

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: COUNTY FACILITIES

DATE: JULY 17, 2009

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS THOMAS
O'CONNOR
CHAMPAGNE
VANNESS
GOODSPEED
PITKIN

OTHERS PRESENT:

WILLIAM LAMY, SUPERINTENDENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC WORKS
FRANK MOREHOUSE, SUPERINTENDENT OF BUILDINGS
JEFFREY TENNYSON, DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT OF ENGINEERING
FRED AUSTIN, BUILDING PROJECT COORDINATOR
FREDERICK MONROE, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
HAL PAYNE, COMMISSIONER OF ADMINISTRATIVE & FISCAL
SERVICES

COMMITTEE MEMBER ABSENT:

SUPERVISOR GIRARD

JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD
KEVIN GERAGHTY, BUDGET OFFICER

SUPERVISORS BELDEN
BENTLEY
KENNY
MERLINO
SHEEHAN
SIMMES
SOKOL
STEC
STRAINER
TAYLOR
TESSIER

KAREN PUTNEY, ADMINISTRATOR OF FIRE PREVENTION &
BUILDING CODE ENFORCEMENT

FRANCIS O'KEEFE, COUNTY TREASURER

LEN FOSBROOK, PRESIDENT OF THE WARREN COUNTY
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

MIKE WHITE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE LAKE GEORGE PARK
COMMISSION

TOM MONJEAU, ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE

DON LEHMAN, *THE POST STAR*

THOM RANDALL, *THE ADIRONDACK JOURNAL*

GORDON WOODWORTH, *THE CHRONICLE*

CHARLENE DIRESTA, SR. LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

Mr. Thomas called the meeting of the County Facilities Committee to order at 9:30 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. O'Connor, seconded by Mr. Champagne and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the previous Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Mr. Thomas stated that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss options for the soon to be vacated Department of Social Services (DSS) Building. He noted that at the last meeting it had been estimated that the cost of demolishing the building was approximately \$1.2 million; however, he added, Bovis Lend Lease had estimated the total cost of \$550,000 for asbestos abatement (\$100,000), demolition (\$350,000) and pavement removal (\$100,000). He continued that he wanted the Committee's opinion on the demolition of the DSS Building based on the new figures.

Chairman Monroe noted that Francis O'Keefe, County Treasurer, was working on completing the bonding and added that the final cost for the Human Services Building (HSB) had been significantly under budget at \$16.75 million, as opposed to the anticipated \$19.1 million. He advised that they had discussed the possibility of including the demolition of the DSS Building in the bonding for the HSB. He added that Mr. Tessier had suggested that the County retain the pavement on the parcel which would save \$100,000. Mr. Thomas noted that the demolition had been part of the original scope of the project but had been removed in order to keep costs down. He advised that since the cost of the HSB was under budget he felt it was important to move forward with the demolition of the DSS Building. Mr. Champagne agreed that the pavement should not be removed from the property, which would make the estimated cost of demolition \$450,000. He added that he thought that \$450,000 would be on the high side when the demolition was put out to bid. He said that he was in favor of releasing a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the demolition of the DSS Building.

Mr. Kenny apprised that the County should be cautious as to the final cost of the HSB until the project was completed. Mr. Thomas countered that the estimated costs of \$16.75 million had included allowances for each phase. Mr. Kenny asked if the DSS Building was saleable and Mr. Thomas responded that the building needed a new roof, had deteriorating concrete underneath the carpeting and was built out of terra cotta block, which the County had been advised not to put any further holes in. He added that the contents of the third floor had been removed because the floor was unable to support the weight. Mr. VanNess noted that the building had many issues including the problems with asbestos and lead. He advised that based on the illnesses that the DSS Building employees had experienced in the last few years, the County could be open to liability issues if the property was sold. He added that he was in favor of demolition.

Mr. Pitkin apprised that he was concerned at the prospect of the County taking on more debt at this time and added that he felt there was nothing to lose by waiting. Hal Payne, Commissioner of Administrative & Fiscal Services, said that he had requested that Karen Putney, Administrator of Fire Prevention and Building Code Enforcement, attend the meeting to report on the costs of retaining the building. Ms. Putney advised that in keeping a vacant building, there were certain standards that needed to be met under the building code. She said that vacant buildings had to comply with certain sections of the fire code and the premises would need to be safeguarded and secured. She added that the exterior and interior openings that were accessible to unauthorized persons needed to be

blocked, locked or otherwise protected. She stated that fire alarms and sprinklers needed to be maintained in operable condition, unless the building was completely stripped of all combustible material, in which case they could be removed.

Mr. Champagne questioned the cost to the County if the additional \$450,000 was bonded and Mr. O'Keefe estimated a cost of approximately \$75,000 over a five year period. Mr. Taylor asked if the demolition of the DSS Building could be considered as part of the Capital Project for the HSB and not as a separate bond. Mr. Thomas said that the demolition had not been included in the original bond; therefore, he noted, a separate bond would be required. Chairman Monroe disagreed and explained that they were preparing the paperwork to enter into the bond and they needed to decide whether or not to include the cost of the demolition in the bond total.

Mr. O'Connor suggested that the demolition of the building be put out to bid to determine the actual cost of demolition of the DSS Building. He added that he felt the property was valuable and should be retained. Mr. Taylor noted that insurance companies were reluctant to insure vacant buildings and the County should inquire as to whether their insurance premium would increase if the building were left vacant. Mr. Belden questioned if the County could sell the building "as is" with no liability to the County. Mr. Goodspeed recommended that the County cover the cost of maintaining the property until they were in a stronger budget cycle. Mr. Champagne noted that if the debt could not be added to the original bond then he was opposed to proceeding with the demolition at this time. Mr. VanNess recommended that the County release an RFP for the demolition of the DSS Building. He added that they could make a decision on whether or not to demolish the building based on the results of the RFP.

Mr. Strainer stated that the costs of demolition were lower now and would increase as the economy improved. He said that he felt it was sensible to put the demolition out to bid now. Fred Austin, Building Project Coordinator, advised that the building had been constructed many years ago when motorized equipment had not been available. He said that the only reason anyone would have to purchase the property would be for the value of the land. He added that the parcel would be ideal for the location of the next building the County needed to construct and the land should be retained.

Following a brief discussion, motion was made by Mr. VanNess, seconded by Mr. O'Connor and carried by majority vote to develop an RFP for the demolition of the DSS Building, with Mr. Goodspeed and Mr. Pitkin voting in opposition.

As there was no further business to come before the County Facilities Committee, on motion made by Mr. Champagne and seconded by Mr. VanNess, Mr. Thomas adjourned the meeting at 9:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Charlene DiResta, Sr. Legislative Office Specialist