

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: SUPPORT SERVICES

DATE: JULY 29, 2010

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COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:	OTHERS PRESENT:
SUPERVISORS TAYLOR	FREDERICK MONROE, CHAIRMAN
VANNESS	PAUL DUSEK, COUNTY ATTORNEY/ADMINISTRATOR
STRAINER	JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD
STEC	MARY BETH CASEY, COMMISSIONER, BOARD OF ELECTIONS
LOEB	WILLIAM MONTFORT, COMMISSIONER, BOARD OF ELECTIONS.0
MCCOY	JULIE PACYNA, PURCHASING AGENT
	ROBERT METTHE, DIRECTOR, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
COMMITTEE MEMBER ABSENT:	AMY CLUTE, SELF-INSURANCE ADMINISTRATOR
SUPERVISOR GIRARD	SUPERVISOR THOMAS
	THOM RANDALL, ADIRONDACK JOURNAL
	JOANNE COLLINS, LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

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Mr. Taylor called the meeting of the Support Services Committee to order at 9:33 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Loeb, seconded by Mr. Strainer and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the previous meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Bill Montfort and Mary Beth Casey, Commissioners for the Warren County Board of Elections (BOE), who distributed agendas to the Committee members, a copy of which is on file with the minutes.

Commencing the agenda review, Mrs. Casey addressed the budget shortfall and referenced the Budget Worksheet Reports which reflected the previous years figures, as actual data from an election using the new optical scan voting system had not yet been completed. She estimated a budget shortfall of \$150,000 which was equivalent to the budget reduction. She further stated that the Department had no choice but to prepare for the 2010 election season, thereby procuring the necessary supplies which resulted in a current balance of \$28,265 in their Supplies Code.

Mr. Stec entered the meeting at 9:38 a.m.

Chairman Monroe asked for the cost comparison between the former and new voting systems and Mrs. Casey estimated the difference to be approximately \$148,000. She stated that it was necessary to use voter history based on the 2008 primary election versus voter registration and the ballots comprised approximately \$90,000 of the \$148,000. New York State Law, according to Mrs. Casey, allowed for the interpretation of data by the BOE in a manner which generated the best possible or most conservative data. Chairman Monroe opined that the new voting system was unnecessary and costly to maintain. Mr. Montfort expounded that cost saving opportunities could better be evaluated after the completion of one election with the new voting system. Mrs. Casey noted that there was a 5 or 6 year equipment and maintenance agreement between the BOE and the Office of General Services (OGS) and therefore, she said, those expenses were not expected to change. She added that the security requirement of election seals for 30,000 live ballots were necessary at a cost of \$5 per machine (92 machines) for each election. She further noted that the mandatory audit process was required and was mutually exclusive of recounts.

Mr. McCoy stated that the audit process had been carried out in the Town of Lake George and he acknowledged the BOE for their cost saving efforts relative to office supplies, such as envelopes and pens, and he thanked the Commissioners for their cost containment efforts. Mrs. Casey explained that pen color effected both integrity (confidentiality) and speed (scanning) and blue was selected for optimum results. Additionally, she noted, details, such as the level of color contrast, impacted the efficiency of the audit process.

Addressing supplies, Mr. Loeb noted that, unfortunately, a surplus of unused ballots was inevitable in order to be certain that the ballot supply was sufficient for the election and Mrs. Casey concurred. She explained that Ocean City, New Jersey had completed an election using the optical scan system and she utilized their experiential data which underscored the importance of a sufficient ballot supply. Mr. Montfort noted the requirement that ballots be stored for a period of two years. Mr. Loeb asked for clarification of the total amount of the budget shortfall and Mrs. Casey revised her estimate to between \$143,000 and \$146,000.

Mrs. Casey presented a request to transfer funds in the amount of \$8,225, from Miscellaneous Fees and Expenses, to Other Equipment, for 162 ballot containers, lock boxes and the transfer of carts for supply distribution. Mr. Strainer asked if the request to transfer funds would serve both the general and primary elections and Mrs. Casey replied affirmatively.

Motion was made by Mr. Loeb and seconded by Mr. Stec to approve the request for a transfer of funds in the amount of \$8,225 as outlined above, as well as to refer to Finance for a source of funding for the shortfall in the 2010 BOE Budget.

Mr. Strainer asked the disposition of the former lever voting machines and Mrs. Casey stated that it was mandated that they be removed from use and stored for a period of one year. She apprised of pending litigation against the Election Modernization Act, which would necessitate storage of the machines until litigation was settled. Mr. Montfort pointed out the short time frame within which the Election Commissioners were notified of changes in State Law.

