

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: PUBLIC SAFETY

DATE: MAY 26, 2015

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS WOOD
GIRARD
TAYLOR
FRASIER
BROCK
SEEBER
SIMPSON

OTHERS PRESENT:

REPRESENTING THE OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES:
BRIAN LAFLURE, DIRECTOR/FIRE COORDINATOR
AMYHIRSCH, DEPUTY DIRECTOR
REPRESENTING THE WARREN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE:
BUD YORK, SHERIFF
SHAWN LAMOUREE, UNDERSHERIFF
MARK NEALE, SYSTEM MAINTENANCE COORDINATOR
KEVIN B. GERAGHTY, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
PAUL DUSEK, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
AMANDA ALLEN, CLERK OF THE BOARD
FRANK E. THOMAS, BUDGET OFFICER
SUPERVISORS BEATY
DICKINSON
MCDEVITT
MERLINO
MONROE
SARAH MCLENITHAN, DEPUTY CLERK OF THE BOARD

Ms. Wood called the meeting of the Public Safety Committee to order at 9:30 a.m.

Motion was made by Mrs. Frasier, seconded by Mr. Taylor and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the previous Public Safety Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Brian LaFlure, *Fire Coordinator/Director of the Office of Emergency Services (OES)*, who distributed copies of the OES Agenda to the Committee members; *a copy of the Agenda is on file with the minutes.*

Commencing the Agenda review, Mr. LaFlure presented a request to authorize his attendance at the AUXCOM Course being offered at SUNY Oswego in Oswego, NY on June 5-7, 2015. He advised this was a FEMA (*Federal Emergency Management Agency*) radio course which would allow him to provide instruction to the RACES (*Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service*) volunteers upon his return. Mr. LaFlure advised this travel would require the County to fund the costs of his hotel accommodations for two nights; however, he added, there was no cost to the County for the course itself.

Motion was made by Mrs. Frasier, seconded by Mr. Taylor and carried unanimously to approve the travel request, as outlined above. *A copy of the executed Authorization to Attend Meeting or Convention Form is on file with the meeting minutes.*

Next, Mr. LaFlure presented a request for a new contract with Tetra Tech, Inc., the lowest responsible bidder for the RFP (*Request for Proposals*) released to obtain assistance in the event of a major emergency or for planning exercises. He noted that this would provide a standing contract in the event that these services were needed.

Motion was made by Mr. Simpson, seconded by Mrs. Frasier and carried unanimously to approve the request and the necessary resolution was authorized for the June 19th Board Meeting. *A copy of the request is on file with the meeting minutes.*

Mr. LaFlure announced Agenda Item 3 included a request to establish a new contract with the USGS (*United States Geological Survey*) to continue use of the USGS river gauge on Schroon River at a cost not to exceed \$6,200 annually. He explained that this gauge has been used for a number of years; however, he said, one of the other organizations that had been paying part of the operational costs was no longer doing so. Mr. LaFlure further apprised that the County had two opportunities in this case, those being that they could either provide funding for continued operation of the gauge, or they could choose to relinquish all use. He stated that the USGS Schroon River gauge was very important to the County, especially for the Towns of Horicon, Chester and Warrensburg, and he felt it was essential for the County to provide funds to continue use of the gauge. Mr. LaFlure indicated that the USGS paid for 20% of the operation costs and he noted that the NYSDOT (*New York State Department of Transportation*) providing funding, as well. He said monies provided by the County would support the electrical costs and the communication facets necessary to receive information from the gauge. Mr. LaFlure advised that the data garnered from the gauge was important for flood information, as well as for the predictions received from the National Weather Service. He commented that although the County had not been required to pay for use of the gauge in the past, it appeared that they would now have to do so if they desired to continue such use. Mr. LaFlure pointed out that Agenda Item 4 consisted of a request for a transfer of funds in the amount of \$2,800 from the Contingent Account, *A.1990 469*, to fund the use of the gauge for the months of July-December, 2015.

In response to Mr. Simpson's request for clarification on the cost of the contract, Mr. LaFlure advised the total annual cost for operation of the gauge was \$6,600, from which they would need to deduct 20% for the USGS portion, then divide the balance in half for the remainder of the year. He noted that the previous funding source would cease on July 1st, so the County would need to provide funding beginning on that date in order to prevent any loss of connectivity.

