



MEMORANDUM

ERIE COUNTY CAPITAL PROJECTS COMMITTEE

DATE: July 18, 2024

TO: Mark C. Poloncarz, Erie County Executive & Chair of the Capital Projects Committee

FROM: Natalie Nitsche

RE: 2025 Capital Projects Committee Meeting #4

Attendance: County Executive Mark Poloncarz, Deputy County Executive Lisa Chimera, Comptroller Kevin Hardwick, Budget Director Mark Cornell, Deputy Budget Director Kim Kajdasz, Commissioner Troy Schinzel, Commissioner William Geary, Dr. Gale Burstein, Deputy Commissioner Thomas Baines, Legislator John Mills, Legislator Timothy Meyers, Jessica Schuster (virtual), Sean Mulligan, Nathan Lippitt, James Blackwell, Deputy Commissioner Tracy Cihocki, Jonathan McNulty, John Spears, Paul Danieu, Emily Patronik, Carleen Pope, and Natalie Nitsche.

The County Executive called to order the fourth meeting of the Capital Project Committee Meetings for 2025 and recognized a quorum. Director Cornell motioned to approve the previous meeting's minutes, which was seconded by Commissioner Geary.

Buffalo & Erie County Public Library

Central Building Envelope and Various Improvements

John Spears, the Director of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library began by discussing the Library's Capital Project History. Next, the Assistant Deputy Director – Controller, Emily Patronik, discussed the project. The last repairs done to the envelope of the building were in 2003. The life expectancy of the project is 15 to 20 years. This will be done in two phases, 2025 and 2026, and the ask is \$1 million each year. This is a top priority for the Library due to the level of deterioration of the paneling and joint sealant.

This project will also include asbestos abatement. The pre-existing caulk, which includes asbestos, will need to be removed. Then, the damaged paneling and joint sealants will be replaced with new marble paneling and joint sealants using mortar and caulk. A handout was provided to show the level of damage to the envelope of the building. Ms. Patronik discussed the cause of the damage – freeze/thaw cycle.

Comptroller Hardwick asked if these repairs would last 15 – 20 years and if this was repairing the same panels as in 2003. Ms. Patronik advised that this is a different, bigger section. The County Executive asked if the plan was to complete the project in two phases or if the funding was being requested in

two phases and repairs would not start until 2026. Ms. Patronik advised that the project will most likely take a total of two years to complete.

Director Cornell inquired about State funding. Ms. Patronik explained how the State allocates funding to the library system. The BECPL is anticipating \$1.5 - \$2 million in State funding. Commissioner Geary asked if State funding could be used for design. Director Spears advised that this is for construction, but it can have a design aspect to it. The only requirement for New York State construction aid is to show that the money is spent. Director Cornell and Ms. Patronik discussed an initial quote and taking the project to bid.

Buildings & Grounds – B&ECPL – Various Improvements & Upgrades

Deputy Commissioner Cihocki described this project as supplementing the DEC grant received to install a vegetative roofing system. The existing roof is over 24 years old, out of warranty, and the request is for \$3.5 million. The County Executive asked about not completing the green portion. Director Cornell advised losing the green component would be a loss of the \$3 million grant. Deputy Commissioner Cihocki advised there is currently \$2 million in hand which is being used for design.

The County Executive asked for the total project cost. Deputy Commissioner Cihocki explained the total project is \$9.5 million. The amount of funds committed is \$5.8 million. The B&ECPL is anticipating \$800,000 in State aid.

Director Cornell asked about the benefits of having a green roof. Deputy Commissioner Cihocki advised it is environmentally positive. It will act as an insulator, and, with the solar component, it will generate energy. Director Spears discussed this being just one step in the plan to make Central Library a more modern library over the next twenty years.

Health Department

LC-TQMS and GC-TQMS Instruments for Drinking Water Testing

Dr. Burstein discussed PFAS, toxic chemicals in plastics, and other synthetic materials. Exposure from water is a known source. It is anticipated that New York State will change the regulations to require more testing for PFAS in water. The current equipment the County has cannot test at the level needed in the future.

