



COUNTY OF ERIE
MARK C. POLONCARZ
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

May 22, 2026

Erie County Legislature
92 Franklin Street, 4th Floor
Buffalo, New York 14202

RE: Authorization to Enter into Contract with ErieNet for Dark Fiber IRU & Managed Network Services

Dear Honorable Members:

Please find enclosed a memorandum and proposed resolution seeking authorization to enter into agreement with ErieNet LDC for the lease of dark fiber optic strands and related network management services to provide "lit" internet service to 72 County facilities.

Should your Honorable Body require further information, I encourage you to contact Commissioner Michael Breeden at the Department of Information & Support Services. Thank you for your consideration on this matter.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mark C. Poloncarz".

Mark C. Poloncarz, Esq.
Erie County Executive

MCP/nb
Enclosure

cc: Michael Breeden, Commissioner, Information & Support Services

MEMORANDUM

To: Honorable Members of the Erie County Legislature
From: Department of Information & Support Services
Re: Authorization to Enter into Contract with ErieNet for Dark Fiber IRU & Managed Network Services
Date: May 22, 2026

SUMMARY

Erie County seeks to enter into agreement with ErieNet LDC for an indefeasible right of use (IRU) lease of dark fiber to interconnect 72 facilities including Sewer, Emergency Services, PSAP/911 and new Highmark Stadium first responder sites. The 20 PSAP/911 and stadium sites will be on their own fiber optic ring separate from the other 52 County sites. Both networks will have the primary core at the Rath Building with a secondary core at the Fire Training Academy/Emergency Operations Center in Cheektowaga. The lease of fiber will be for a 5-year term with the option of three 5-year extensions).

The County will also enter into agreement for a 5-year term (with the option of two 1-year extensions) with ErieNet for Managed Network Services to light the dark fiber providing internet access.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The IRU is based upon 367 miles of backbone and lateral fiber connections to all 72 County locations with a IRU fee of \$734,000 for 1-time construction costs and monthly charges of \$9,859 (\$118,308 annually or \$591,540 total for the initial 5-year term). These costs will be covered by existing funds within the Department of Information and Support Services 2026 Adopted Budget (Fund 110, Funds Center 10500) Accounts 515000 – Utility Charges & 516030 – Maintenance Contracts and will result in a cost savings versus the current monthly recurring charges for existing service.

To “light” the fiber, there will be a 1-time cost for equipment purchased on Erie County’s behalf of \$2,253,294. This cost was planned for, and sufficient funds exist in DISS Capital Project A.25007 – WAN Upgrades.

There will also be a monthly recurring charge for support and monitoring of \$5,467 (\$65,623 annually or \$328,117 total for the initial 5-year term) that will be covered by existing funds within DISS’s 2026 Adopted Budget (Fund 110, Funds Center 10500) Account 516030 – Maintenance Contracts and will result in a cost savings versus the current monthly recurring charges for existing service.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

The County connecting to ErieNet and utilizing their Managed Network Services will increase the number of county facilities that can access consistent high-speed internet at a significantly lower annual cost than the current services through Verizon.

Currently, the County is paying \$168,480 monthly or \$2,021,760 annually for Managed Network Services through Verizon for 60 locations while the County will now pay \$183,931 annually for the Managed Network Services and IRU support for 72 sites an overall reduction in monthly reoccurring charges of \$1,837,829 annually. The County was also responsible for the purchase of all network equipment with the existing Verizon service with all existing equipment at end of life and needing replacement regardless.

Even if the 1-time network equipment cost of \$2,253,294 was unique to use of ErieNet's service and not a necessary cost regardless of provider, the County will realize immediate savings beginning in the second year of the agreement and save approximately \$6,201,850 over the first 5-year term of the ErieNet agreement.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

ErieNET is a not-for-profit, local development corporation, incorporated in September 2022, designed to provide stewardship for the construction and ongoing management of a municipal based open access fiber optic backbone that will span nearly 400 miles throughout Erie County, NY. The LDC's mission is to create a foundation to address the broadband needs of unserved and underserved areas of our community, which will ultimately enhance economic development opportunities, promote better quality of life across Erie County.

The Indefeasible Right to Use (IRU) agreement will allow Erie County access to 6-strands of ErieNet backbone dark fiber to connect 52 County facilities, 19 PSAPs and the new Highmark Stadium. The backbone is comprised of multiple sub-rings to provide redundancy and resiliency to network applications and services. The PSAPs will be on a separate sub-ring from County facilities. The IRU includes all costs associated with the initial last-mile construction, installation, termination, maintenance and support of the County's dark fiber IRU.

