

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: MUNICIPAL SHARED SERVICES

DATE: MARCH 26, 2008

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Supervisors O'Connor
VanNess
Sheehan
Sokol

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Supervisors Belden
Tessier
Merlino

OTHERS PRESENT:

Representing the City of Glens Falls
(Common Council):
John A. Diamond, President
Michael Busch, Ward I
Judy Villa-White, Ward II
Scott Watson, Ward III
James Brock, Ward IV
Josh Milton, Recreation Superintendent
Dan Hall, Recreation Commission
Hal Payne, Commissioner of Administrative &
Fiscal Services
Paul Dusek, County Attorney
Joan Sady, Clerk of the Board
Paul Butler, Director, Parks, Recreation &
Railroad
Supervisor Taylor
Supervisor Strainer
Supervisor Girard
Jeffrey Farley, Director, Adirondack Regional
Business Incubator (ARBI)
Phil Tucker, Glens Falls Golden Eagles
Christopher Kilmartin, City of Glens Falls
Debra L. Schreiber, Sr. Legislative Office
Specialist

Mr. O'Connor called the meeting of the Municipal Shared Services Committee meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Sokol, seconded by Mr. VanNess, and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the February 27, 2008 Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk.

Mr. O'Connor commenced the meeting by welcoming the Glens Falls Common Council, and other guests that were in attendance. At the previous Municipal Shared Services Committee meeting, he indicated the Committee decided that the tour of East Field would be postponed until the source of funding was determined. At the same meeting, he said, the Committee recommended hosting a joint meeting with the Glens Falls Common Council in an attempt to coordinate any

potential shared services between the City of Glens Falls (hereinafter referred to as the "City") and Warren County as they related to East Field.

Paul Dusek, County Attorney, related that the Municipal Shared Services Committee asked him to research the possibility of the County and the City forming a "partnership" for the purpose of applying for a shared services grant for East Field improvements. It was proposed that the County would provide in-kind services in exchange for some of the East Field functions; however, he said, that type of arrangement did not meet the "shared services" guidelines to qualify for funding assistance from the Government. Mr. Dusek explained that only those applications that revealed a sharing of services by two or more municipalities and demonstrated some sort of financial savings would be awarded grant funds. He said a cooperative agreement was defined as two entities joining together to perform a task, such as a town and village creating a joint planning/zoning board or sharing the services of a police department. He said a "shared service" was classified as two municipalities that formed a partnership to hire a consultant to prepare a joint plan or feasibility study or a school district and town wishing to explore a potential cost savings in the area of maintenance, purchasing, technology or administrative staff. Should a municipality be the recipient of grant funds, he stated, the monies could only be utilized for direct, non-salaried expenses, including legal, consultant and contractual services, as well as *some* capital costs.

Based upon his research, Mr. Dusek concluded that no grant applications would be accepted nor would any new grant programs be released until the 2009 New York State (NYS) Budget was adopted. Furthermore, he noted, there may be new regulations or restrictions imposed on any new shared services grant programs. During his research, he said, he had a discussion with a NYS representative that suggested they apply for a Federal pass-through grant in 2009 that was available through the Department of Parks and Recreation.

Mr. O'Connor indicated at a previous meeting, the Committee mentioned the County contributing an additional sum of monies to the City that would be earmarked only for East Field improvements. He noted that in 2007, the City passed a resolution indicating their willingness to assist the County in their takeover of a portion or entire domain of East Field; however, he said, the necessary logistics had not been finalized. Mr. VanNess commented that any additional funding requests would have to be considered during the 2009 Budget process.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Josh Milton, Superintendent of the Glens Falls Recreation Department, who distributed copies of a cost estimate from ABC

Restaurant Equipment, Inc. to replace the equipment in the concession stand, as well as a quote from Hilltop Construction to renovate the locker rooms/field house. In order to be in compliance with NYS Department of Health, Mr. Milton commented that the highlighted items were required to operate the concession stand this year. While the concession stand building appeared to be “sound,” he said, linoleum flooring and wood paneling may need to be installed in order to pass inspection. Mr. Milton indicated there would be no concession stand when their baseball opening season commenced in April.