Carleen Pope, the Director of Erie County's Public Health Lab, stated that the EPA has ruled that by 2027, there will need to be a monitoring program in place for all public water systems. The only other lab testing for this is the Erie County Water Authority, but they are only testing their own facilities – they are not a public lab. This service could be provided to local municipalities, communities with either own water systems, campgrounds, mobile home parks, etc. By 2029, there is going to be a requirement for a remediation program to be in place. Ms. Pope discussed the types of equipment needed based on anticipated future needs.

Commissioner Geary asked about remediation and enforcement. Director Pope discussed the ways in which the Public Health Lab would help. Commissioner Geary confirmed this is just testing.

The County Executive asked that Commissioners attempt to acquire as much aid via grants as possible and to only present absolutely necessary projects to the Committee due to decreased County revenue and a tighter budget.

SUNY Erie

SUNY Erie Facility Master Plan – Phase 4

SUNY Erie's Business Manager, Paul Danieu, discussed past and current capital projects' statuses as part of the facility's Masterplan. In 2021, approximately \$284 million in recommended facility improvements were recommended; \$27 million of those recommendations were already partially funded or planned. South Campus projects have all been tabled. The current ask is for \$6 million, and it will finish the Masterplan. SUNY will match the \$6 million for a total of \$12 million. This would include finishing Kittinger Hall and Gleasner.

Director Cornell asked about the funds outstanding from phases one, two, and three as well as a timeline for completion. Mr. Danieu advised that projects are either underway or up for bid.

SUNY Erie North Sports Field Improvements – Phase 3

Mr. Danieu discussed that the local funding request is for \$2.5 million with a match from the State at the same amount. This would cover a full turf field with lines for soccer, lacrosse, and football. There will be a softball field, dugouts, batting cages, drainage costs, and bleachers. Depending on how the bids come back, this may include lighting, bleachers, a press box, and fencing.

Director Cornell inquired about prioritizing the fields versus the amenities and the construction start timeframe. Mr. Danieu explained this would go out to bid in either October or November with the groundbreaking in March.

Public Works – Buildings & Grounds

Rehabilitation of Buffalo Bills Stadium

This project is for the rehabilitation of the current Bills stadium. As part of the lease agreement between the County, the Bills, and the Stadium Corp, all parties are required to contribute a portion of the annual capital improvement allotment that is determined at the end of August. Given that CIA payments are capped at 2.8% the rate of inflation based on CPI-U, the total maximum cost is \$5,796,414.78 with the County's contribution at \$2,394,209.13. Also, with the expectation to complete the new stadium for the 2026-27 season this would be the final CIA installment that would exist under the current stadium lease. The scope of work is infrastructure repairs, life safety, and ADA code compliance.

Convention Center Improvements

This submission is focused on continuing to invest in the existing buildings to attract new events and

retain existing clients through improvements to the ballroom, finish upgrades, and A/V upgrades throughout the facility. Design is complete. This request is for construction costs.

Director Cornell and Chief of Staff Swanekamp discussed the Airbnb local law tax and paygo to pay for future renovations to the convention center.

County Executive Poloncarz asked what was done with the money that was set aside for the convention center in 2024. Deputy Commissioner Cihocki advised the County pivoted and is focusing on the Wi-Fi and some exterior issues.

The County Executive then asked what the \$3 million is primarily for. Commissioner Geary expressed that it would primarily be for the ballroom. The CE, Commissioner Geary, and Deputy Commissioner Cihocki discussed past ballroom improvements. Commissioner Geary advised A/V is a big part of the cost – that is the command center that controls the ballroom but also the lighting on the outside and the integrated speaker system.

B&ECPL – Various Improvements and Upgrades

See above

Public Health Lab Improvements

This request is for the fourth and final phase of renovations at the lab. This will address restrooms and doors as well as installation of the EIFS system and flooring. The \$3.5 million is construction cost.

The County Executive asked if this would complete all work at the public health lab, excluding maintenance. Deputy Commissioner Cihocki advised that this is the last phase.

