

**WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

**COMMITTEE: SHERIFF & COMMUNICATIONS**

**DATE: JUNE 27, 2006**

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<b>Committee Members Present:</b>	<b>Others Present:</b>
Supervisors Bentley	Sheriff Cleveland
VanNess	Joan Parsons, Commissioner of Administrative & Fiscal Services
O'Connor	Joan Sady, Clerk
Belden	Paul Dusek, County Attorney
Mason	Supervisors Champagne
Haskell	Barody
Stec	Marvin Lemery, Fire Prevention & Building Code Enforcement Administrator
<b>Committee Member Absent:</b>	Amanda Allen, Legislative Office Specialist
None	

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Mr. Bentley called the meeting to order at 10:25 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Belden, seconded by Mr. Haskell and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the April 27, 2006 Sheriff and Communications Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Sheriff Cleveland who distributed copies of his agenda to the Committee members. Sheriff Cleveland began by addressing item number one of his agenda referencing a resolution request to amend a contract currently held with New World Systems for additional software licensing at a cost of \$5,000.

Motion was made by Mr. O'Connor, seconded by Mr. Belden and carried unanimously to approve the request as presented and the necessary resolution was authorized for the July Board Meeting. A copy of the resolution request is on file with the minutes.

Sheriff Cleveland proceeded to item number two of the agenda which asked the Committee to approve a resolution to increase appropriations to cover retro-active salary payments made following the Police Benevolent Association (PBA) contract settlement. The amount of the appropriation was \$156,051.35, Sheriff Cleveland stated. He added that this issue had been discussed in a prior meeting and he had been advised to return to the Committee once a firm figure was in place.

Discussion ensued between Committee members as to how funds could be budgeted for the next year to account for retro-active salary payments during the PBA contract settlement. Mr. VanNess suggested that 3% of the total salaries should be set aside each year in the budget to cover these costs. Mrs. Parsons advised that in past years this had been done, placing the funds in a retirement fund; however, she added, the union had questioned the extra monies and the process was not continued. She added that she would review areas where there might be extra funds available to cover the appropriation, and would report her findings at the Finance Committee meeting.

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Mr. Belden questioned the percentage increase determined by the PBA contract. Sheriff Cleveland advised that the increase ranged from 1.8% to 4% each year for a three year contract.

Mr. O'Connor reminded the Committee that salary increases were usually not included in the budget to keep the figures low although the Committee was fully aware that the increases would be necessary later in the year. Mrs. Parsons stated that there was a strategy to this move; years ago it was decided that bringing a resolution forward showed the union how much the settlement actually cost Warren County and that there were not funds available for the settlement and as such a budget note was required.

Mr. Stec entered the meeting at 10:24 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Haskell, seconded by Mr. Belden and carried unanimously approving the request as presented and referring same to the Finance Committee. A copy of the resolution request is on file with the minutes.

Mrs. Parsons exited the meeting at 10:26 a.m.

Returning to the agenda, Sheriff Cleveland noted that items three and four of the agenda pertained to the closing of two capital project accounts used for the construction of the Public Safety Building and the communication upgrades required. He added that between the two projects there was a surplus of funds in the neighborhood of \$500,000 which would be applied directly against the debt reduction of the Warren County budget. Sheriff Cleveland said that there was a third capital project active which would be completed in approximately two months and he estimated a surplus of \$250,000 from that project, also to be returned and applied to debt reduction.

Mr. Belden questioned exactly where the surplus funds would be placed when returned to the budget. Sheriff Cleveland responded that he did not have an accurate answer for this and would have to wait for Mrs. Parsons to return and advise the Committee on the placement of the funds.

Mr. Haskell asked Sheriff Cleveland for confirmation that all of the improvements had been completed on the Public Safety Building and that everything was satisfactory. Sheriff Cleveland responded that all of the work has been completed, liens released and contractors paid and that they were very happy with the building.

Mr. VanNess asked Sheriff Cleveland if the loading dock proposed had been installed in the Public Safety Building. Sheriff Cleveland advised that this had not been added, it would have been nice but was not necessary at that time. The request would be re-presented some time in the future, he added.

Motion was made by Mr. VanNess, seconded by Mr. Belden and carried unanimously approving items three and four as outlined above and referring same to the Finance Committee. A copy of the resolution request is on file with the minutes.

Sheriff Cleveland addressed items five, six and seven of the agenda which were all Notices of Intent to Fill Vacant positions.

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Motion was made by Mr. Haskell, seconded by Mr. Belden and carried unanimously approving items five, six and seven of the agenda and referring same to the Personnel Committee. Copies of the Notice of Intent to Fill Vacant Positions are on file with the minutes.

Sheriff Cleveland noted to the Committee that the positions vacated were a Patrol Officer due to retirement for medical reasons, a Correction Officer who was resigning to fill the vacated Patrol Officer position and another Correction Officer resignation.

