

**WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

**COMMITTEE: MUNICIPAL SHARED SERVICES**

**DATE: FEBRUARY 27, 2008**

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**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Supervisors O'Connor  
VanNess  
Sheehan  
Belden  
Tessier

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Representing the City of Glens Falls:  
Josh Milton, Recreation Superintendent  
Paul Dusek, County Attorney  
Hal Payne, Commissioner of Administrative &  
Fiscal Services  
JoAnn McKinstry, Deputy Commissioner of  
Administrative & Fiscal Services  
Joan Sady, Clerk of the Board  
Supervisor Taylor  
Supervisor Sokol  
Todd Shimkus, Adirondack Regional  
Chamber of Commerce (ARCC)  
Nicholas Caimano, Adirondack Regional  
Chamber of Commerce (ARCC)  
Joanne Collins, Legislative Office Specialist

**COMMITTEE MEMBER ABSENT:**

Supervisor Merlino

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Mr. O'Connor called the meeting of the Municipal Shared Services Committee to order at 2:03 p.m.

Motion was made by Mr. VanNess, seconded by Mr. Tessier, and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the previous Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk.

Beginning with the pending items portion of the meeting, Mr. O'Connor addressed pending item one; Tour of East Field and other City recreational facilities. He said, that due to the continuation of inclement weather, the tour would be held off until the weather improved permitting a comprehensive tour.

Moving to pending item two; Paul Dusek, County Attorney, advised he had completed research regarding the possible acquisition of East Field from the City of Glens Falls. Mr. Dusek stated he had discussed various acquisition options with City Attorney Ron Newell, and said he would proceed to report his findings to the Committee.

According to Mr. Dusek, the request he received from the Committee was two-fold. He said one of the objectives of the Committee was to pursue Shared Services Grant funds from the State. Mr. Dusek noted he reviewed history regarding what would qualify the County to receive Grant funds. He added that although the City was prohibited by law to lease property to the County, it was best to allow residents to use the property/facilities through the use of some type of revocable license. He advised that the County must

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apply to the State Legislature for specific legislation and determine whether it would be a partnership or some type of lease agreement, and, he said, the agreement required State approval.

Mr. Dusek stated that the second part of the two-fold issue was that the County would need to determine if said agreement would qualify for any Shared Services Grant funding, regardless of the undertaking.

Mr. Dusek also reported that he spoke with both Patricia Tatich, Director of Planning and Community Development, and Attorney Ron Newell with regard to the Shared Services Grant. He apprised the Committee that the County would have to demonstrate that there would be a joining together of municipalities resulting in a measurable cost savings. He asserted that if two municipalities that performed the same function joined efforts to consolidate, and in so doing required funding in order to commence the effort, which would result in a net savings for the long term, consideration under the Shared Services Grant would be likely.

Discussion ensued regarding the existence or creation of a list of items or projects to consider for Shared Services.

Nicholas Caimano entered the meeting at 2:15 p.m.

Mr. Sheehan reminded the Committee of the original purpose behind this effort in which discussion began two and one half years ago, and he said, the reason was due to the significant amount of work that needed to be accomplished at East Field. The County then recognized several viable reasons to consider this joint effort; however, he said, the County could not bear the additional expenses.

Mr. O'Connor pointed out to the Committee that the Municipal Shared Services Committee was unique and not a funded Committee like other County Committees. Mr. O'Connor continued that the purpose of this Standing Committee was to listen to the needs of the people and determine if any City effort(s) could be incorporated into the County without great expense. He added that this effort was originally started by Supervisor Taylor and the former Mayor of the City, and there was no funding with which to move forward.

Mr. VanNess advised that the Committee did not have a recommendation to present to the Board in terms of what the County could do to contribute to this effort.

A brief discussion ensued.

Continuing with the issue of maintenance efforts for East Field, Mr. O'Connor informed the Committee that William Lamy, Superintendent of the Warren County Department of Public Works, had indicated that it would be difficult logistically for the County DPW,

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located in Warrensburg, to take over the facility, as East Field was located in the City. Mr. O'Connor noted that with regard to the City of Glens Falls DPW, if the County assumed some of the burden to show a cost savings, he said that the City would request additional assistance because they were already understaffed.

