Health/Patient Services*, was requesting to provide an update on what her department had been working on with regard to the pandemic. Chairwoman Seeber stated prior to the update from Ms. Jones she would like to offer privilege of the floor to any of the Supervisors who would like to address the Board on any matter.

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Supervisor Leggett stated first he would like to thank everyone who had supported his nomination as Chair and he extended his well wishes to Chairwoman Seeber in her new position. He added he believed the members of the Board would all work well together this year, as they were all shared the same frame of mind to do so.

Supervisor Braymer advised she would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone she was able to talk to over these last several weeks about seeking the Chair. She said she thoroughly enjoyed their discussions and hoped they could continue those as they worked on various issues throughout the County. She stated she would like to acknowledge the Democrat and Republican Supervisors she had talked to, as well as Supervisor Leggett, who was an Independent.

Supervisor Driscoll indicated he would like to congratulate Senator Stec and Assemblyman Simpson on their new endeavors. He apprised Assemblyman Simpson would be working with one of his constituents from the 5<sup>th</sup> Ward of the City of Glens Falls who was also a colleague and a friend, former 5<sup>th</sup> Ward Supervisor for the City of Glens Falls, Matthew McDonald. He stated he believed Assemblyman Simpson and his staff would serve the County well. Supervisor Driscoll advised when reviewing the matrix that was used for staff evaluations he determined this had changed for 2020 and he believed this was also applicable to Supervisor Thomas for the work he did as Chairman of the Board this past year. He concluded by stating he believed good things would occur during 2021 and he congratulated Chairwoman Seeber on her appointment.

Supervisor Geraghty apprised he would like to thank all of the County employees for assisting the County in persevering during the past year which was very trying. He stated he would also like to recognize Supervisor Thomas for leading the County during a difficult time, as he believed Supervisor Thomas had done the best job he could have considering the circumstances, noting his years of service to the County should not go unnoticed. He wished Chairwoman Seeber the best in her new endeavor, adding he would like to remind the Board members the County had great employees who needed to be recognized regardless of the positions they held. He said whenever a change in leadership occurred there was trepidation among County employees and he believed it was the Board's responsibility to assure the employees that they had the highest regard for them and would continue to ensure that they flourished in their positions.

Chairwoman Seeber stated she could not agree with Supervisor Geraghty more that the County employees made up an incredible team that the entire Board was fortunate enough to work with every day. She said the Board would continue to provide not only that level of continuity, but also the strength and a foundation that the employees could depend and rely on. Next, she said what Supervisor Thomas had contributed to the Board as Budget Officer, a Supervisor and as the prior Chair had made them all stronger and better because of that and it did not go unnoticed and was appreciated.

Supervisor Thomas thanked Chairwoman Seeber for her kind words and wished her well in her new position.

Supervisor Magowan stated it had been a long year for all of the Board members with the pandemic resulting in trying times for all of the municipalities in the County. He said he felt compelled to note that the Board members all worked well together as a team despite their differences and he was looking forward to moving forward in a united direction. In regard to the remarks made by Supervisor Geraghty pertaining to County employees, he advised he believed the County had a number of hard working employees which he took the time to thank when he saw them in the hallways of the Municipal Center Building. He recognized Supervisor Thomas for the difficult decision he had made today, as well as all of his efforts in 2020. He concluded by stating he was looking forward to working closely with all of

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the Supervisors in 2021.

Supervisor Beaty indicated this was a historic day for the County with the first female ever to be elected as Chairwoman of the Board which he felt spoke volumes about their current status; however, he noted, he could not celebrate a bridge that should have been crossed many years ago, as there had been numerous women with the skill set required to lead the Board, but were never appointed. He said the fact that Chairwoman Seeber had received the majority of the votes for Chair indicated they were supportive of her. He thanked Supervisor Thomas for serving as the Chairman of the Board during one of the most difficult years in the history of the County as a result of the pandemic, adding he was appreciative of the time and effort he had exerted. He advised the difficulties resulting from the pandemic would continue into this year, but he was confident in Chairwoman Seeber's skill set and leadership abilities to advance this Board to another level which was something special and he congratulated Chairwoman Seeber on her appointment.

Prior to offering privilege of the floor to Ms. Jones to provide an update regarding the County's response to the pandemic, Chairwoman Seeber apprised it was important that the Board members reminded one another about how strong of a team they were when they all worked together. She said she was looking forward to that opportunity across the aisle with one another dependent upon not only the honesty they would provide one another, but also the openness, transparency and the support which she believed they were capable of doing to provide the very best representation that they could to every single resident regardless of party affiliation as they moved forward.

Chairwoman Seeber extended privilege of the floor to Ms. Jones to provide an update regarding the County's response to COVID-19.

