

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: REAL PROPERTY TAX SERVICES

DATE: APRIL 22, 2010

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS GOODSPEED
BENTLEY
THOMAS
MCDEVITT

OTHERS PRESENT:

MICHAEL SWAN, DIRECTOR, REAL PROPERTY TAX
SERVICES
FREDERICK MONROE, CHAIRMAN
PAUL DUSEK, COUNTY ATTORNEY/COMMISSIONER
OF ADMINISTRATIVE & FISCAL SERVICES

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

SUPERVISORS MERLINO
STEC
GIRARD

JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD
KEVIN GERAGHTY, BUDGET OFFICER
SUPERVISOR TAYLOR
SUPERVISOR LOEB
SUPERVISOR SOKOL
SUPERVISOR MCCOY
SUPERVISOR STRAINER
SUPERVISOR KENNY
THOM RANDALL, ADIRONDACK JOURNAL
JOANNE COLLINS, LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

Mr. Goodspeed called the meeting of the Real Property Tax Services Committee to order at 9:57 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Bentley, seconded by Mr. McDevitt and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the March 29, 2010 Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Michael Swan, Director of RPTS (Real Property Tax Services) who distributed copies of the agenda to the Committee members; *a copy of the agenda is on file with the minutes.*

Mr. Swan noted that there were no corrections from the Treasurer's Office to present this month.

Agenda Item 2, presented by Mr. Swan was a recommendation that had been raised in the previous Committee meeting which would restrict bidders at auction who currently owed delinquent taxes, or who had lost property to foreclosure. Mr. Swan stated that he had researched the matter and found that many counties had restricted the sale of property at auction in this manner. Mr. Swan noted that a situation could occur whereby a property owner would deliberately allow the property taxes to become delinquent, thereby presenting the opportunity to repurchase the property at auction at a price which was lower than the amount of the actual taxes owed on the property.

A discussion ensued and it was the consensus of the Committee to amend the Terms of Sale for County Land Auction to add the following:

"If a purchaser owes any outstanding or delinquent taxes to Warren County, those taxes must be paid in full prior to closing on any purchases made at this auction. Failure to comply with the provision will be grounds for default and forfeiture of any deposits paid."

Motion was made by Mr. Thomas, seconded by Mr. Bentley and carried unanimously to approve the request to amend Resolution No. 506 of 2007 relative to the Terms of Sale as outlined above and the necessary resolution was authorized for the May 21, 2010 Board meeting. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

Addressing Agenda Item 3, Mr. Swan reported that he had received inquiries on a regular basis requesting that credit card payments or installments be accepted for payment of current taxes. At present, he said, credit cards were not an acceptable method of payment and he expounded that a payment schedule of two payments was allowed under Real Property Tax Law for the payment of current taxes. Some counties, he stated, charged a 2% to 3% credit card processing fee. Mr. Swan added that the Warren County Treasurer must be involved in any changes thereto.

Mr. Thomas stated his support for allowing credit card payments for current taxes owed. Mr. Goodspeed noted that he had also received requests of this nature. Mr. Sokol suggested that information could be obtained from Patricia Auer, Director of Public Health Services, who had recently started allowing credit card transactions.

It was consensus of the Committee that Mr. Swan further explore the issue of allowing credit card and installment payments for current taxes due. Mr. Swan added that he would work with the Treasurer and share information at the next Committee meeting.

For information purposes only, Mr. Swan presented Agenda Item 4 and he stated that some delays were experienced as a result of using the new software from the Treasurer's Office to generate letters with regard to foreclosure action. He noted the new method of generating letters would result in a cost savings of over \$5,000 in postage and a savings of processing time in the future.

Concluding the Agenda review, Mr. Swan reported that he did not anticipate adjustments to the 2010 Budget, and he was optimistic that the current budget would sustain through 2010. He noted that the New York State (NYS) Office of Real Property Services (ORPS) had eliminated the increase in licensing fees for the assessment software, thereby saving \$6,000 for Warren County. Chairman Monroe asked the reason the ORPS moved to the Department of Taxation and Finance and Mr. Swan explained that a significant cost savings would result from the move from leased office space in Albany to the available space on the State campus. Mr. Swan noted that the Director of ORPS was now the Deputy Director for the NYS Department of Taxation & Finance. He added that Information Technology (IT) services were expected to improve due to the fact that the IT Department in RPTS was comprised of 6 people as compared to 600 IT staff in Taxation & Finance.

Lastly, Mr. Swan informed the Committee that the Warren County RPTS web site had been completed.

As there was no further business to come before the Real Property Tax Services Committee, on motion by Mr. McDevitt and seconded by Mr. Bentley, Mr. Goodspeed adjourned the meeting at 10:13 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joanne Collins, Legislative Office Specialist