Mr. VanNess inquired as to whether the City had applied for grants and Josh Milton, Recreation Superintendent, replied in the negative and indicated that he was not aware of any such applications.

Mr. Tessier said that with regard to Shared Services there should be no billing, transfer of funds, or shifting of expenses, as was defined by "Shared" in reference to the Committee. He noted that grants and matching funds were not the answer, and suggested that the Committee look back ten years to the inception of this issue.

A discussion ensued.

Mr. O'Connor thanked Mr. Milton for the work he had done regarding East Field, and asked the Committee how they would like to proceed.

Mr. VanNess clarified that if approved, the reconstruction and improvements would commence in 2009.

A short discussion ensued.

Reflecting on the previous project at East Field, Mr. Tessier stated that the in kind services were directed inappropriately and the overall project at that time was not successful.

Mr. Milton expounded that he understood that the City would most like to see the bleachers done first, after which time, remaining funds could be assessed for the stadium. He said the City was not expecting a comprehensive amount all at once; however, he noted, some assistance from the County to begin the process would be significant and worthwhile. He disclosed that the owners of the Golden Eagles had expressed a willingness to help with this labor effort, along with a commitment from volunteers and friends of the Eagles, which represented a savings as well.

Mr. Dusek inquired if any research through the office of Senator Little had been done to ascertain if any other funds were available. He concluded from the discussions that this would constitute the entire rebuilding of a facility and said, perhaps other funds would be available because the area facilities (baseball stadium) would serve a variety of purposes. If the County took a legal interest in the property, he noted that the improvements could be accomplished should funding be granted. He said that the

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joining together of municipalities often precipitated receptivity on the part of the State in terms of funding and if the County took a legal interest in the property, it would further enhance receptivity by the State. Mr. Dusek added that it could also be considered that possible federal level funds could be available through Congresswoman Gillibrand.

Joan Sady, Clerk of the Board, stated that there were Park Restoration Grant funds available.

Mr. Dusek contended that the way to get that interest would be to get a State Legislative Act that would allow the County to secure joint legal ownership of the property. With this, he said, the City would not be disenfranchised, which therefore would encourage consideration on the part of the legislature.

Mr. O'Connor noted to the Committee that the City already agreed to this in a resolution drafted last summer.

Mr. Dusek responded to an inquiry from Mr. VanNess regarding what, if any, fiscal responsibility would be placed on the County. Mr. Dusek stated that the responsibility was dictated by what the agreement reflected and the County could adopt a phased in approach. Mr. Dusek recommended that the Committee first determine the likelihood of qualifying for grant funds. He said, step two would involve drafting an agreement and the third step would be to incorporate any necessary legislation into that agreement.

Mr. Tessier apprised that there were funds for parks such as matching grants, and also partnership or joint ownership agreements. In addition, he said, a transaction such as the sale of the property to the County, whereby the County could then seek grant funds could be an option. He said that the reason the arena would lose a team would be due to the state of disrepair of the entire facility.

Following a short discussion Mr. VanNess suggested that a letter be prepared and forwarded to Senator Little and Congresswoman Sayward advising of the issues.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Nicholas Caimano, Adirondack Regional Chamber of Commerce (ARCC), who recognized Mr. Tessier for his efforts both current and past to progress the Municipal Shared Services activities. He also acknowledged Mr. Belden as a staunch supporter of Shared Municipal Services activity with the City of Glens Falls. He observed that a substantial segment of the member base was not present and therefore the Committee should be prevented from moving forward. Mr. Caimano implored the Committee continually made a concerted effort to progress activity, and in so doing has called for action related to the County, Senator Little and Assemblywoman Sayward. He contended that it is, in fact, the City that was required to participate and referenced the \$78,000 in occupancy tax paid to the City last year, as well as a significant increase for a project with the Town of Queensbury. He stated that although we have no right to tell the City how to spend their money, it should be acknowledged that the City has asked

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the County for money. Mr. Caimano apprised that it was Mr. Tessier who was instrumental in setting the first East Field project into motion and, he said, unfortunately the outcome of the project was not satisfactory. He suggested that before we ask legislators and taxpayers to spend money, the City could consider options such as giving up the \$78,000 occupancy tax revenue, of which most is spent on a service duplicated by the Warren County Tourism Department. He suggested, for example, a short term cut in one area for two years which would significantly progress projects most in need of funds.