In discussions with the owners of the Glens Falls Golden Eagles and Adirondack Community College (ACC), Mr. Milton apprised they were both willing to lend their support and assistance to any East Field improvements. Mr. VanNess indicated that according to his calculations, the total cost of the highlighted items (not including installation) was approximately \$14,600. In response to an inquiry by Mr. O’Connor, Mr. Milton replied that his Department had not budgeted any funds for East Field improvements. Jack Diamond, Common Council President, stated it was his belief that no funding requests were submitted by the City Recreation Department at the time of the Budget process.

Mr. Diamond asked whether the bleachers could be considered a Capital Project that was supported by both the City and County. Mr. Dusek emphasized that a Capital Project must be associated with an approved work plan (i.e., merger, consolidation, et cetera), in order to meet the necessary requirements. He further stated a park owned by a municipality was considered inalienable and required a special act by the State Legislature. If the Common Council and Municipal Shared Services Committee were looking to resolve any issues prior to the upcoming season, Mr. Dusek said he did not believe a shared services grant would solve their problem because they (NYS) were not accepting any applications until after the 2009 Budget process.

If they were unsuccessful in making a grant application request, Mr. Diamond asked whether the County would be willing to assume the responsibilities of East Field. In the alternative, if the two municipalities could not approach East Field in a shared services manner, he queried whether the County would consider managing a majority of the Field expenses, while the City contributed funds towards the operating costs or Capital Project. In response, Mr. VanNess said he recalled some discussions at a previous Municipal Shared Services that perhaps they should consider demolishing the entire field house and starting from scratch, due to the cost of renovating the building. Joan Sady, Clerk of the Board, stated there were conversations that encompassed park restoration grants. Mr. Dusek replied a park restoration grant differed from a shared services grant; however, he said, he would still encourage them to apply. Mr. Diamond stated he was hopeful

the City and County would collectively work together to make the necessary capital improvements to East Field.

Putting the grant application process aside, Mr. Diamond asked whether the County would assist the City in establishing an East Field Capital Project on a long-term basis with the City proportionately paying their share, and, thereafter, seek alternative options for additional funding either through grant assistance or municipality funding. While everyone agreed the field was in tremendous shape, Mr. Diamond said the City needed help with the Capital Projects that had been neglected over the years.

Mr. Sheehan suggested the City maintain ownership and establish an East Field Capital Project whereby the County would commit to making an annual contribution to repair/replace the bleachers. At a previous meeting, Mr. Sheehan stated the Committee requested Senator Little and Assemblywoman Sayward be invited to tour the field and he queried whether they had received a response. Mrs. Sady replied a decision had been made to await the outcome of this meeting before setting up a tour with our Legislators. In response to an inquiry by Mr. O'Connor, Mr. Dusek indicated the Capital Project must be established by the City as owners of the property; however, he said the two municipalities could enter into an intermunicipal agreement requiring the City to establish the Capital Project, retain ownership and maintain the premises and the County would make an annual funding contribution. Alternatively, he said, if the County were to establish the Capital Project they would be required to obtain special State Legislation that transferred ownership to both the City and County. Mr. Dusek further explained that he thought that February or March was the deadline to submit special State Legislation requests; decisions would be made by June and funds disbursed in July or August; however, he suggested, they make inquiry of Senator Little and/or Assemblywoman Sayward.

Mr. O'Connor queried whether it was the intention of the City to have joint ownership of East Field with the County as opposed to either municipality having 100 percent ownership. From a grant application process, Mr. Diamond said it appeared as though joint ownership was the best option. When this dialog commenced two years ago, Mr. VanNess interjected that it was suggested that if East Field were jointly owned by the City and County it would enable them to apply for shared services grants; however, based on the information provided by the County Attorney, he said, there was no benefit to joint ownership. Mr. Dusek replied that he saw no advantage to joint ownership in a shared services grant application; however, he said, it could potentially help with a Federal pass-through or restoration grants, which he had not had the opportunity to fully research. Mr. Diamond indicated that he was concerned about the timeliness of

the grant process as many of the capital improvements required immediate attention. He said a course of action must be decided soon and, therefore, he suggested seeking the path with the least amount of resistance in order to obtain the necessary funding to make the needed improvements.

Upon a brief review of the cost estimate, Mr. Sokol encouraged Mr. Milton to obtain additional quotes and/or consider purchasing used equipment rather than new equipment for the concession stand. Mr. Milton commented that used equipment had been mentioned; however, he said, the quote he received only reflected the cost of new equipment.