Mr. Taylor called the question and the motion was carried unanimously to approve the request to transfer funds as outlined above as well as to determine a source of funding for the Budget shortfall referred to the Finance Committee. *A copy of the request for Transfer of Funds is on file with the minutes.*

Mr. VanNess entered the meeting at 9:50 a.m.

Mrs. Casey presented a request for a contract with Fort Orange Press for the publication of voter education brochures. She informed that the brochures included a picture of an actual ballot and was consistent with the information mailed to residents and displayed in the voting booth. Approval to execute the contract, she noted, was required prior to the August 20, 2010 Board meeting.

Also pertaining to voter education, Mr. Montfort suggested that the two-minute instructional film be run on TV/DVD at the Warren County Department of Motor Vehicles and other public venues, such as Public Libraries within Warren County.

Mr. McCoy conveyed some positive aspects of the new voting system and noted voters could sit down,

read instructions and make thoughtful selections in an unhurried manner followed by the final step to slide the ballot through the scanner.

Motion was made by Mr. Strainer and seconded by Mr. McCoy to ratify the actions of the Chairman in executing a contract with Fort Orange Press for the publication of voter registration fliers.

Joan Sady, Clerk of the Board, apprised that the BOE would identify another code from which to expend the \$4,924 at this time in order to submit the print order. She explained that subsequent to the approval of the budget amendment at the August 20<sup>th</sup> Board meeting, the funds could then be returned to the account from which they were taken.

Mr. Taylor called the question and the motion was carried unanimously to approve the request to ratify the action of the Chairman of the Board in executing a contract with Fort Orange Press in the amount of \$4,924 as outlined above and the necessary resolution was authorized for the August 20, 2010 Board meeting. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

Mrs. Casey presented a request to amend the 2010 County Budget to increase estimated revenues and appropriations in the amount of \$13,381 to reflect the receipt of Voter Education & Poll Worker Training Grant Funds. She stated that \$4,924 was allocated for the contract with Fort Orange Press, \$7,509 for postage and \$948 for other equipment.

Motion was made by Mr. McCoy, seconded by Mr. Loeb and carried unanimously to approve the request to amend the 2010 County Budget as outlined above and to refer same to the Finance Committee. *A copy of the request to Amend County Budget is on file with the minutes.*

Continuing with the agenda review, Mrs. Casey addressed the proposals for trucking/moving services for the delivery of the voting systems. She informed that Mullen Moving and Storage would continue to provide services for the delivery of the voting systems and she noted the BOE had been pleased with their proposal and their service.

Regarding the 2011 budget figures, Mrs. Casey reiterated that the figures could not be anticipated until the completion of an election using the optical scan voting system. Prior to that time, she stated, any budget figures submitted would be derived from the 2010 budget.

Mrs. Casey announced that a schedule of public viewings of the new voting system had been set and she extended invitations to all present. She noted the schedule was posted in the County Clerk's Office. She added that interested individuals could also view the machine located in the BOE Office.

A discussion ensued with regard to the possible reinstatement of the lever voting machines and Mrs. Casey stated that it would be a decision of the Court in consideration of Help America Vote Act (HAVA) requirements.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Rob Metthe, Director of Information Technology (IT), who distributed agendas to the Committee members, a copy of which is on file with the minutes.

Mr. Metthe presented a request for a contract with Time Warner Cable Business Class for Broadband and ISP services, to commence on or after August 20, 2010 and terminate five years from the

commencement date, for a total amount of \$630 per month. He noted that the contract was an opportunity to increase the broadband width by nearly three times that of the current capability and the money was in the IT budget.

Motion was made by Mr. Stec, seconded by Mr. Strainer and carried unanimously to approve the request for a contract as outlined above and the necessary resolution was authorized for the August 20, 2010 Board meeting. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

Mr. Dusek referenced the IT Department report and encouraged Committee members to read the report which reflected the critical and challenging role of the IT Department. He acknowledged Mr. Metthe and his staff for steadfast efforts and vigilance in maintaining technical systems throughout the County. Mr. Dusek noted the myriad tasks and projects being performed in the IT Department which included building enterprise systems, and the procurement and development of package and custom systems, in addition to the Help Desk operation. Mr. Dusek apprised that he had suggested that Mr. Metthe keep the Committee informed of projects in this manner. Mr. Dusek stated that JoAnn McKinstry, Assistant to the County Administrator, had performed a staffing analysis which compared the IT Department with those of other businesses and government Offices in the region. As a result, he stated, he had determined the Department to be adequately staffed. He acknowledged that Mr. Metthe had deemed the Department to be short staffed and will continue his efforts in maintaining optimum efficiency with the resources at hand. Furthermore, Mr. Dusek cited Mr. Metthe for his management of the complex workload and prioritization of all projects and tasks. Mr. Dusek expressed his appreciation for the work of the Department which was a valuable resource to the County and stated that he would continue to work with Mr. Metthe to discuss his many cost savings ideas. Mr. Taylor thanked Mr. Dusek and acknowledged the work of the IT Department. Mr. Dusek stated that he would forward a copy of the IT Department Staffing Analysis Report to all Supervisors.

