

**WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

**COMMITTEE:           PARKS, RECREATION & RAILROAD**

**DATE:                   JULY 31, 2007**

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<b>COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:</b>	<b>OTHERS PRESENT:</b>
SUPERVISORS   HASKELL	REPRESENTING THE PARKS, RECREATION & RAILROAD
BELDEN	DEPARTMENT:
O'CONNOR	PAUL BUTLER, DIRECTOR
GABRIELS	PAT BELAND, TEMPORARY DIRECTOR
VANNESS	WILLIAM THOMAS, CHAIRMAN
F. THOMAS	HAL PAYNE, COMMISSIONER OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND
STEC	FISCAL SERVICES
GERAGHTY	JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD
MERLINO	SUPERVISOR CAIMANO
	WILLIAM LAMY, DPW SUPERINTENDENT
	JEFFREY TENNYSON, DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT OF
	ENGINEERING
	CHARLENE DiRESTA, LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

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Mr. Haskell called the meeting of the Parks, Recreation & Railroad Committee to order at 11:50 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Geraghty, seconded by Mr. VanNess and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the June 26, 2007 Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Pat Beland, Temporary Director of Parks, Recreation & Railroad Department, for discussion on the proposed rail stations in the Towns of Hadley and Thurman.

Mr. Beland apprised that he would be having a meeting with Clough Harbour & Associates on August 7, 2007 and added that he hoped both Mr. Haskell and Mr. Merlino would be available to join him. He said they would be finalizing the plans that would be submitted to the State. He added that the State would then have 30 days to comment on the plan specifications and estimates.

Mr. Beland stated that the Committee would need to wait for the State's comments before proceeding any further. He added that the chances were good that the project could be put out for bid this year.

Mr. Beland apprised that he would like to use the \$2 million that the County had received from Governor Pataki's administration, to complete the siding on both stations. Chairman Thomas said that he had someone looking into the location of the \$2 million and they thought that it was part of either the New York State Department of Transportation budget or the Empire State Development budget.

Discussion ensued.

Mr. Merlino stated that he thought they should construct a platform at each station for now and construct the buildings later, when the budget allowed. He added that if they spent \$1.1 million of the \$1.3 million remaining in the budget, they would only have one beautiful station as opposed to two functional stations. Mr. Beland said that they had to do something with the station in the Town of Hadley because once the property had been purchased they had committed to the project. Mr. Merlino suggested that instead of removing the Biondi building, they should remove the metal siding of the building and replace it with wooden logs, to give the appearance of an old western town.

Mr. F. Thomas questioned if there were only enough funds to construct one of the rail stations, would the County still be locked into the plans. Mr. Beland responded that the plans could be altered and resubmitted to the State for approval; however, he added, it would require the use of additional funds to alter the plans. Mr. F. Thomas suggested having Lincoln Logs, LTD design and build the stations.

Mr. Beland said that the plans were for two stations and each would have an appearance that was historic in nature. Mr. Haskell apprised that he had a hard time believing that each of these stations would cost \$1.1 million to construct. William Lamy, DPW Superintendent, stated that the library addition that was being completed in the Town of Warrensburg was approximately 4,000 square feet with a basement and a new roof and he added that the cost for that project had been approximately \$450,000. Mr. VanNess asked how many square feet the proposed stations would be and Mr. Beland replied that they would be 1,500 square feet. Mr. Beland said that the Committee might want to put both stations out to bid and see what proposals were received. He suggested putting the construction for both stations out to bid at the same time with the option of awarding one or the other, or both to the lowest responsible bidder.

Mr. VanNess stated that the average cost for commercial construction was \$300 per square foot; however, he added, at \$1.1 million for a 1,500 square foot building, these buildings would cost approximately \$750 per square foot. Mr. Beland apprised that the \$1.1 million was not just to construct the building; he

noted the cost estimates also included the construction of the parking lot, water and sewer lines, utilities, retaining walls, etc. He added that the cost for construction of the building only was approximately \$450,000.

