

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: ECONOMIC GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

DATE: MAY 12, 2011

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS TAYLOR
CONOVER
CHAMPAGNE

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

MONROE
GOODSPEED

OTHERS PRESENT:

REPRESENTING THE CITY OF GLENS FALLS:
JACK DIAMOND, MAYOR, CITY OF GLENS FALLS
JIM BROCK, WARD 4
SCOTT WATSON, WARD 3
JUDY VILLA, WARD 2
DANIEL STEC, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
PAUL DUSEK, COUNTY ATTORNEY/ADMINISTRATOR
JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD
KEVIN GERAGHTY, BUDGET OFFICER
SUPERVISORS THOMAS
KENNY
MCDEVITT
BUD YORK, SHERIFF
MAURY THOMPSON, *THE POST STAR*
PLEASE SEE SIGN-IN SHEET FOR ALL OTHERS PRESENT
JOANNE COLLINS, LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

Mr. Taylor called the meeting of the Economic Growth and Development Committee to order at 6:38 p.m.

Mr. Taylor stated the purpose of the meeting was to discuss a proposal for shared 911 dispatch services with the City of Glens Falls. He noted discussions began in 2010 and he thanked Sheriff York for providing the necessary information and for participating in several discussions with the City of Glens Falls regarding the matter. Mr. Taylor stated it was his understanding that Sheriff York was in agreement with the transfer of dispatch services and Sheriff York responded affirmatively.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Jack Diamond, Mayor of the City of Glens Falls, who stated that a fiscal agreement was necessary for the City of Glens Falls in order to enter into a contract with Warren County for dispatch services. Once an initial agreement was reached, he said, the County could bring the request before the full Board of Supervisors, and the City of Glens Falls would present it to the Common Council. He stated the financial piece was necessary in order to move forward with the initiative. Mayor Diamond thanked the Committee for considering the request and he acknowledged the collaborative efforts for the purpose of sharing services. The agreement, Mayor Diamond said, would offer cost savings, improved services and greater efficiency.

Mayor Diamond proposed that the City of Glens Falls would subsidize \$140,000 to Warren County over a period of eight years, for dispatch services.

Mayor Diamond expounded that similar transitions had taken place in other municipalities. He asserted the initiative would result in cost savings for the City and he praised the County's state-of-the-art Call Center located at the Warren County Sheriff's Office. Furthermore, he said, response time would be improved for the City of Glens Falls.

Addressing the time line for the project, Mayor Diamond stated that training was the City's financial

obligation once the dispatchers became a part of the County. The project, he said, was slated for completion by the end of 2011 and he invited ideas and feedback from the community at-large.

Mr. Champagne introduced himself and requested that Committee members introduce themselves for the benefit of the guests in attendance. Following introductions, Mr. Champagne asked how the \$140,000 figure was determined. Mayor Diamond explained that the starting figure of \$280,000 for dispatch services was provided by Sheriff York. Subsequently, he said, research was conducted regarding the tax district and the amount the City contributed towards the Police Department and dispatching services. Based on the tax assessment, he explained, the City contributed approximately \$143,000 annually to the Call Center. Therefore, he noted, the \$143,000 was subtracted from the \$280,000 to arrive at the final figure of \$140,000, which he felt was reasonable.

Mr. Taylor pointed out that 911 calls made in the City of Glens Falls were received at the County and transferred to the City. Today's proposal to merge services, he stated, would shortcut the process, thereby improving efficiency. Mr. Taylor advised that research indicated two prior agreements with the Village of Lake George and Town of Queensbury where the County had assumed Police responsibilities. He reviewed the payment arrangements and noted totals of \$1.7 million and \$1.6 million, respectively. Mr. Taylor said it was his understanding that the County had assumed dispatch services for the Town of Queensbury and Mr. Champagne replied affirmatively. Mayor Diamond summarized that a total amount to be paid was approximately \$1.1 million over the eight year period. Chairman Stec stated his support for the proposal which he felt was reasonable and he declared that all partnerships should benefit both parties without causing harm to either. He further stated that the proposal would help both municipalities and show immediate savings for the City, and was reasonable for the County. He credited Mayor Diamond and Mr. Taylor for their time and persistence.

Privilege of the floor was extended to John Barrett, of the Department of Public Works and President of the Civil Service Employee Association (CSEA), who asked how the changes would effect the City's current dispatchers'. Mr. Taylor confirmed that positions would be absorbed by the County dispatch operation. Sheriff York stated that with an agreement in place, background investigations and probationary periods were necessary for County employees. Mr. Barrett asked if Glens Falls employees would carry their seniority and Mayor Diamond stated the details were currently under review. Paul Dusek, County Attorney/Administrator explained that Civil Service Law governed many procedures associated with employee transfers and issues, such as seniority and leave time were included in the law. There may be some flexibility within that law, he said, and discussions will be held at the appropriate time. Mayor Diamond stated there would be staff training sessions and noted that employees had the right to bid on open positions. He said the City's intent was not to eliminate positions but to enable the best arrangement possible.

Mr. Conover stated his support for the proposal and conveyed his concern for the County relative to the first year of the transition in terms of costs. Mayor Diamond asserted that the transition would commence before the close of the present quarter of 2011, using funds included in the City's budget. With regard to Mr. Conover's concern, Mr. Watson asked if the County was looking for a step arrangement with a higher payout in the first year. Mr. Conover explained that the first year of the transition would be the most challenging for the County. Mayor Diamond said planning and training would take place in the last quarter of 2011. According to Mr. Kenny, shared services would become an inevitable necessity in light of the State's uncertainly in terms of funding changes and property tax caps. Mr. Kenny apprised that employees have always been treated fairly and the union contract was considered in detail. Mr. McDevitt agreed and stated he would remain sensitive to job security issues and he acknowledged that uncertainty was stressful. He asserted that the

Committee must make efficiency enhancing financial decisions which incorporated technology to seek better ways to complete the work. Chairman Stec stated that the details of the agreement would not move forward without the support of a financial package. He noted that a resolution would be necessary to authorize the Committee Chairman to continue to work with Mayor Diamond regarding contract language that would address the details raised today. Mr. Taylor stated that Mr. Dusek required support from the full Board prior to continuing his work on the details of the agreement. Mayor Diamond concurred and said the same was true for the Glens Falls Common Council. Mr. Champagne asked if the Common Council had taken action and Mayor Diamond stated that work with the GFPD was currently underway.

Motion was made by Mr. Champagne, seconded by Mr. Conover and carried unanimously to approve the proposal from the City of Glens Falls, for 911 dispatch services, wherein the City of Glens Falls would pay \$140,000 per year to Warren County for a period of eight years.

Mr. Conover suggested that Sheriff York, Mr. Dusek, Mayor Diamond and Mr. Taylor continue to meet and monitor progress during the transition period. Mr. Diamond noted that he would also engage the leadership of the GFPD in that regard.

With regard to the time line, Mr. Dusek stated that the end of the year was a reasonable expectation and noted time frames under Civil Service Law relative to postings. He said an inter-municipal draft agreement was necessary and the full Board would address the conceptual plan at the May 20th Board meeting. Subsequent to the Board meeting, he stated, work could begin on the specific details. He stated he was not certain how much time would be required for same and conjectured that July or August might be feasible for completion of an inter-municipal agreement. Training, he noted, would begin later in the year.

There being no further business to come before the Economic Growth & Development Committee, on motion made by Mr. Conover and seconded by Mr. Champagne, Mr. Taylor adjourned the meeting at 7:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Joanne Collins, Legislative Office Specialist