As a result of feedback received in his Office, Mr. Stec requested that Mr. Metthe review and streamline where possible the system whereby individuals could e-mail elected Officials and Department Heads through the Warren County Website. He suggested that e-mail addresses be listed alongside the existing phone list. He stated that he had perused the website and confirmed that e-mail addresses had not been easily accessible from the website and he acknowledged security measures as the possible reason. Mr. Metthe noted that the capability to e-mail Supervisors had always been available; however, he stated, for security purposes IT had not expressly listed Supervisors e-mail addresses which were shielded with a small program which utilized an email box. He explained that the messages would reach IT who would then allow for transmission to the Supervisor. The program, he explained, protected against spam and web scam activity. Mr. Metthe further stated that he had applied measures to clarify the e-mail process on the website as a result of information received from Mr. Dusek. Chairman Monroe stated that he had not had any problems with obtaining e-mail addresses; however, he said, an added step was necessary due to the fact that a reply could not be initiated directly from the original e-mail message and a new message had to be created for same. Mr. Dusek apologized for not following up with Mr. Stec subsequent to the application of Mr. Metthe's website enhancements. In closing, Mr. Dusek informed that Mr. Metthe's accountability system exemplified a management tool critical to any business or operation to gather measurable results for evaluative purposes.

Pertaining to the Administrative Support functions of the Mail Room, Print Shop and Stock Room, Mr. Dusek recounted the Request for Proposal (RFP) discussed at the previous Committee meeting for the

review and possible redesign of the above functional areas in terms of efficiency and cost savings. He informed that a plan had been prepared with Ms. McKinstry to present at today's meeting and prior to the meeting a call was received from Pitney Bowes, Warren County's postage meter provider, who understood that Warren County was evaluating current services. As a result, he stated, Pitney Bowes contacted the County to offer a review of all of their program features and services which included mail pickup services and other cost saving initiatives. Mr. Dusek stated that he would be remiss if he did not ask for additional time for full evaluation of Pitney Bowes services prior to presenting his findings to the Committee. He concluded that coverage and staffing were essential, and he required one additional month to complete the analysis.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Julie Pacyna, Purchasing Agent, who stated that the Governor had signed into law an amendment to the General Municipal Law (GML) Section 103 which raised the commodity bid threshold from \$10,000 to \$20,000. Mrs. Pacyna presented a request to amend the Warren County Purchasing Policy to increase the commodity bid threshold to \$20,000 to coincide with the recently amended GML Section 103 and increasing quote thresholds accordingly.

Motion was made by Mr. Stec, seconded by Mr. VanNess and carried unanimously to approve the request to amend the Warren County Purchasing Policy as outlined above and the necessary resolution was authorized for the August 20, 2010 Board meeting. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

Privilege of the floor was extended to Amy Clute, Self-Insurance Administrator, who referred to the 2010 Self-Insurance Plan Budget and Participant Assessments, a copy of which is on file with the minutes. Mrs. Clute explained that self-insurance revenues were derived from the plan participants which included various municipalities, public agencies and institutions, such as the Towns, County, Fire Companies, the City of Glens Falls, and Adirondack Community College. Although self-insurance was not a direct portion of the County Budget, she said, the County was a participant and therefore, Workers Compensation costs were reflected in the County Budget. The Self-Insurance Department, she stated, billed out assessments to all participants and the allocations relative to same would be reviewed following discussion of the reserve fund. The Contributed Reserve Fund, she expounded, was funded with participant payments and could be used, if needed, for outstanding liabilities for plans and claims.

Mrs. Clute asserted the complex analysis required for determining payments. She further noted the unpredictable nature of claims and stated that the budget was estimated using prior year figures, with current year figures posted to July 1, 2010, which had reflected significant improvement from 2009. She informed that several serious claims received at the end of 2009 had challenged the budget process and outcomes. She estimated an increase in the 2011 budget of \$214,000 and she had consulted with Mr. Dusek for Code recommendations. For comparison, Mrs. Clute noted that administrative costs for 2011 were less than 2006, which evidenced that claims were the reason for the increase.