Mr. Belden asked when the candidates would be sent to the Police Academy for training, to which Sheriff Cleveland responded that the training began on July 12, 2006. He added that four candidates graduated from the Academy in June. Sheriff Cleveland educated the Committee on the process of determining candidates eligible for hire and training in the Police Academy. He explained that twenty-nine individuals were invited to compete in an agility test administered by Warren County; fifteen of these individuals attended, of which only nine individuals passed, three of which were hired and would be sent to the Police Academy in July for further training.

Mrs. Parsons returned to the meeting at 10:35 a.m.

Sheriff Cleveland returned to Mr. Belden's question and asked Mrs. Parsons to explain exactly where the surplus funds from the closed capital projects would be placed. Mrs. Parsons apprised that the monies would have to go back to the source; in this case, she said, it would go back to the bonding done for the facility and would show up on the 2007 budget as debt reduction in that area.

Mr. Barody entered the meeting at 10:38 a.m.

Mr. Bently asked if both the Patrol Officers and Correction Officers attended the same academy to which Sheriff Cleveland advised that the Patrol Officers attend a 26 week program in Schenectady and the Correction Officers attend a program in the same building; however, he added, it was for only four weeks.

Sheriff Cleveland proceeded to item number eight of his agenda which were discussion Items A through E, the first of which was the noise from the air-conditioning in the rear of the Public Safety building. He advised that LaBella Associates had been hired to test the noise levels of the air-conditioning unit both before and after noise reduction work was completed. The acceptable noise levels were met and, Sheriff Cleveland noted, he has had no complaints from surrounding residents. In addition to reducing noise levels, weather and insulation guards were also installed to protect the unit, he added.

Continuing to Item B of the discussion items, Sheriff Cleveland referenced the fire at the Washington County Correctional Facility. He apprised that Warren County had assisted Washington County by transporting 23 of their inmates to the Warren County facility and housed them until they could be returned. Sheriff Cleveland stated that the female inmates remained in the Warren County jail through the weekend and that they also took all of the admissions for Washington County for two days. He added that the kitchen of the Washington County facility was inoperable due to the fire and as such Warren County provided approximately 200 meals for occupants of the Correctional Facility.

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Sheriff Cleveland stated that Washington County would be charged for the boarding of the inmates from Friday until their removal. He said that Washington County would not be charged for the inmates who were only present on Thursday night. Mrs. Parsons advised that she had received a call from the County Administrator of Washington County thanking Warren County for their assistance.

Sheriff Cleveland proceeded to item C of the discussion items and distributed a copy of an article printed in the Albany Times Union. He advised that the article referenced the task force created to remove drug dealers from Saratoga, Warren and Washington Counties. Sheriff Cleveland said that the northern branch had been very active and that within a week there would be an announcement regarding the arrests of 14 major offenders in and around the Glens Falls and Queensbury areas. He added that millions of dollars had been seized during these arrests and that 6% of the total seized would be received by Warren County.

Mr. VanNess stated that it was important to note that the capital received from the seizure of drug monies was strictly regulated and can only be used for drug enforcement. Sheriff Cleveland noted that he had purchased the surveillance system destroyed in the Pottersville fire from this seizure account and would be able to replace it from these funds once again.

Sheriff Cleveland distributed a handout to the Committee members which detailed the colors of emergency lights in other states and accounted for item D of the discussion items listed on the agenda. He stated that New York State was the only state not using blue emergency lights for its police vehicles. This was a problem because visitors from other states did not realize that a police vehicle was approaching as the emergency light scheme was not the same as in their home state, Sheriff Cleveland advised. He added that further confusion was caused by the fact that highway patrols have red emergency lights while boat patrols have blue lights.

Blue lights have been added to one portion of the back side of the light bar on the top of the Sheriff patrol vehicles, Sheriff Cleveland stated. He said it was his hope that blue lights would be added to all parts of the back side of the vehicle in the near future.

Mr. Stec left the meeting at 10:48 a.m.

Sheriff Cleveland advised that volunteer firefighters are vehemently opposed to the addition of blue lights on police vehicles as it would require them to change the lights they are currently using. He said that EMS and volunteer firefighters take two colors away from the scheme, blue and green; it had been suggested that all volunteers, whether EMS or fire, covert to green lights across the State. The change would allow the blue lights to be used by the police department as in every other state, he added.

Mr. Lemery addressed the Committee, and stated that the issue had united the 180,000 volunteers and the 30,000 career fighters in New York State in opposition to this change as they do not wish to change their lights due to cost. He added that he would anticipate a strong opposition to the change when introduced. Sheriff Cleveland advised that the effort would be pushed to standardize across the nation and place blue and red lights on police vehicles, red on fire trucks and fire chiefs vehicles and green on all volunteers.

Mr. O'Connor asked why blue lights were only placed on the back side of the police vehicles, to which Sheriff Cleveland replied that these were baby steps instituted by the legislature to

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introduce the blue lights. Next year the lights would be extended to cover one whole side of the car, he added. Mr. VanNess noted that this was very similar to when Great Escape introduced their traffic lights, setting them to flash yellow for a period to introduce them to the public prior to using them actively as stop lights.