Rath Building Improvements

This submission is to continue replacement of obsolete electrical and HVAC equipment and controls. The request is for \$500,000.

The County Executive asked if there is any money in prior years' Rath Building Improvements. Director Cornell advised there is approximately \$3 million remaining. Commissioner Geary advised that money is spoken for.

Countywide Mechanical, Electrical, Plumbing, and Misc Improvements

This request is for repairs and upgrades to existing mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems throughout the county. The main focus will be on supporting fleet electrification in County buildings with chargers and addressing the lack of exhaust system in the vehicle bay of Public Safety.

The County Executive asked how much could be done with \$250,000. Deputy Commissioner Cihocki advised this will be more of a study for the electrification and then the exhaust system will be design and construction.

Next, the County Executive inquired about the percentage of County electric vehicles. Commissioner Geary advised about ten percent is electric. The County has hit a wall, because electric needs to be installed to allow for charging.

Preservation of County Buildings and Facilities

This request is for funding to address needed improvements inside and outside the County buildings. The main focus for this funding will be vehicle protection measures needed to be taken at Old County Hall and KeyBank Center. The request is for \$1.5 million. This will also include construction of the freight elevator at 25 Delaware.

Commissioner Geary advised this number needs to be updated. The plan with the bollards at KeyBank Center has changed. The door on Washington does not need to be moved. Updated numbers will be provided.

Preservation of County Highway Facilities – Countywide

This request is for site-specific design for the Harlem maintenance facility. The idea is to use the design documents from the Lancaster facility and apply it to Harlem. Construction funding would be a future capital request for 2026.

The County Executive asked if buildings would be taken down at Harlem. Commissioner Geary responded that it is possible. The CE then asked what the total cost of the Lancaster facility was. Deputy Commissioner Cihocki advised it was \$9.3 million, without taking buildings down. The CE asked if \$10 million for Harlem for 2026 is an underestimate. Commissioner Geary and the CE discussed possible County forces demolishing any necessary buildings. Mr. Swanekamp asked if there are female restrooms at this location. Commissioner Geary advised there are not.

Countywide Code and Environmental Compliance

This request is to address building code and environment issues that may arise, including special inspections needed for other construction projects. This request is for \$500,000.

Director Cornell observed that resolutions have recently gone through obligating code compliance.

Erie County Shooting Range Improvements

The request is for \$1 million for improvements to the berm and the possibility of altering the direction of the shooting due to complaints from neighbors.

The County Executive asked if the Sheriff's Office will be pursuing any grant money for this improvement. Commissioner Geary advised no.

Lincoln Building Exterior Rehabilitation

This is for funding to finish the design of the exterior building renovations needed for the Lincoln Building, which would include the entablature, exterior windows and doors, and repointing of the

chimney. The request is \$250,000.

The County Executive inquired about phase two. Deputy Commissioner Cihocki advised the \$250,000 request is just for design, and the construction is \$2.5 million in 2026. The CE and Deputy Commissioner Cihocki discussed window replacement versus encapsulation. The CE asked for a comparison of prices to paint the brick versus the window replacement.

New EMS Support Facility

This project would be for construction of a new EMS ambulatory facility. This was based on a very basic scope. The scope has since expanded. Construction estimates are going to exceed \$1.5 million.

Chief of Staff Swanekamp advised he spoke with Deputy Commissioner Gill and told him it would be the basic construction. Deputy Commissioner Cihocki advised utility work is going to be extensive. Commissioner Geary advised the building is under design currently.

EC Energy Conservation Implementation Initiatives

The last request is for energy conservation and implementation initiatives. There have been two very successful rounds of this improvement infrastructure around the County. The projects pay for themselves over their lives.

The County Executive asked if, after two successful phases, the County is getting to projects that have the least return. Commissioner Geary advised DPW is looking into the ECC buildings. The STEM building is ten years old and has a lot of power usage. There is potential savings on putting in different pumps, evacuation systems in the lab rooms, and lighting.

Motion to adjourn by Majority Leader Meyers with a second from Comptroller Hardwick. The next meeting is to be held on July 25, 2024.