Continuing with the budget review, Mrs. Clute summarized the Budget worksheets and she pointed out that 2009 figures were reported, as well as actual 2010 figures to July 1<sup>st</sup>, with the 2010 estimate based on the year-to-date figures, from which 2011 estimated figures were derived. She explained that legal fees for the remainder of 2010 were higher than anticipated at \$75,000 due to the fact that changes made by the New York State Legislature had altered the Workers Compensation claim process, making it significantly more challenging; thereby increasing the number of appeals requested by the County, as

well as an increase in the number of hearings (24% increase). She informed that the contracted Attorney was paid for each hearing and by the hour for appeals. She noted that the cost for private investigations had decreased for 2010 to date. Mr. Strainer asked if the appeal process ultimately saved the County money and Ms. Clute responded affirmatively. She further explained that each decision from the Workers Compensation Board was reviewed in detail and cost analysis and the resulting action was weighed carefully prior to the Department's decision to appeal.

Addressing Assessments, Mrs. Clute reported the 2009 actual figure of \$99,670 and a 2010 budget request of \$101,959. She stated that \$36,795 was paid for 2010 (to July 1<sup>st</sup>) with an anticipated additional expenditure of \$83,000 for the remainder of 2010 which placed the estimated 2010 figure and the 2011 estimate at \$120,097 and \$120,100 respectively. She noted that assessments provided special funds for the Workers Compensation Board in the same manner that Warren County built participants for revenue.

Pertaining to Medical and Compensation Awards, Mrs. Clute cited these as the largest fees in Self-Insurance Fund and noted that both were driven by claims. Medical Awards, she explained, were used by injured workers for treatment and related expenses. She reviewed the figures on page 6 of the Budget Worksheet and she noted that although she could not control such expenses, some related expenses could be controlled through measures, such as fee schedules for chiropractic care, pharmacy and surgery, and with diagnostic radiologic networks. The expenses, she stated, were largely the result of surgeries and inpatient stays.

Compensation Awards, Mrs. Clute apprised, were funds expended for lost wages (final closures) and scheduled loss of use to injured workers and she noted the high costs in 2009. Mrs. Clute observed a significant increase last year in the number of treating providers who routinely scheduled one year follow up visits for patients who had undergone surgery on an extremity, for the purpose of determination of some degree of permanent loss of use. Mrs. Clute added that she routinely seeks cases for final closure to eliminate future liability.

In terms of ongoing cost saving initiatives, Mrs. Clute stated that she had met with the Safety Consulting Management Group to discuss methods by which to decrease claims. She noted that meetings would be held with the Town Supervisors to review bills and claims and to discuss claim reduction and safety strategies. She further stated that Mr. Dusek had offered to assist and attend a meeting with the City of Glens Falls, the Department of Public Works and the Sheriff's Office to address cost containment via claim reduction. Mr. Strainer asked if the safety program in place had impacted claims and Mrs. Clute replied affirmatively. She noted that the trend had decreased during the end of 2009; however, she said, lost work days had increased each month which she conjectured was driven in part by the economic environment and also due to improved record keeping. Mr. Strainer pointed out that a disparity in claim levels throughout the County could have an overall negative outcome with the high areas offsetting those Towns with good claim histories. He asserted the imperative need for a uniform cost containment effort. Mrs. Clute noted that safety improvement programming was available to all plan participants and information was regularly communicated for that purpose.

Discussion ensued relative to participation criteria and Mr. Dusek stated that the Plan must allow the Town and Civil Defense volunteers participation in the Plan. Mr. Dusek further opined that the lack of safety improvement results were likely due to a lack of understanding regarding the often complicated

claim analysis and loss history data; and he felt that improved understanding would improve the desire and motivation of the participants to act in a manner that would better control outcomes. Mr. Dusek stated that he was in favor of the meetings with the Safety Consultant, and for those municipalities or agencies which refused the opportunity for cost containment education and initiative, further research regarding rules, regulations and continued eligibility in the Plan could be conducted.

Mrs. Clute reported that the total anticipated amount needed from the Plan participants was \$1,048,976 (2011 Revenue from Assessments) or \$1,143,976 which included interest and earnings. Regarding the Assessment Formula, Mrs. Clute stated that a base charge was incurred to each participant and claims would incur additional charges. For those without claims, she noted, payment was based on payroll. She pointed out a complete list of participant assessments on page 10 which reflected the total assessment amount of \$1,048,976 for 2011. She noted that she had spoken with Mr. Dusek regarding consideration of the possible use of 50% of the Reserve Fund, as well as other options.

