



Judiciary & Public Safety Committee

Special Committee Meeting

60 Central Ave.
Cortland, NY 13045
<https://www.cortlandcountyny.gov>

~ Minutes ~

Thursday, April 25, 2024

4:15 PM

Room 302

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:15 PM by Committee Chair Sandra Price

Attendee Name	Organization	Title	Status	Arrived
Sandra Price	Cortland County, NY	Committee Chair	Present	
Christopher Newell	Cortland County, NY	Committee Member	Present	
Douglas Bentley	Cortland County, NY	Committee Member	Present	
Susan Wilson	Cortland County, NY	Committee Member	Present	
Eugene Waldbauer	Cortland County, NY	Committee Vice-Chair	Present	
Mitchel Eccleston	Cortland County, NY	Committee Member	Absent	
Reed Cleland	Cortland County, NY	Committee Member	Present	
Savannah Hempstead	Cortland County, NY	Clerk of the Legislature	Present	
Rob Corpora	Cortland County, NY	County Administrator	Present	
Trish Hansen	TLC		Present	
Margaret Mellott	Cortland Standard	Reporter	Remote	

Resolutions

AGENDA ITEM NO. 1 – Advocating Against OSHA Reforms in New York State for Firefighters

RESULT: APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]

Next: 4/25/2024 6:00 PM

MOVER: Eugene Waldbauer, Committee Vice-Chair

SECONDER: Christopher Newell, Committee Member

AYES: Price, Newell, Bentley, Wilson, Waldbauer, Cleland

ABSENT: Mitchel Eccleston

ON MOTION OF PRICE

RESOLUTION NO.

Advocating Against OSHA Reforms in New York State for Firefighters

WHEREAS, Cortland County, nestled in the heart of New York State, is a rural county with a population of 46,809 individuals spread across 502 square miles, relying heavily on the essential services provided by its twelve (12) independent fire departments; AND

WHEREAS, these twelve (12) fire departments, comprised of eleven (11) entirely volunteer organizations and one combination paid/volunteer department, serve as the lifeblood of our community, dutifully responding to 3,700 emergency calls in the preceding year, embodying the spirit of selflessness and dedication that defines Cortland County; AND

WHEREAS, the personnel of these departments, comprised of 391 volunteers, 39 career firefighters, and 7 fire coordinators, form the backbone of our emergency response apparatus, tirelessly working to ensure the safety, security, and well-being of our residents, often at great personal sacrifice; AND

WHEREAS, Cortland County acknowledges, with gratitude, the commendable efforts of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) in initiating measures aimed at enhancing the safety and welfare of our invaluable emergency responders; AND

WHEREAS, notwithstanding the strides made in bolstering emergency responder safety, Cortland County harbors legitimate concerns regarding the future accessibility, affordability, and efficacy of emergency services within our jurisdiction; NOW THEREFORE BE IT

RESOLVED, that Cortland County, mindful of its responsibility to safeguard the interests and welfare of its constituents, hereby expresses its reservations and respectfully requests that OSHA, in conjunction with our esteemed state and national officials, give due consideration to the following points of contention and areas of improvement pertaining to the current proposed OSHA 1910.156 document:

1. Extending the public comment period beyond the prescribed deadline of June 21, 2024 by a minimum of 45 days, thereby affording our officials adequate time to meticulously review the voluminous 608-page document and formulate comprehensive, fact-based comments reflective of our community's unique needs and circumstances;
2. Facilitating the organization and conduct of in-person public comment sessions to provide a platform for stakeholders to voice their concerns, insights, and recommendations in a transparent and inclusive manner;
3. Ensuring equitable and substantive representation of volunteer firefighters in the proposal process, proportionate to their significant contribution to emergency services nationwide, thereby fostering a balanced and representative discourse that accounts for the diverse perspectives and interests at play;
4. Simplifying and expediting the incorporation of referenced standards (22 in total) into the proposed standard to enhance clarity, accessibility, and comprehension, thereby facilitating widespread dissemination and implementation across our diverse emergency response landscape;
5. Reevaluating the intended audience and scope of the standard to accommodate the varying regulatory frameworks and classifications of volunteer firefighters across different states, ensuring equitable treatment and compliance with applicable laws and regulations;
6. Transforming the proposed standard into a dynamic, adaptive "living document" capable of evolving in tandem with emerging national needs, technological advancements, and best practices, thereby obviating the need for periodic overhauls and updates to address obsolescence and inefficiency;
7. Identifying and prioritizing additional safety measures and protocols that can be expeditiously implemented with minimal resource expenditure and manpower requirements, thereby augmenting the resilience and effectiveness of our emergency response infrastructure;
8. Collaborating closely with stakeholders to develop a standardized framework that strikes a judicious balance between economic feasibility and technical efficacy, thereby ensuring the sustainability and viability of our emergency response initiatives in the long run;
9. Instituting a formal, structured negotiation process characterized by transparency, accountability, and active engagement, thereby fostering a culture of collaboration, consensus-building, and mutual respect among all parties involved;
10. Embracing these recommendations and initiatives in a concerted effort to uphold the safety, well-being, and resilience of our dedicated emergency responders, while concurrently safeguarding the interests and resources of our taxpaying constituents.

; AND BE IT FURTHER

RESOLVED, that in adopting this resolution, the Cortland County Legislature reaffirms its unwavering commitment to the principles of safety, equity, and inclusivity, and pledges to work collaboratively with all relevant stakeholders to address the pressing concerns and challenges confronting our emergency response infrastructure in the pursuit of a safer, more resilient, and prosperous future for all; AND BE IT FURTHER

RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution shall be transmitted to OSHA, the Governor of New York State, the New York State Legislature, the National Advisory Committee on Occupational Safety and Health, and other relevant stakeholders to express the opposition of the Cortland County Legislature to any OSHA reforms that do not adequately consider the concerns outlined herein.

Adjournment

The meeting was closed at 4:18 PM