ErieNet will also provide 365 monitoring, management and support of the "lit" County IT and PSAPs network. This service includes design, installation, commissioning and ongoing maintenance and support for the contract term.

CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION

Erie County will not become a primary customer of the ErieNet dark fiber network that it has been instrumental in creating and would be required to remain with the various inferior and more expensive internet options available for each individual location.

STEPS FOLLOWING APPROVAL

Upon passage, the County will enter into a contract with ErieNet LDC.

COMPTROLLER' S OFFICE REVIEW

The proposed legislation has been reviewed by the Comptroller's Office. The request is related to an authorized capital project ~~(*) (or the project will be authorized based on the Legislature's approval of this proposal)~~ for which there are sufficient appropriations/funds available for the actions proposed. If bonded funds are being utilized, the bond covenant for the funds allows for their use for this purpose.

A.25007 – Wide Area Network (WAN) Upgrades

TTC Callan 5/21/26

Timothy C. Callan
Deputy Comptroller ~~Audit~~
Erie County Comptroller's Office

**A RESOLUTION TO BE SUBMITTED BY:
DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION AND SUPPORT SERVICES**

RE: Authorization to Enter into Contract with ErieNet for Dark Fiber IRU & Managed Network Services

WHEREAS, ErieNET is a not-for-profit, local development corporation, incorporated in September 2022, designed to provide stewardship for the construction and ongoing management of a municipal-based open access fiber optic backbone that will span nearly 400 miles throughout Erie County, NY; and

WHEREAS, ErieNet’s mission is to create a foundation to address the broadband needs of unserved and underserved areas of our community, which will ultimately enhance economic development opportunities and promote better quality of life across Erie County; and

WHEREAS, Erie County wishes to contract with ErieNet for the indefeasible right to use dark fiber to interconnect 72 facilities including Sewer, Emergency Services, PSAP/911 and new Highmark Stadium first responder sites; and

WHEREAS, the County also wishes to contract for ErieNet to provide Managed Network Services to “light” the dark fiber providing internet access; and

WHEREAS, including monthly reoccurring charges and one-time IRU buildout and network equipment costs, the County will realize savings with ErieNet beginning in the 2nd year of the agreement and totaling \$6,201,851 over the first 5-year term versus continuing the existing services with Verizon.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, that the Erie County Legislature hereby authorizes the County Executive or Deputy County Executive to enter into contract with ErieNet Local Development Corporation for the Indefeasible Right to Use (“IRU”) lease of dark fiber for an initial 5-year term with the option to extend for up to 3 additional 5-year terms, and for Managed Network Services to “light” the dark fiber network for an initial 5-year term with the option to extend for up to 2 additional 1-year terms; and

RESOLVED, that sufficient funds exist within the Department of Information and Support Services’ 2026 Adopted Budget (Fund 110, Funds Center 10500) Accounts 515000 – Utility Charges & 516030 – Maintenance Contracts for the 1-time and monthly reoccurring IRU costs and the monthly reoccurring Managed Network Services; and be it further

RESOLVED, that funds, in the total amount of \$2,253,394.36 be made available the upfront equipment costs for Managed Network Services from Capital Project A.25007 – WAN Upgrades; and be it further

RESOLVED, that certified copies of this resolution be sent to the County Executive's Office, the Comptroller's Office, Department of Law, Department of Information and Support Services and Division of Budget and Management.

CAPITAL PROJECT/ACCOUNT CONTRACT APPROVAL CHECKLIST

TO: COMPTRROLLER'S OFFICE
FROM: Department of Information and Support Services (DISS)

PROPOSED RESOLUTION REQUIRING CAPITAL ACCOUNT REVIEW
CONTRACT APPROVAL CHECKLIST
CONFIRMATION OF AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS IN CAPITAL PROJECTS

REQUESTING DEPARTMENT

COMPLETE ITEMS 1 THROUGH 5

1. CONTRACTOR'S NAME
OR ENTITY RECEIVING FUNDS ErieNet Local Development Corporation

2. AMOUNT OF CONTRACT \$2,253,294.36

3. PROJECT NUMBER A.25007

4. PROJECT TITLE WAN Upgrades

5. DEPARTMENT CONTACT Funding questions: Michael Breeden x6266
Mark Cornell x2920
Letter pickup: Mark Cornell

COMPTRROLLER'S OFFICE

COMPLETE ITEMS 6 AND 7

6. AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS \$

7. PERFORMED BY _____

- Date Sent to Comptroller's Office: 5/20/26