



Joint Legislative Committee on Economic Development

Testimony by Commissioner RoAnn Destito

February 13, 2020

Good morning Chairs Krueger and Weinstein, ranking members Ra and Seward, and distinguished members of the committees. I am Commissioner RoAnn Destito and I am pleased to be here today to provide testimony about the Office of General Services.

I would like to talk with you today about some of the exciting things happening at OGS.

Our Procurement Services group continues to lead the way in new and innovative procurements. In August they were nationally recognized by Governing Magazine as a top 5 procurement organization in the United States. This was one of 7 national accolades for OGS Procurement this past year. We maintain the largest Information Technology catalog contracts in the country, attracting NY-based small, MWBE, and SDVOB businesses as well as many of the largest technology companies in the world. We have approximately 500 MWBE and SDVOB vendors in the IT space alone. In 2019, we did approximately 40 trainings and outreaches educating over 5,000 government employees on our contracts and 3,000 businesses on how to do business with NYS and did trainings and outreaches for over 8,000 government employees, maintained an amazon-like electronic catalog of over 10 million items to purchase from, and facilitated employing individuals with disabilities on approximately 216 service and commodity projects across the state. We added contracts for community solar, intelligent security systems and solutions, statewide laundry and linen services, and telecommunications connectivity services to name a few, and continued the success with contracts such as centralized resources for Project Labor Agreement studies and contracts for translation services across state agencies and local governments. When the legislature modernized the voting process by authorizing early voting and electronic poll books, our team built a single centralized contract supporting all 58 local boards of elections, and even found a way to reduce the list of the necessary associated hardware that resulted in administrative savings.

In Buffalo, a dynamic downtown revitalization is underway. OGS, working with State and local officials determined that in the current competitive and robust Buffalo real estate market, the highest and best use of the Senator Walter J. Mahoney State Office Building is no longer State office space and that it will be sold at auction later this year. State employees will remain in the downtown Buffalo footprint that currently encompasses more than 600,000 square feet of space leased by the State.

Here in Albany, as part of our work to meet the Governor's clean energy goals, NYPA and OGS have unveiled a new project that takes into consideration legislative, community, and expert feedback, budgetary constraints, and the need to replace obsolete equipment at the Sheridan Hollow Steam Plant. The project has five major components: first, we have demolished the old steel smoke stack at the former ANSWERS plant; second, we are replacing the existing obsolete emergency generators with quiet, state-of-the-art emission-controlled units; third, we are going to electrify one of the on-site steam driven chillers at the Empire State Plaza Chill Plant. Electrifying this one chiller will reduce local gas use and emissions by 18%; fourth, we are installing LED lighting technology throughout the entire plaza complex to reduce energy and statewide greenhouse gas emissions; and fifth, we are in the process of establishing a 38-megawatt solar photo voltaic project at the former Oriskany Airport, a property now owned by OGS. This project would be financed through a power purchase agreement and would generate over 50% of the electricity used by the Empire State Plaza.

We are also working on a project at the Capitol courtyard which serves as a roof over the basement mechanical space of the building. The original roof has had multiple layers of re-roofing over the past 100 years. The project will repair the leaking roof and reintroduce the windows along the Hawk Street passage.

I hope you have noticed the new grab-and-go lunch stop in the LOB that is serving up fresh salads, sandwiches and snacks on session days. We have also begun a multi-year phased project to renovate and modernize the public bathrooms in the Legislative State Office Building. All of the renovated bathrooms will meet modern ADA standards.

In conjunction with other agency partners OGS has launched the Employee Zero Emissions Vehicle (ZEV) Charging Pilot Program in targeted OGS Parking facilities throughout Downtown Albany and the Harriman State Campus with a total of 64 charging ports. In addition, we have completed the installation of fleet charging stations at our building on Wolf Road in Albany and will complete a similar installation at the Eleanor Roosevelt Office Building in Poughkeepsie. Additional charging station projects are in development.

The Office of General Services is also participating in the Governor's Resiliency and Economic Development Initiative (REDI) program. In addition to serving on the REDI committee and advancing multiple projects for the initiative OGS is directly managing the \$15M navigation dredging initiative which is part of the Governor's efforts to dredge 20 sites in navigable waterways and harbors and keep them operational.

In an effort to expand savings and efficiencies for New York State taxpayers, OGS would like the Legislature to consider granting expansion of its Design-Build (DB) authority to additional State entities just as the Legislature did last year for a number of NYC agencies. Granting OGS full scale DB authority would allow parity for OGS to consider such alternative delivery methods just as other comparable State construction agencies do, including the Department of Transportation, Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, and the Department of Environmental Conservation.

OGS also does an excellent job growing businesses. In 2011, the OGS eligible MWBE utilization rate was 14%, and we are very proud to say that we have now exceeded the Governor's goal of 30 percent. As an example, in that time, MWBEs have received in excess of \$702 million from contracts associated with our Design & Construction Group alone, up from \$538 million at this time last year.

Our success implementing the Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Business Act continues. We now have approximately 770 certified businesses in a wide range of categories from construction and financial services to commodities. Over the 12 months ending September 30, New York State disbursed over \$103 million to SDVOBs, which represents an 83% growth over last year. One great example is Walker Diving Underwater Construction LLC, owned by a post-911 veteran who was awarded the largest SDVOB contract at \$9.8 million.

Providing an exceptional visitor experience is a source of pride for the OGS team. I am very pleased to report that we have completed renovations at the Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. State Office Building Community Room and Art Gallery and that the Harlem Art Collection made its first return to the building in over 25 years. In the mid-1990s, a majority of works in the collection were moved into storage in the basement of the building to make way for exhibits of works by community artists. In 2006, flooding in the basement resulted in water damage to some pieces. The collection was then moved to the building's 13th floor storage area where it remained in poor condition and hidden from public view. In 2012, the collection was rediscovered while I was touring the building, and we temporarily relocated it to Albany where the condition of the artwork was assessed, and individual pieces were sent out for cleaning and conservation treatments.

Portions of the collection were returned to the Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. State Office Building for the 2019 exhibition titled, "Harlem Roots," and, most recently, for the exhibit "Harlem Art Then and Now: A Celebration of Community and Contemporary Art." Over the next year in addition to sharing this newly renovated space with the community, we will be hosting new public exhibits with additional works from the Collection. Also, this year's Black History Month exhibit marks the first time works from the Harlem Collection have been displayed in the State Capitol.

As Commissioner, I am honored to lead the hard-working and dedicated team at the Office of General Services. Their service to the people of New York State never wavers and can be counted on at all times. Thank you for listening to my testimony, and I am happy to take any questions that you may have.