Mr. Taylor interjected that the County should have had a list of items that the City and the County worked on. He said that the creation of the City Economic Development position at an annual salary of \$60,000 is an example of bypassing an opportunity for a joint effort with the County which could have utilized \$60,000 for other projects. He reiterated that the City must become a part of this Committee.

Mr. Tessier added that the City of Glens Falls has a disproportionately high (37) percentage of property off the tax rolls, which is hurting the City, coupled with other fiscal decisions that mitigated Municipal Shared progress.

Mr. O'Connor stated that the City had a governing body which made these decisions (as related to the tax rolls), and respectfully refrained from making judgement regarding their spending decisions.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Todd Shimkus, Adirondack Regional Chamber of Commerce (ARCC). Mr. Shimkus offered a suggestion for moving the project forward which involved the County creating a menu, or list of opportunities in the City of Glens Falls. He highlighted all of the improvement/development projects funded predominantly with private money through fund-raising efforts that included venues such as Crandall Park, City Park, Glens Falls Hospital, and The Wood Theater. He said it was unrealistic to rely on taxpayers for funding. According to his observation, he noted, there seemed to be a disconnect between the City and County and the City did not understand the opportunities that were available with the County. He suggested that the County prepare and offer a menu or list of possible projects to the City which would aid in the movement of this project.

Mr. Tessier praised Mr. Shimkus' suggestion and indicated that he was in agreement with the idea to create a list for the City. He stated that the Committee could not continue to move forward without the guidance of the City, because the City was their own governing body and therefore the choice ultimately was the City's.

The consensus of the Committee was to schedule an evening meeting in the Supervisors' Board Room in order for the Common Council members to attend. Mr. O'Connor asked that Mr. Dusek be available for the meeting. Joan Sady, Clerk of the Board, agreed that the meeting would be best held here with minutes taken on site.

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Hal Payne, Commissioner of Administrative and Fiscal Services, asked how soon the meeting could be scheduled as there were many spring and summer events scheduled at East Field including the upcoming Baseball season. Additionally, he noted, East Field had contracts with ACC (Adirondack Community College) and other schools such as Glens Falls. Mr. Payne said that it would be advisable for ACC to attend the meeting.

Mr. VanNess reminded Committee members that there was not enough time to begin this process for this year; therefore, he said, they would be planning for the 2009 season.

Mr. Belden suggested to the Committee that a meeting be set up with the City first, before setting up an enlarged meeting which would include Senator Little and Assemblywoman Sayward.

In response to an inquiry from Mr. Tessier regarding the estimated cost for bleachers, Mr. Milton responded an estimated figure of \$600,000 to \$800,000 for new bleachers. According to Mr. Milton, the entire stadium was not unsafe; however, he said, those bleachers that are unsafe must be blocked off. Mr. Milton reiterated that the project would not commence for the upcoming season, but with plans for 2009. He informed the Committee that he was still getting calls reflecting the public's high regard and appreciation of the field and it had been described as the best field between Albany and Canada. He noted that the schools were interested in it as they could save money versus transporting the teams to other fields.

Mr. O'Connor concluded that East Field was a great and viable field; however, he added, it was the accoutrements that were in disrepair.

Mr. Milton assured the Committee that we would not lose the teams for this year should the project be held off.

After a brief discussion Mr. O'Connor apprised the Committee that the meeting would be a public meeting, not a public hearing.

Mr. Dusek exited the meeting at 3:17 p.m.

It was unanimously agreed to hold a joint meeting of the Municipal Shared Services Committee and the Glens Falls Common Council on Wednesday, March 19, 2008 at 6:30 p.m. in the Board Room of the Warren County Municipal Center. (Note: Subsequent to this meeting, the joint meeting was *rescheduled for Wednesday, March 26, 2008 at 6:30 p.m.*)

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There being no further business to come before the Committee, on motion by Mr. VanNess, and seconded by Mr. Sokol, Mr. O'Connor adjourned the meeting at 3:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joanne Collins  
Legislative Office Specialist