Mrs. Clute noted the comparison figures on page 18 and 19 pertaining to 50% or 25% of the Reserve Fund used and the net changes therefrom. Addressing the impact on the reserve balance, Mrs. Clute noted that the last page of the report reflected the history of the Contributed Reserve Balance since 2008 and reported the balance of \$4.9 million at the end of 2008; \$4.5 million at the end of 2009; and \$3.8 million for 2010 with Mrs. Clute's conjecture of \$3.2 million for the close of 2010. She cautioned that reserves were unpredictable and depended upon medical occurrences and were used to pay outstanding liabilities or held as claim reserves for anticipated costs. The Contributed Reserve, she said, was a cash account which the Treasurer invested for interest bearing dividends. She reported the Contributed Reserve Balance to be \$4.5 million at present and noted that permanency awards were paid from same. Revenues or Assessments, she said, was the fund derived from payments from the participants/Towns.

Mrs. Clute summarized that the purpose of today's meeting was to communicate the assessment amounts to the Towns, to explain the increase for 2011, and to ask for the Committee's decision regarding the use of the Reserve Fund.

Responding to a question from Mr. Taylor, Mrs. Clute stated that the City of Glens Falls was the member with the highest number of cases and a safety committee had been formed to address those incidents in an effort to control the number of incidents. She noted that some claims were legitimate and others were questionable and required additional time and analysis and she noted that patterns of illness and injury had been observed over a period of time. Mr. Dusek noted that he had invited John Diamond, Mayor of the City of Glens Falls, to join a discussion in this regard and was notified that a representative from the City of Glens Falls would be present.

Mrs. Clute reiterated that \$1,048,976 was the total amount needed in order to operate in 2011. She noted that the decision should be made today due to the fact that County Departments, as well as the City of Glens Falls, required the final assessment figures to determine allocations relative to budget preparation. Regarding a plan for the future, Mrs. Clute stated that she had discussed the budget with Mr. Dusek and although she was comfortable using 50% of the Reserve Fund for 2011, a plan to phase out the two year pattern of using Reserve Funds must begin. Mr. Dusek stated that the 50% option would incur a \$40,150 increase for the County. Mr. Loeb declared that action relative to improved safety measures on the part of plan participants was essential and must begin immediately thereby minimizing the need to use the Reserve Fund.

Discussion ensued. Mr. VanNess expressed his confidence in Mrs. Clute regarding the 50% option with a projection to decrease that need over the coming year and he noted that 2009 was the first time the Reserve Fund had been used. Mr. Thomas raised the issue of the fraudulent use of Workers Compensation benefits. A brief discussion ensued.

Motion was made by Mr. VanNess and seconded by Mr. McCoy to authorize 50% of the Reserve Fund or \$524,488 to reduce the 2011 Assessments.

Chairman Monroe expressed concern that the Reserve Fund had increased by \$647,000 from 2005 to 2010 followed by a decrease of \$714,000 within a two year period, which he declared to be a disturbing trend. He recommended the most prudent use of the Reserve Fund.

Mr. Taylor called the question and the motion was carried unanimously to approve the use of 50% of the Reserve Fund to reduce 2011 Assessments as outlined above, and the necessary resolution was authorized for the August 20, 2010 Board meeting. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

Mrs. Clute presented a request to attend the New York State Association of Self Insured Counties (NYSASIC) Fall 2010 Conference, to be held from September 29 through October 1, 2010 in Owego, NY, at a total cost of \$339 which included room and meals.

Motion was made by Mr. Strainer, seconded by Mr. VanNess and carried unanimously to approve the travel request as presented. *A copy of the Authorization to Attend Meeting or Convention is on file with the minutes.*

Mr. Taylor pointed out that the 2010-2011 net change for an Assessment for the City of Glens Falls was \$150,726 without the Reserve Fund and \$30,263 with the 50% Reserve Fund, a substantive difference. He informed the Committee that he would like to attend the meeting with the City of Glens Falls and would take measures to encourage the attendance of Mayor Diamond.

Mr. Dusek presented a request to transfer funds in the amount of \$500 from Salaries - Overtime, to Postage, for increased mailings in the County Attorney/Administrator's Office.

Motion was made by Mr. McCoy and seconded by Mr. Strainer and carried unanimously to approve the request for a transfer of funds as outlined above and to refer same to the Finance Committee. A copy of the request for Transfer of Funds is on file with the minutes.

As there was no further business to come before the Support Services Committee, on motion made by Mr. VanNess and seconded by Mr. McCoy, Mr. Taylor adjourned the meeting at 11:24 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joanne Collins, Legislative Office Specialist