

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: REAL PROPERTY TAX SERVICES

DATE: JULY 25, 2006

Committee Members Present:

Supervisors Belden  
Monroe  
Haskell  
Bentley  
Geraghty

Absent: Champagne  
F. Thomas

Others Present:

Michael Swan, Director, Real Property Tax Services  
William Thomas, Chairman  
Joanne McKinstry, Confidential Secretary to  
Commissioner of Administrative & Fiscal Services  
Joan Sady, Clerk  
Paul Dusek, County Attorney  
Supervisor Gabriels  
Supervisor Kenny  
Carlene A. Ramsey, Sr. Legislative Office Specialist

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Mr. Belden called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

Michael Swan, Director of Real Property Tax Services (RPTS), distributed an Agenda packet to each of the Committee members and a copy is on file with the minutes.

Motion was made by Mr. Geraghty, seconded by Mr. Bentley and carried unanimously to accept the minutes of the previous meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk.

Mr. Swan began his Agenda review with Item 1, as he apprized he would be attending the New York State Association of Real Property Tax Directors' summer conference. He said he would be elected as the association President for 2006-2007 and he intended to bring the summer conference to the Queensbury Hotel in 2007.

Turning to Agenda Item 2, Personnel, Mr. Swan reported the Real Property Tax Map Technician was out on disability leave for 4 to 6 weeks. He reminded the Committee members the mapping system's software was in the middle of a conversion process and he was concerned about the workflow. He presented a request to transfer \$2,000 from Regular Salary to Overtime Salary so that the other Technician could put in the extra hours to maintain smooth operations. He noted the funds were available in the Budget due to the vacant Real Property Clerk position.

Motion was made by Mr. Haskell, seconded by Mr. Geraghty and carried unanimously to authorize the Request For Transfer of Funds be forwarded to the Finance Committee. A copy of the request form is on file with the minutes.

Returning to the Agenda review at Item 3, Equipment Purchase, Mr. Swan presented a Request For Transfer Funds in the amount of \$850 to cover the purchase of a laptop computer. He explained the Deputy Directory, Teri Ross, would be traveling to the various assessors offices to conduct training classes for the assessors. He noted the laptop computer would greatly facilitate the training sessions.

Motion was made by Mr. Haskell, seconded by Mr. Bentley and carried unanimously to authorize the Request for Transfer of Funds be forwarded to the Finance Committee.

A copy of the request form is on file with the minutes.

Mr. Swan confirmed the purchase would be managed by the Information Technology Department, and purchased through State contract.

Mr. Gabriels entered the meeting at 9:40 a.m.

Mr. Swan continued to Agenda Item 4, Old Tax Parcels, and he reported there were 3 different parcels he was concerned with and listed them as follows:

1. A parcel in the Town of Queensbury (the former Corlew property) had been advertised for sealed bid in May 2006, with a minimum of \$65,000. Since no offers were submitted, he proposed the property be offered for sale, once more, with NO minimum bid.

2. A parcel in the Town of Queensbury (on Rhode Island Avenue) did not sell at the previous public auction. He noted the house was vacant, had been broken into several times, had become a hangout for teenagers, and the Town of Queensbury had threatened to condemn the building. He suggested the County might be able to sell the property if it were offered with a minimum bid of \$20,000.

3. A parcel in the Town of Johnsbury (at the intersection of Route 28 and Thirteenth Lake Road) had been offered several times in the public auction, yet the bidders always back out of the transaction. Even though the small parcel adjoined the Railroad property, he noted, there were 6 easements on the parcel, and the Parks Recreation and Railroad Director, Pat Beland, had determined it was of no use to the County. However, he noted, the other adjoining property owner had expressed an interest in the property. He suggested a minimum bid of \$500.

Motion was made by Mr. Bentley, seconded by Mr. Monroe and carried unanimously to authorize to following requests:

1. Town of Queensbury, Tax Map Parcel No. 303.20-1-12, be offered for sale via sealed bid, with no minimum bid. The Committee authorized a resolution be prepared for the August 18th Board meeting and a copy of the request is on file with the minutes.

2. Town of Queensbury, Tax Map Parcel No. 309.9-3-24, be offered for sale via sealed bid, with a minimum bid of \$20,000. The Committee authorized a resolution be prepared for the August 18th Board meeting and a copy of the request is on file with the minutes.

3. Town of Johnsbury, Tax Map Parcel No. 30.-1-91, be offered for sale via sealed bid, with a minimum bid of \$500.00. The Committee authorized a resolution be prepared for the August 18th Board meeting and a copy of the request is on file with the minutes. [*Subsequent to the meeting it was determined the County had NOT yet foreclosed on the property.*]

[*Subsequent to the Meeting it was determined the requests to sell county property should be reviewed by the Finance Committee.*]

Returning to Agenda review at Item 5, Town of Johnsbury, Tax Map Parcel No. 46.-2-11.1, Mr. Swan explained the parcel had been incorrectly assigned as a subdivided lot.

He explained a building contractor, Mr. McCormick, developed and sold the land in 1995. Subsequently, he stated, the tax rolls listed the new owner for the full 3.74 acre parcel, while the tax map incorrectly listed the parcel as subdivided, with a 1.5 acre parcel attributed to Mr. McCormick.

Mr. Swan further explained the error was compounded when the Countywide tax mapping project (done in 2000) created a new, erroneous tax map number, for Mr. McCormick's fictitious parcel. He further noted that Mr. McCormick actually paid the tax bill (on the fictitious parcel) for the first year, but stopped any further payments without ever reporting the mistake to anyone. Just recently, he commented, the owner of the 3.74 acre parcel received a delinquent tax bill and contacted the County about the confusion.

Mr. Kenny entered the meeting at 9:44 a.m.

Responding to Mr. Monroe's questions, Mr. Swan clarified the County had properly collected taxes from the owner of the 3.74 acres (since 1995), along with the taxes on the fictitious parcel for that one year.

Motion was made by Mr. Haskell, seconded by Mr. Bentley and carried unanimously to authorize the amount of \$543.29 be deleted from the tax rolls in the Town of Johnsbury, on Tax Map Parcel No. 46.-2-11.1; and authorized a resolution be prepared for the August 18<sup>th</sup> Board meeting. A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.

Mr. Swan resumed the Agenda review at Item 6, New Tax Foreclosure Law, and he reported the Legislature passed a bill on the last day of its session. The new law, he noted, related to the property tax procedures, and would require the County to notify the delinquent property owners via U.S. Mail, using *both First Class Mail and Certified Mail*. In addition, if the mail was returned as undeliverable, he said the law would require a notice to be physically posted on the property of the pending foreclosure. He explained the new law would automatically require additional postage expenses, as well as the time and mileage for any parcel with returned mail.

Mr. Swan explained the proposed bill had been reviewed by the Second Assistant County Attorney, Patricia Nenner. He said he wanted to report on the new legislation since the County Attorney's Office did not routinely meet with an oversight Committee.

Mr. Girard entered the meeting at 9:50 a.m.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, on motion by Mr. Haskell and seconded by Mr. Bentley, Mr. Belden adjourned the meeting at 9:51 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Carlene A. Ramsey, Sr. Legislative Office Specialist