Ms. Jones thanked the Board for providing her with the opportunity to provide a brief update on the County's response to COVID-19. She stated she wanted to begin her update with the words of Gina Mintzer, who she met through her affiliation with the Economic Recovery Task Force as follows: "While many of us could not wait to move on to 2021, 2020 was also the year where we rediscovered the spirit of togetherness and collaboration of community. In 2021 we all have our freedom in hand and it was up to us to make the most of what it is to turn the corner to a bright new year onward and upward". Ms. Jones remarked she found these words very meaningful for her staff because she believed they had all been waiting for 2020 to end and for 2021 to begin. She apprised keeping that in mind she and her staff were also excited about the vaccine campaign they had commenced with. She thanked Lisa Lehman, who was a local graphic artist who had volunteered her time to assist the department with developing a logo for their "Vaccinate 100% of Warren County" campaign which they had developed stickers of to issue when individuals were vaccinated. She stated she felt like they had been on a gerbil wheel this entire time, but they were now moving into the tunnel hopefully toward the light which was the end of this pandemic. She informed the Governor had established priority groups for the distribution of the COVID-19 vaccines which the County was required to adhere to fully or face consequences, such as a \$1 million fine per person that was vaccinated, but was not eligible to be. She apprised the vaccines would be distributed through the eleven hubs in New York State of which the County was part of the Albany Medical Center Hub that was inclusive of the hospitals, the federal qualified health centers and the local health departments located in the region. She said those included in this hub met every morning at 10:00 a.m. to review issues, most of which concerned the redistribution between the different counties and clarifying issues regarding the different groups within the community who felt they should be included in a different priority group. She informed there was also a representative from the Governor's office included as a member of the Hub and had provided their cell phone number for contact purposes to the members and would advocate on behalf of the group to the Governor which allowed them to get a reply rather quickly. She mentioned the County's

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local partners were Glens Falls Hospital and Hudson Headwaters Health Network which they had communicated and pooled their resources with well to assist those with different needs. She said she had recently contacted the local nursing homes to inquire how they were doing with their vaccinations and determined that two of the facilities were having issues, one of which had been resolved without any assistance; she added she had offered them any assistance her department could provide them with. She stated as of today her department was delivering vaccines to the Elderwood at North Creek facility to assist them with their issues, apprising she was pleased to have such good partners to work together with on any issues that may arise here locally.

Ms. Jones informed last week Hudson Headwaters Health Network, which was the County's federally qualified health center, administered all one hundred doses of the vaccine that had been provided to them. She said Public Health had held two clinics, one of which was on Saturday, January 2<sup>nd</sup> which she was disappointed with because even after all of the outreach they had done they only had around fourteen individuals sign up for; however, she noted, by the end of the clinic they had administered forty-three vaccinations and the remaining doses were given on Tuesday evening. She apprised this week they had received five hundred doses for which eighty-five doses were administered at their clinic last night and another clinic was scheduled for this Saturday; she added they were still only administering the vaccines to those included in the Priority 1A group. She indicated she had been contacting the adult group homes and assisted living facilities to ensure they were on schedule with resources in place to receive and administer the vaccine. She said she had been saving some of the vaccines to be able to vaccinate some of the staff and residents at these facilities, all of whom she had spoken to indicated they were all set. She apprised once she was assured these facilities were taken care of she would open up a few more appointments for vaccinations this weekend to ensure they utilized all five hundred of their doses.

In regard to the roll out of the vaccines for the priority group, Ms. Jones advised they were notified by their regional hub who received their orders from the Governor Office regarding who was eligible to be vaccinated with the doses provided to the County. She said from this a clinic was created that generated a link for the priority groups for which they had contact people for each of those groups who then shared the link with their population. She informed they also participated in the NYS DOH's (*New York State Department of Health*) alert system which allowed her to distribute a notification to all of the medical providers, pharmacists, dentists or whichever groups she selected that were registered to the State and lived in and worked in Warren County to issue them an invitation to come to the County's vaccination clinic. She said she had been working on sending out those alerts as the vaccine became available, setting up clinics and sending out the links to those groups as was Hudson Headwaters Health Network and the Glens Fall Hospital to ensure the priority groups were notified. She said she could foresee when they opened the vaccinations up to the public, as well as the priority groups with a significant number of individuals they did not have a distribution list for, such as those in the ages 75 and above group, that they would be using the media, local newspapers and Mr. Lehman to assist them with getting the notification out with that regard and they would be issuing the link for individuals to register. She advised as per the NYS DOH requirements the link would put individuals through the CDMS (*Clinical Data Management System*) which was a NYS DOH system where individuals registered ahead of time and when the nurse administered the vaccine to them they entered the information into the system which fed into the New York State Immunization Registry Program to document the vaccine which was how they calculated how many individuals had been vaccinated. She added her office had practiced using this system to ensure they were handling the process correctly. She stated she wanted to ensure everyone was aware the process was not just as simple as contacting her office to sign up for a clinic. She apprised for those who did not have access to a computer could make appointments with her office and be assisted through the CDMS or they could work with loved ones to help them with the process. In regard to those who were homebound, Ms. Jones informed they would do what they had

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done in the past with their flu shots which was to send a nurse to those they were aware of in that situation.