Mr. Taylor asked whether the 2007 carry-over of funds could be utilized for some of these improvements and Mrs. Sady replied the monies had already been encumbered and were in addition to the \$150,000 already approved for the City for 2008.

If the City established a Capital Project that incorporated an intermunicipal agreement prioritizing the various improvements necessary at East Field, Mr. VanNess said the Municipal Shared Services Committee could present their (City) request to the full Board of Supervisors for final determination. While Mr. Dusek concurred with Mr. VanNess, he articulated that he envisioned an intermunicipal agreement that encompassed a Capital Project that defined the contributions by each municipality, as well as the priority schedule and costs thereof for items needing immediate attention and those items requiring attention in subsequent years.

Michael Busch, Glens Falls Common Council, representing Ward I, commented this project sounded exciting when it was first suggested; however, he noted, it reached some stumbling blocks and never got off the ground. He said it was his opinion that whenever there was a sharing of services, monies or ownership it would appear to be a win/win situation for all parties involved. Mr. Busch recommended selling advertising and naming rights to the field as a way to increase revenue and he was hopeful these monies would be earmarked for capital improvements. In response to an inquiry by Mr. O'Connor, Mr. Busch replied the new firm that was hired to promote the Glens Falls Civic Center agreed to market East Field as well. Mr. Diamond stated it would be difficult for the management firm to market the Field if funds were not invested to improve the bleachers, concession stand, buildings and rest rooms.

Scott Watson, Glens Falls Common Council, representing Ward III, commented that it was obvious that East Field was not generating the revenue needed to promote a safe facility and any assistance by the County would be appreciated.

Unlike the Glens Falls Civic Center, Judy Villa-White, Glens Falls Common Council, representing Ward II, stated there had never been a committee established that focused on East Field. In her discussions with Glens Falls Mayor LeRoy Akins, she said, they recently established an East Field Committee that was comprised of three Common Council members (Mr. Diamond, Mr. Busch, and Mrs. Villa-White) and she further suggested a foundation or booster club be created for East Field to help generate additional revenue for improvements.

Mr. Busch thanked Supervisor Taylor and the other members of the Glens Falls community for their efforts on the recent improvements to Crandall Park.

Mr. Diamond added that Mayor Akins asked the East Field Committee to invite Supervisor Girard, who represented Ward 1 on the County level, to participate in their East Field discussions. He said he would recommend to the entire Glens Falls Common Council establishing a Capital Project to be discussed at a Municipal Shared Services Committee meeting and subsequently presented to the full Board of Supervisors. While he understood there were no funds in the 2008 County or City Budgets, Mr. Diamond said the Committee would prepare a cost estimate of the necessary capital improvements and at the same time, he said he would ask Mr. Dusek to continue to research alternative options to collaborate services between the two municipalities.

James Brock, Glens Falls Common Council, representing Ward IV, recommended the City and County commit to improving East Field and bond the entire project over a specified period of time. After the itemized cost estimate and project priority schedule had been determined, he said, they could ascertain an approximate cost to each municipality should they decide to bond the entire project. Until there were cost estimates for each capital improvement, Mr. VanNess stated there was nothing the County could do.

Mr. Dusek indicated the concept of including “everything” in the wish list could potentially improve their chances of obtaining grant funds. As part of the Capital Project, he suggested the City provide a narrative of the current condition of East Field, the anticipated direction, a cost analysis of all improvements, and the estimated yearly cost, should the project be bonded.

Jeff Farley, Director, Adirondack Regional Business Incubator (ARBI), apprised that he had been working with the management of the Glens Falls Golden Eagles and that everything that had been discussed involving the facility was 100 percent correct; however, he said, there were some band-aids that were needed for the 2008 season. He added that it was his understanding the team was indebted to the City (\$5,700) and if those funds were combined with the additional County

share from 2007 (\$22,000), those funds could be earmarked for the replacement of seats.

