



COUNTY OF ERIE

MICHAEL P. KEARNS
COUNTY CLERK

IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATION REQUESTED

May 8, 2026

The Honorable Erie County Legislature
92 Franklin Street, Fourth Floor
Buffalo, New York 14202

Re: COMM. 7E-15- Proposed Northtowns Auto Bureau Lease

Dear Honorable Members:

I write to respectfully request that this Honorable Body discharge COMM. 7E-15 (2025) from the Economic Development and place it on the next possible Session agenda for a vote. Please find enclosed with this letter a copy of the Second Amended Proposed Resolution of COMM. 7E-15, which was previously sent to the Clerk of the Legislature at the request of Chair Meyers on April 27, 2026.

As you are aware, this proposed resolution was filed on April 9, 2026 and discussed in the Economic Development Committee on April 23, 2026. A special information session was held on May 7, 2026 to allow additional discussion.

I am grateful to this Honorable Body, and in particular Legislator and Economic Development Committee Chair St. Jean-Tard, for affording us the opportunity to address you on May 7, 2026 outside of the agenda.

To clarify and confirm a few points made during the May 7, 2026 discussion:

- **RFP Process:** In accordance with the established process for Requests for Proposals (“RFPs”), the instant RFP was published by the Purchasing Department publicly on the County’s website on October 1, 2025. No entity was denied the opportunity to bid, including the current landlord. No new proposals may be entertained until a vote is taken by this Honorable Body on instant resolution for the presumptive winner of the contract.
- **Current Space:** Regarding the issues with the current location of the Northtowns Auto Bureau:
 - The current location has experienced multiple service disruptions, including:
 - A gas shutoff related to a heating issue that forced closure.
 - A sewage backup through the floor, which again required us to close and relocate scheduled appointments.

- These issues not only interrupt service to the public but also create an unacceptable working environment for our staff.
- In addition, the landlord and management company are based out of Rochester, which has resulted in delays when service is needed. Even in emergency situations, such as the sewage issue, we have had to wait for contractors to travel in, extending downtime and disruption.
- Under our current lease, the County is responsible for many interior repairs, including lighting and damage caused by recurring roof leaks.
- We are continuing to invest resources into a facility that is aging and increasingly difficult to maintain.
- The office has been in place since February 2016 and was undersized from the outset.
- Early on, we had to create two makeshift cashiering windows just to meet basic demand.
- We now have 14 full-time and 3 part-time employees, but only 12 service windows.
- Even with those adjustments, we still cannot fully utilize staff at the counter when fully staffed.
- Back-office space is also very limited, creating challenges for breaks, workflow, and overall efficiency.
- Parking has become increasingly limited, particularly since the opening of O'Reilly Auto Parts next door, which eliminated employee parking behind the building. Previously, when rear parking was available, staff utilized the designated employee entrance located in proximity.
- Staff are sometimes forced to park in customer spaces and enter through crowded public areas.
- This creates avoidable safety concerns and negatively impacts the customer experience.

The proposed new location offers multiple positive opportunities, including but not limited to:

- **Improved service capability and access:**
 - The proposed new location would increase service windows from 12 to 15, allowing us to serve more customers efficiently and reduce wait times.
 - It also positions us to better support our partnership with EZ DMV Inc as they expand their operations.
- **Expansion of access to dealerships:**
 - The new location also gives us a strategic opportunity to better serve dealerships in the Northtowns.
 - Currently, our Dealer Division is in the Southtowns, which has been a barrier for some dealerships to fully engage with our services.
 - A more accessible location will make it easier for those businesses to work with us and bring additional transaction volume into the County system.
- **The first drive-thru DMV in New York State.**
 - This will provide greater accessibility for senior citizens and the disability community.

It was suggested that there were other, less expensive options available, including a plaza in Amherst and another property on Sheridan Drive. While cost is certainly an important consideration, it is far from the only factor in this qualitative decision. Location, accessibility, operational needs, and the ability to best serve our residents are all major considerations.

Ideally, we would prefer to remain within the Town of Tonawanda. The Amherst Plaza site that was referenced is located deep into Amherst and in very close proximity to our Eastern Hills Mall branch, making it less convenient for residents of Kenmore, North Buffalo, and the Tonawandas and would potentially take away business from the Eastern Hills Mall Branch. If Amherst were to be considered in the future, it would need to be in close proximity to our current location to best serve the clientele who rely on this office.

As it relates to the referenced Sheridan property, the selection committee did not receive any correspondence or Request for Proposal (RFP) submission from that landlord. Without an RFP submission, the property could not be considered by the committee and was therefore not part of the formal review process.

Additionally, Legislator Bargnesi stated that he recently visited the Sheridan Plaza office and felt operations "seemed to operate fine" during the brief time he was there. We appreciate that he and his employee had a positive experience. However, a short visit does not fully reflect the day-to-day operational challenges faced by staff and customers at that location.