Motion was made by Mr. Belden, seconded by Mr. O'Connor and carried unanimously to put the proposed construction of the rail station in the Town of Thurman and the proposed construction of the rail station in the Town of Hadley out to bid, with the option of awarding one or the other, or both projects to the lowest responsible bidder. *The necessary resolution was authorized for the August 17, 2007 Board meeting.*

Mr. Beland exited the meeting at 12:02 p.m.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Paul Butler, Director of Parks, Recreation & Railroad Department, who distributed copies of the Agenda to the Committee members; *a copy of the Agenda is on file with the minutes.*

Mr. Butler apprised that Item No. 1 on the Agenda was to inform the Committee of the New York State Department of Transportation's (NYS DOT) qualifications for the 80% reimbursement for donation of the Biondi building. Mr. Butler reported that the building's ownership must be transferred to the Town of Hadley and not to a private entity and the agreement must contain a clause that stated that the building could only be used for public use. If the building did not stay in public use, ownership would revert back to Warren County, he added. Mr. Haskell stated that the resolution authorizing the sale of the building had been tabled at the last Board meeting. Mr. Merlino apprised that it had been tabled due to the fact that the Committee had not made a decision as to the plans for the Town of Hadley rail station. He added that he was working with the Town of Hadley in an attempt to secure funding from Saratoga County for the construction of the new train station. Mr. Belden suggested that the sale of the Biondi building remain on hold for now. Mr. Haskell asked Mr. Butler to check with NYS DOT to see if the building would need to be for public use immediately or if it could be stored by the Town until needed.

Mr. Butler said that Item No. 2 on the Agenda pertained to two letters he had received regarding the Kellogg Property from the North Creek Railroad Depot Preservation Association and the Johnsbury Historical Society. He added that both organizations were very enthusiastic about working with Warren County to develop ideas and strategies for uses of the Kellogg Property. Mr. Haskell apprised that the County had suggested the possibility of the museum being moved into the building that had a recently replaced roof. He added that the current location of

the museum would then be used as the train station.

Mr. Butler acknowledged that he had misnumbered the Agenda and proceeded with Item No. 4 on the Agenda. He said that the application of herbicide to the Riverside Station had been completed on July 12, 2007. Mr. Haskell asked if the Upper Hudson River Railroad would be applying herbicide to the areas that had not been covered and Mr. Butler replied affirmatively.

Mr. Butler apprised that Item No. 5 on the Agenda was a request from the Hadley Business Association (HBA) for use of half of the parking lot at the train station on Rockwell Street in the Town of Hadley, for a town-wide garage sale on August 18-19, 2007. He added that the HBA would rope off the section of the parking lot that they would be using so that it did not interfere with the operation of the railroad. He further added that the HBA would provide a certificate of insurance for the event. It was the consensus of the Committee to grant the HBA a County Facility Use Permit to use the property as outlined above, as permitted under Resolution No. 170 of 1979.

Discussion ensued.

Mr. Butler stated that Item No. 6 on the Agenda pertained to a new generator that was needed for the Warren County Fish Hatchery. He said that he was requesting a Transfer of Funds in the amount of \$22,000. He added that \$8,000 would be transferred from the Machinery-Other Equipment code (DM5130 260), \$13,000 from the Parks & Recreation-Foods code (A.7110 445) and \$1,000 from the Parks & Recreation-Miscellaneous Fees code (A.7110 439) and he added, that the total of \$22,000 would be transferred into the Parks & Recreation-Other Equipment code (A.7110 260) for the purchase of the generator. He said he would also be using \$4,200 from the Railroad Miscellaneous budget to purchase some wire, a concrete pad, conduit, etc.

Mr. Butler apprised that the generator would operate the communications equipment at the Fish Hatchery, six public railroad crossing signals, the Parks & Recreation Office, the Fish Hatchery and the shop operation. Mr. Haskell stated that he felt that this was a necessary expense due to the fact that the fish at the hatchery would die without the aerators and also for safety reasons with the railroad crossings.

Motion was made by Mr. Gabriels, seconded by Mr. Geraghty and carried unanimously to forward the request for Transfer of Funds as outlined above, to the Finance Committee. *A copy of the request for Transfer of Funds is on file with the minutes.*

Mr. Butler apprised that the next item on the Agenda was to discuss the 2008 budget. He added that he would like to determine how much to appropriate for the snowmobile trails, the Kellogg Property and the Biondi Property. Mr. Belden said that \$75,000 for the Warren County Association of Snowmobile Clubs for improvements to the snowmobile trails was a significant amount and the Committee might want to reduce that amount. Mr. Haskell stated that several years ago when the County was responsible for the snowmobile trails they had spent approximately \$250,000 a year. He questioned the problem with allocating \$75,000 to the Association for maintenance of the snowmobile trails. He added that the Snowmobile Clubs brought a lot of tourists to the area in the winter months. Mr. Geraghty said that the Association had some tough years in the recent past due to lack of snow and he questioned if they received revenue from other sources. Mr. Merlino responded that the Association also received revenue from the State and from the gas tax. Mr. Belden asked how much funding the Association received from the State and Mr. Butler responded that they had received \$45,000 for 2007 which was down from the \$108,000 they had received in 2006.

