

ERIENET LOCAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

NEWS RELEASE

April 19, 2023

CONTACT: Mark Cornell / Mark.Cornell@erie.gov
Phone: (716) 858-2920

ERIE NET ANNOUNCES MELISSA HARTMAN AS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Hartman brings nearly a decade of executive-level experience in municipal planning, infrastructure project management from her work as Eden's town supervisor

ERIE COUNTY, NY— ErieNET Local Development Corporation (ErieNET) recently announced that Melissa M. Hartman has been appointed as its first ever Executive Director. The appointment, effective May 1, was made after a unanimous vote by the ErieNET Board of Directors at their meeting held on April 18.

"I am excited to join ErieNET as the executive director and to capitalize on my experience working on critical infrastructure projects," **said Melissa Hartman**. "The vision and now the reality of ErieNET fulfills not just a need but the right that all residents should be connected to the internet. As a rural town supervisor, I have worked hard to bring connectivity to my constituents. However, I have seen first-hand how the lack of competition and choice drives up cost, making broadband unachievable for some people."

"I have worked with Melissa for eight years in local government and she is detail oriented and driven by results," **said Jason Keding, Boston Town Supervisor and ErieNET board member**. "Melissa's has held numerous leadership roles during her time as a town supervisor, including chairwoman for the Erie County Town Supervisor Forum, president of the Association of Erie County Governments, and fifth vice-president for the Erie County Association of Towns. She has led the Town of Eden through multiple successful projects, including their water infrastructure transition. Many communities in the Southtowns struggle with quality broadband service for residents. Melissa understands these limitations and the associated challenges, which is why I feel she is the right person for this transformative project. I am honored to be part of this project as a board member and I look forward to welcoming Melissa and working together with the ErieNET LDC team in her new role."

The ErieNET Board received more than 20 resumes from applicants and conducted detailed interviews with four candidates.

"At the end of this process, it was clear that Melissa Hartman was the top candidate. She brings a unique combination of public sector management skills, proven experience working with municipalities and higher education organizations within Erie County, and a deep understanding of the need for expanded broadband access in Erie County," **said John Spears, director of the**

Buffalo & Erie County Public Library. “I was impressed not only with her experience as a town supervisor but also her long history of leadership positions with the Association of Erie County Governments, the New York State Association of Towns, and Erie County Sewer District No. 3. All of that experience will be invaluable as ErieNET begins to sign up customers and begin construction.”

“As chairperson, my primary goal was to identify someone with the technical ability to drive this initiative forward, but also someone who has a passion for Erie County. Unequivocally, Melissa embodies both,” said **Thomas E. Baines, deputy commissioner of Planning and Economic Development for Erie County and ErieNET Board Chairperson.**

Hartman has served as Eden’s town supervisor since 2016. She will officially resign from that position as of July 1 after a 60-day transition period. Hartman served as Eden’s chief executive and fiscal officer, managing an annual budget of nearly \$4.5 million. During her tenure, Hartman successfully delivered critical infrastructure projects such as road, water, and sanitary sewer service. As a member of the Erie County Sewer District No. 3 Board, Hartman has been a part of the \$130 million Southtowns Wasterwater Treatment Facility plant upgrade project, while also overseeing the board’s annual budget and operations.

Hartman previously worked as the assistant director of operations and as an admission advisor at SUNY at Buffalo for eight years. A native of the Village of Hamburg, she holds a masters of education in Higher Education Administration and a bachelor of arts in History from SUNY at Buffalo.

ErieNET, a not-for-profit, local development corporation, was incorporated in September 2022. It is 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.

###