Mr. Farley encouraged the City and County to form a collective body to change the business model that reflected a savings to both municipalities and opened the doors to additional opportunities for grant funding. If the two municipalities created a business model that reflected a joint savings and generated revenue, Mr. Dusek stated that would assist them in their grant application processes. Mr. Farley suggested that one business option might be allowing the team owners to collect any revenues generated by the baseball games and assume all field maintenance responsibilities. He proposed reviewing business models that had been incorporated by other municipalities to determine which plan would best be suited for East Field. He briefly explained the business plan adopted by Montgomery County and the Amsterdam baseball team which created an entrepreneurial spirit and ultimately increased attendance, thereby developing a win/win situation for all parties involved.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Busch, Mr. Dusek reiterated his original recommendation that in order for East Field to become its own revenue-generating entity, the City should compile a narrative that depicted the current condition of the field, a brief explanation of all the field possibilities, as well as an itemization of all capital improvements together with their associated costs. Once this information were assembled, he said it would then be shared with all supervisors and utilized in any grant application process; however, he noted, in the interim, he suggested identifying all the band-aids needed for the upcoming 2008 season.

Dan Girard, Supervisor, City of Glens Falls, expounded that it was his understanding based on what had been discussed that business would be conducted as usual regardless of whether the lockers or bleachers were fixed because recreation was not paramount on the list of priorities for the City and County. As a representative, citizen and taxpayer, he said, it was his recommendation that East Field be closed after this season because it was his belief that someone would get hurt unless the two municipalities worked together to assist the Golden Eagles.

In addition to the baseball fields, Mr. Girard related there was a large parking lot, as well as additional property adjacent to East Field that the City just recently purchased so they could host the Tow Truck or Fire Chief Conventions. He further apprised that the City had their own emergency personnel (fire, police and ambulance) and did not require any services from the County and their only request of the County was to promote East Field for what it could be. Mr. Girard reiterated that he had tried unsuccessfully for two years to improve East Field and

while everyone had a passion for baseball, if the two municipalities could not reach some kind of agreement, the field should be closed.

Mr. VanNess indicated the County contributed \$7,500 in 2007 to help repair the bleachers, which was included in the 2007 carry-over of funds. He said he was hopeful these funds would be utilized to band-aid the necessities for the 2008 season and allow the City ample opportunity to establish an East Field Capital Project that could be presented to the County Supervisors. Mr. O'Connor stated it was his understanding the \$7,500 was utilized for lighting expenses.

Mr. Girard said that Mr. VanNess had been working for some time on the Emergency Training Center, which was a conjunctive effort with Washington County and he thought East Field could progress along those same efforts. He stated it was their intention to only make those improvements on this project for which they secured funding, thereby reducing the taxpayer expense.

Phil Tucker, Glens Falls Golden Eagles, briefly discussed his passion for baseball and some of the players that played on the team. He said this was the fifth year anniversary of the Glens Falls Golden Eagles playing at East Field, and he concurred with Mr. Girard that if the necessary capital improvements were not made soon, the field should be shut down.

Mr. Tucker apprised that since last Fall, he and Mr. Farley had met weekly with the owners of the baseball team to develop a business plan that accommodated the team and the City. He further indicated they made contact with a company that manufactured the same bleacher seats and he anticipated replacing some of those seats this year.

Mr. Tucker briefly articulated that the history of baseball had expanded longer than the history of hockey in Glens Falls and they had associated themselves with such professional teams as the Chicago White Sox, Detroit Tigers and St. Louis Cardinals. Mr. Tucker stated that he expected to retire soon and accept a position with the Glens Falls Golden Eagles, and it was his desire to expand this organization into a year-round business. He further informed the Council and Committee that Glens Falls would be the host city for the all-star baseball game. While no official announcement had been made, Mr. Tucker expounded the New York Police Department (NYPD) had committed to playing an exhibition game against the Glens Falls Golden Eagles sometime this summer. The New York City Fire Department (NYFD) had expressed the same interest, he added. In summation, Mr. Tucker stated he was hopeful the City and County were committed to making the necessary improvements as he and the owners of the

team were concerned about the safety and well-being of those attending events at East Field.

Dan Hall, Recreation Commission, City of Glens Falls, said he appreciated the City Common Council and County Supervisors gathering to discuss a “plan of action” for East Field. As Mr. Girard mentioned, the wheels of government moved slowly; however, he indicated, there now appeared a sense of urgency and he was hopeful this matter would be expedited so East Field could continue to host many exciting games and events.

Mr. O’Connor asked Mrs. Sady to make inquiry of Senator Little to determine whether the deadline for legislation had passed and he asked the City to prepare a priority list allowing the two municipalities to enter into an intermunicipal agreement or memorandum of understanding.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, on motion by Mr. Sokol and seconded by Mr. Sheehan, Mr. O’Connor adjourned the meeting at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra L. Schreiber
Sr. Legislative Office Specialist