I welcome any Legislator to spend time in the office and observe firsthand why we believe this move is necessary. Please contact me directly, and we will gladly make the appropriate arrangements.

Once again, I thank this Honorable Body once again for its immediate consideration of this matter and vote on the proposed amended resolution. As noted during discussion relocating an Auto Bureau office requires significant coordination with the NYS DMV. We are required to provide approximately 12 months' notice to the State for an office relocation, making advance planning essential. Because of that timeline, this is something we need to begin addressing now rather than waiting for additional operational failures or service disruptions.

Respectfully submitted,



MICHAEL P. KEARNS
Erie County Clerk

MPK/wal
Encl.

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**STATE OF NEW YORK
LEGISLATURE OF ERIE COUNTY
BUFFALO, NEW YORK**

**A Second Amended Resolution Submitted by the Erie County Clerk
Re: Office Space For Erie County Auto Bureau – Northtowns Satellite**

WHEREAS, pursuant to New York State Vehicle and Traffic Law § 205, the Erie County Clerk (“Clerk”) shall act as an agent of the Commissioner of the Department of Motor Vehicles and in such capacity the Erie County Clerk operates the Erie County Auto Bureau; and

WHEREAS, the Erie County Auto Bureau, at full operations, maintains six (6) branch locations and one (1) mobile unit throughout the County of Erie to provide convenient services to Erie County residents; and

WHEREAS, the Erie County Auto Bureau has occupied space in Tonawanda, New York since 2016; and

WHEREAS, the extension of the current lease for space in Tonawanda, New York expires in December 2026; and

WHEREAS, the Erie County Auto Bureau desires to continue providing a branch in the Northtowns region of Erie County; and

WHEREAS, on October 1, 2025, the Clerk’s Office issued RFP #2025-043VF seeking proposers for a new auto bureau location in the Northtowns of Erie County, and two (2) proposals were received; and

WHEREAS, the landlord of the current lease did not submit a proposal to RFP #2025-043VF, making it a certainty that the Auto Bureau needs to relocate; and

WHEREAS, the two (2) proposals that were received were evaluated by a selection committee, and they determined the submission by 1093 Group, LLC to be the best proposal to benefit the Northtowns region of Erie County; and

WHEREAS, the proposed new location of the Northtowns satellite branch of the Erie County Auto Bureau is located at 2047 Sheridan Drive, Tonawanda, New York 14150, and consists of approximately 10,916 Square Feet; and

WHEREAS, the Erie County Clerk’s Office is requesting authorization to enter into a lease agreement with 1093 Group, LLC for the purpose of relocating and opening a Northtowns satellite branch of the Erie County Auto Bureau.

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NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, that the County of Erie is hereby authorized to enter into negotiations for, and execute a Lease Agreement with, 1093 Group, LLC for the purpose of relocating and opening a Northtowns satellite branch of the Erie County Auto Bureau; and be it further

RESOLVED, that said contract, subject to continued negotiations and approval by the County Attorney, the said Lease Agreement shall be a term of five (5) years and include approximately 10,916 rentable square feet of space at \$43.79 per square foot, with a Monthly Rent of \$39,834.30 (10,916 rsf x \$43.79 psf/12 months), which covers all services contemplated in the Lease Agreement including, but not limited to, rubbish removal and water & sewer; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the rent breakdown is as follows:

<u>Rent Detail for New North Towns Auto Bureau</u>		
	<u>Monthly</u>	<u>Annual</u>
	<u>Per Sq. Ft</u>	<u>Rent</u>
Base Rent	\$ 14.90	\$162,648.40
Utilities	\$ 3.75	\$ 40,935.00
Operating Expense	\$ 5.25	\$ 57,309.00
Taxes	\$ 4.58	\$ 49,995.28
Improvements	\$ 15.31	\$167,123.96
Expenses, Taxes & Improvements	\$ 28.89	\$315,363.24
Annual Rent for Years 1 to 5	\$ 43.79	\$478,011.64

RESOLVED, that the Erie County Executive, or the Deputy County Executive, is authorized to authorize the said Lease Agreement with the fundamental terms set forth above, subject to a form of the final Lease Agreement being approved by the County Attorney; and be it further

RESOLVED, that provided the County is not in default of the terms of the Lease Agreement, and subject to authorization by the County Legislature, the County shall be entitled to renew the lease for two (2) consecutive five-year terms, at the County's sole discretion upon written notice to the landlord; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the the source of funds comprising payment under the Lease Agreement with 1093 Group, LLC shall be from and are currently available in the following account: General Account 1132015 (Auto Bureau); with the general ledger being GL 545000; and be it further

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RESOLVED, that authorization is hereby given for the Division of Budget and Management to make any technical adjustments necessary to effectuate this resolution; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Clerk of the Legislature shall forward certified copies of this Resolution to the Erie County Executive; the Erie County Attorney; the Director of the Division of Budget and Management; the Erie County Comptroller; and the Erie County Clerk.