Ms. Jones apprised they were busy working to identify pod sites for which they had a number of locations in mind. She said they wanted to have both large and small locations so they could ramp up or down depending upon the number of vaccines they had. She voiced her appreciation of the community, informing a number of businesses contacted her to offer up space, such as Fort William Henry, The Great Escape, SUNY Adirondack and the Queensbury Community Center. She said she was hoping when the vaccine was opened up to the public they would be able to offer one to two very large pods at a time where there would be up to twenty vaccinators in order to accommodate a significant number of people; however, she noted, with that she needed to consider social distancing and organization by offering it through appointment only and no one would be allowed in early to prevent overcrowding. She mentioned in addition she had hired some per diem nurses that were school nurses who had volunteered to assist the County with their clinics, as well as 80+ volunteers which continued to grow since January 1<sup>st</sup>, most of whom were retired doctors and nurses in addition to other individuals they could use to assist with traffic flow, set up and tear down, etc. She said as a result of this she was encouraged that staffing would not be an issue with these pods. She apprised her goal was for 100% vaccination in the County which she realized was a significant request, but she believed it was necessary in order to deal with this pandemic. She indicated it was still necessary to wear face masks, remain socially distant and avoid gatherings because even though there was a vaccine the pandemic was not over and it was necessary to remain vigilant. She added those who were vaccinated would still need to be quarantined if they were exposed to COVID-19 because until they received a directive from the Governor that things changed they were still people that would have to be vaccinated.

In regard to the number of cases in the County, Ms. Jones stated as they had anticipated the daily number of positive cases had increased significantly through Christmas and New Years, but it was still very disappointing to see this increase. She apprised her staff were all working tirelessly with 100% of the positive cases and their contacts called on a daily basis. She said they operated seven days a week with a portion of the staff working on contacting individuals and the other portion working on the vaccinations, both of which required a significant amount of work that they were somehow able to keep up with even with the record number of cases that were coming in, such as fifty-four on one day and sixty-six the next. She noted there were volunteers who assisted them with keeping up with the workload by handling the contact investigations and then providing that information to the County with everyone having been notified which was helpful to the department.

Ms. Jones indicated testing, continued as well with over four thousand tests being performed to date which she was pleased about. In regard to the local immunizations completed, it was difficult to determine whether the immunizations were for a Warren County resident or whether it was just given here. She informed Glens Falls Hospital had given 701 doses, Hudson Headwaters Health Network had dispensed 794 doses to date and Warren County Public Health had administered 194 doses, all given within the last week or so. She stated although she believed they were making headway she wanted to note that 65% of the County's positive cases had been since September 1<sup>st</sup> which was why it was not the appropriate time for individuals to let down their defenses and attend gatherings and not social distance. She mentioned her department had been busy working with local school districts on investigations to determine who had been exposed with the positive cases there. She said the school districts, nursing homes and the community partners they had been working with had all been incredibly cooperative.

Ms. Jones remarked she would like to take this opportunity to thank the Board and the County Administration for their continued support, as well as all of the snacks they had provided to her staff

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when they were working their long days. She apprised the Sheriff's Office were the unsung heroes who assisted her department with making phone calls and doing the random visits which they had transitioned to from the daily ones because staff was needed to make the daily phone calls due to having such a substantial number of individuals under quarantine. She recognized their community partners and the community for their continued efforts and vigilance, as well as their anticipated participation in the immunization program to allow the County to achieve its 100% compliance goal. She stated more importantly she would like to acknowledge her staff for being so remarkable and assisting the County with persevering through this pandemic.

Chairwoman Seeber thanked Ms. Jones and her staff for all of their hard work, advising the Board recognized what an uphill challenge this was and were appreciative of all of their efforts. She mentioned the Board would continue their effort to support her, her staff and the community in any way possible.

Chairwoman Seeber apprised she would also like to take this opportunity to welcome Supervisor Smith, who was the new Supervisor representing the Town of Horicon. She stated the Board was pleased to have Supervisor Smith as a member. A round of applause was given.

Chairwoman Seeber called for announcements.

Supervisor Braymer stated she would like to take this opportunity to provide an update on the Mullen's property in the Town of Queensbury. She said the demolition work on the building had begun on Wednesday, January 6<sup>th</sup> and when she drove by the property this morning it appeared as if the work was halfway completed. She advised she was aware many individuals would be pleased to see the building, which was an eyesore gone.

Chairwoman Seeber advised she would once again like to state that she was humbled to be selected today as the Chairwoman for 2021. She said she was committed to working tirelessly on behalf of every citizen in the County. She thanked the Board for their support today, adding she was looking forward to a very productive 2021.

She once again asked Mr. Lehman if any public comments had been received and Mr. Lehman replied in the negative.

There being no further business to come before the Board of Supervisors, on motion made by Supervisor Diamond and seconded by Supervisor Braymer, Chairwoman Seeber adjourned the meeting at 11:41a.m.