Mr. Champagne questioned the extent of the installation of blue lights on existing vehicles. Sheriff Cleveland explained that although some vehicles, such as the Glens Falls Police Department, would require a complete replacement of the bar atop of the vehicle, Warren County Sheriffs department vehicles only require the replacement of one small part, which would be relatively inexpensive.

Mr. O'Connor expressed that the unmarked vehicles used by Warren County are easily distinguishable between the style of wheel and spotlight attached. He suggested that inexpensive wheel covers be purchased to change the look of the vehicle and allow it to blend in with civilian vehicles as intended. Sheriff Cleveland responded stating that two unmarked vehicles used by Warren County are to be replaced next month. These vehicles had regular wheels and no spotlights and would be unrecognizable.

Mr. O'Connor then questioned a vehicle labeled Corrections which he had seen recently. Sheriff Cleveland advised that these were the same vehicles the Corrections Department always had, the paint job was simply altered to better display the fact that this was an official vehicle. He said that there were four sedans and two vans in the fleet and that these vehicles were used primarily for prisoner transports and travel to training courses.

Mr. Haskell recalled that there was a video teleconferencing system in place so that prisoners did not have to be transferred to court, and asked if this was used. Sheriff Cleveland advised that these were called video arraignments; however, he said, a section of the law provided that the inmate could make the final decision as to whether they attended court physically or via video and as such the video arraignment was seldom used. Sheriff Cleveland said that complaints had been made to the State Legislature about this allowance, and the Governor was to sign a bill which would allow one county to institute a mandatory video arraignment standard for all inmates. He added that if it could be proven that a significant savings resulted from the use of video arraignments it could become the statute for all of New York State.

Sheriff Cleveland moved to the final discussion item and advised the Committee that the Sheriff's Department had assisted the Department of Public Works (DPW) with their malfunctioning radio system. He said that there was an issue with an older style radio which became locked on rendering the system useless. As they were unable to find the malfunctioning radio a plan was devised to upgrade the system making it useable once again, Sheriff Cleveland stated.

Mr. Champagne advised that the issue had been discussed in other Committee Meetings and as such, there was no need for further update. He asked Sheriff Cleveland if there was any possibility of the malfunction coming from the Ravena-Coeymans Police Department as they share the same frequency. Sheriff Cleveland responded that this was not possible as all of their radios were programmed for a private line function making the malfunction impossible on their end.

Mr. Dusek entered the meeting at 10:59 a.m.

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Mr. Belden asked Sheriff Cleveland why an inmate work program could not be instituted to assist in maintaining lawns. Sheriff Cleveland advised that the Attorney General has ruled that they could not be used and there was no money in the budget to allow for the personnel to guard the inmates while they worked outside of the jail. He noted that this had been objected to by CSEA in the past at which time they had stated that an inmate work release program would take jobs from CSEA members. Sheriff Cleveland advised that if the Committee would like he could prepare an inmate work release program to present with his budget; however, he said, he had done this in prior years and it was denied. Mr. Belden said he felt this should be done.

Mr. Haskell requested that Sheriff's Deputies be dispatched to the Town of Thurman on July 8, 2006 as it would be Thurman Train Day. Sheriff Cleveland replied that he was already aware of the event and would be sure to schedule the proper coverage.

Mr. Haskell advised that he had met with all of the department heads with respect to the new building and addition of an Emergency Operations Center (EOC) had been discussed. Mr. Haskell wondered if the Emergency Communications Center located in the Public Safety Building had all of the same capabilities as an EOC. Sheriff Cleveland apprised that a room of this nature currently existed in the basement of the Warren County Municipal Center. He added that the Emergency Communications Center in the Public Safety Building was not wired for the Public Health and Social Services departments as the existing room was. Mr. Haskell advised that they did not wish to use the room in the basement, but neither do they want to build a new room as in the past thirty years the EOC had been used only once for a drill. Sheriff Cleveland replied that he was sure something could be done to alter the space available to meet the EOC needs rather than build a new one altogether.

Mr. Lemery exited the meeting at 11:05 a.m.

Mr. Belden asked Sheriff Cleveland if he had scheduled patrols for the fireworks on July 2, 2006 in the Town of Hague. Sheriff Cleveland advised that he would double check to be sure that the coverage would be available, although he was sure it had already been scheduled.

Motion was made by Mr. Haskell, seconded by Mr. Belden and carried unanimously declaring an Executive Session to discuss pending litigation matters pursuant to Section 105(f) of the Public Officers Law.

Executive Session was declared from 11:08 a.m. until 11:25 a.m.

The Committee reconvened, and Mr. Bentley announced that no action was taken as a result of the Executive Session.

There being no further business to come before the Sheriff and Communications Committee on motion by Mr. VanNess, seconded by Mr. Mason, Mr. Bentley adjourned the meeting at 11:26 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Amanda M. Allen, Legislative Office Specialist