Mr. Belden apprised that the funding was divided three ways. Mr. Butler said that the funding was actually divided between four Clubs; however, he said, it was not in equal amounts. Mr. Caimano explained that there was a formula used that involved the number of miles of trail for each Club. Mr. Haskell said that for each mile of snowmobile trail they received a certain amount of funding, depending on the class rating for that trail.

Discussion ensued.

Mr. Caimano suggested that the County implement a formula that was similar to that used by the State in determining the amount of funding to allocate for each Town. Mr. Merlino said that the amount of funding received by the State was also determined by the number of snowmobile machines that were registered with the Clubs. Mr. Merlino further stated that the Clubs had fixed expenses so that even if the weather kept the trails from being used, they still had overhead. He added that the Clubs would save on gas and maintenance of the trails if there was no snow; however, he said they would still have the fixed expenses. Mr. Caimano asked how much of the Clubs expenses were fixed and Mr. Merlino replied that it was about 90%. He added that the Clubs did not pay salaries, as they were operated by volunteers. Mr. Belden asked if the State paid the insurance for the Clubs and Mr. Haskell replied in the negative. Mr. Merlino apprised that the Clubs had purchased better groomers and they had mortgage payments for these

groomers. Mr. Caimano suggested that in the future the County should be allowed to have some input pertaining to large purchases made by the Clubs. Mr. Belden said that he felt that funding for the Snowmobile Clubs should come from Occupancy Tax revenues. Mr. Haskell said that Paul Dusek, County Attorney, had stated in the past that Occupancy Tax funds could not be used for this purpose. Mr. Gabriels asked if Occupancy Tax funding could be used to cover the fixed expenses of the Clubs and Mr. Haskell responded that he would question Mr. Dusek again about the matter.

Mr. Caimano stated that these details would need to be worked out before the budget meeting. Mr. Haskell suggested a special Committee meeting be scheduled within the next two weeks. Mr. Geraghty said that it would be better if the information was presented to the Committee prior to the meeting.

Mr. Butler stated that the Kellogg Property project was being done using grant funding with a 50% local match; however, he added, that the County could use in kind services. He added that the plans for the Biondi Property had not been decided yet.

Mr. Butler apprised that the Up Yonda Farm was doing well. Mr. Belden said that last year the Committee had decided to fund the entire budget of Up Yonda Farm and he asked if they were planning to continue to do that. Mr. Haskell responded that the Committee had agreed to continue funding Up Yonda Farm for 5 years. Mr. Gabriels apprised that the Committee had agreed to try to fund Up Yonda Farm for 5 years. Mr. Butler said that Up Yonda Farm's budget was generally just under \$200,000 a year.

Mr. Butler apprised that the need for the diesel generator at Up Yonda Farm was due to power outages during storms. He added that there had been several large groups at Up Yonda Farm the last time the power went out. He added that he would also like to install lighting on the pathway to the parking lot. Mr. Haskell said that the pathway to the parking lot was at least a couple hundred yards. Mr. Geraghty said that he thought the diesel generator should be a "wish list" item. Mr. VanNess apprised that Up Yonda Farm only needed emergency lighting. Mr. Haskell suggested checking on the cost of a smaller 10 kilowatt generator that would just operate the lights and heat the building. Hal Payne, Commissioner of Administrative & Fiscal Services, suggested that solar lighting be used, since the theme of Up Yonda Farm was all natural.

Mr. Butler suggested that there were a couple of vehicles that needed to be

replaced within the Department of Public Works. He added that the reason for the replacement was that the vehicles were over 10 years old. He said the vehicles included a Ford F-350 Pick Up with a plow, a Toro Grounds Master Mower and a John Deere 4 wheel-drive tractor with a loader and a backhoe. He added that there were also two new items on the list which were an enclosed 12' by 5' construction trailer and a trash pump.

As there was no further business to come before the Parks, Recreation & Railroad Committee, on motion made by Mr. VanNess and seconded by Mr. Merlino, Mr. Haskell adjourned the meeting at 12:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Charlene DiResta, Legislative Office Specialist