Chairman Geraghty questioned why the USGS had ceased funding the gauge and Mr. LaFlure responded that the USGS had not stopped providing funding; he clarified that it was actually the Hudson River-Black River Regulating District that had decided to discontinue their funding. Mr. LaFlure explained the gauge was not involved with any dams and was located completely within Warren County which seemed to relay the responsibility to Warren County. Mr. Monroe commented that many years ago he recalled receiving information indicating that this gauge was fully funded by the USGS and he suggested that they make contact with the USGS to request that such funding be resumed. Amy Hirsch, *Deputy Director of the OES*, noted that less than five years ago the Federal Government had stopped funding several things, including a number of USGS river gauges. She added that many of these gauges had been shut down due to a lack of funding and while there was a possibility that the Schroon River gauge could be shut down, as well, so far there was no talk of dismantling the location because NYSDOT was still collecting their eight-week readings; however, she stated, if the County or another entity did not come forward to pay the remaining 80% of the costs, they would no longer receive readings from the gauge, nor would the National Weather Service who provided prediction information relative to water heights. Mr. Monroe commented that he believed the County should fund this expense, but he also suggested that this issue be referred to the Legislative & Rules Committee in order to contact the County's Legislative representatives and urge that the expenses associated with river gauges be Federally funded. Mr. LaFlure pointed out that because the Schroon River gauge was located in Warren County and on a body of water that completely resided within the County, there was really no other entity seeking the readings. He continued that if Warren County assumed the costs of operation they would have some vested ownership interest in the Schroon River gauge, allowing them to provide an opinion if another party sought to remove the gauge.

Mr. Taylor opined that he saw no other option than to provide funding for the gauge, as requested, and he questioned from what source the funding for this expense would be provided. Mr. LaFlure responded that because the cost had not been accounted for in the 2015 Budget, a transfer from the Contingent Account was requested; he added that the full expense would be included in the 2016

Budget request.

Motion was made by Mr. Taylor, seconded by Mr. Brock and carried unanimously to approve the request for a new contract with the USGS, as outlined above, and the necessary resolution was authorized for the June 19th Board Meeting. *A copy of the request is on file with the meeting minutes.*

It was the consensus of the Committee that this issue should be referred to the Legislative & Rules Committee to seek action urging the County's Legislative representatives to seek for the expense of this and other river gauges to be funded on a Federal level.

Motion was made by Mrs. Frasier, seconded by Mr. Simpson and carried unanimously to approve the request for a transfer of funds in the amount of \$2,800 from the Contingent Account, *A.1990 69*, to Budget Code A.3640 470, *Civil Defense, Contract*, and to refer same to the Finance Committee. *A copy of the request is on file with the meeting minutes.*

This concluded the review of the OES Agenda. Privilege of the floor was extended to Bud York, *Warren County Sheriff*, who distributed copies of the Sheriff's Agenda to the Committee members, a copy of which is on file with the meeting minutes.

Sheriff York began the Agenda review by presenting a request to authorize Sergeants Scott Rawson and Terry Jeffords to attend Supervisor Training School at the Zone 5 Academy in Schenectady, NY from September 14 - October 2, 2015 at a cost of \$480 each.

Motion was made by Mr. Simpson, seconded by Mrs. Frasier and carried unanimously to approve the travel request, as outlined above. *A copy of the Authorization to Attend Meeting or Convention form is on file with the meeting minutes.*

Continuing, Sheriff York apprised his next Agenda item pertained to a request to extend the existing agreement with the Town of Horicon for Marine Patrol services on Schroon Lake through the end of 2015. He noted that this contract was typically renewed annually, but questioned whether it was possible to extend the contract for a longer term, possibly through the end of 2017.

Motion was made by Mr. Simpson, seconded by Mr. Brock and carried unanimously to extend the existing agreement with the Town of Horicon for Marine Patrol services on Schroon Lake through the December 31, 2017 and the necessary resolution was authorized for the June 19th Board Meeting. *A copy of the request is on file with the meeting minutes.*

Sheriff York advised the next Agenda item consisted of a request for funding to begin phase 1 of the radio system upgrade project for new sites in Warrensburg, Lake Luzerne and Stony Creek and to purchase repeater units for the law enforcement vehicles at a total cost not to exceed \$959,600. He acknowledged that the costs for this project were quite high and he said he had been speaking with Chairman Geraghty to determine how best to proceed with this project. Sheriff York pointed out that himself, Shawn Lamouree, *Undersheriff*, and Mark Neale, *System Maintenance Coordinator*, were in attendance to answer any questions the Committee might have with respect to this matter.

Mr. Girard commented that there was some prior communication about possibly upgrading to a digital radio system, rather than to an updated analog system, but that idea had been discarded due to the associated costs, which were very high; however, he added, there was some recent correspondence received indicating that they may have no choice but to upgrade to a completely digital system. Mr. Neale clarified that the current communications system was analog, and while the system would likely remain analog for the near future, any new equipment purchased would be analog and digital phase 1 capable. He continued that there was an option to purchase analog only equipment, but they realized

a need to begin making a migration towards a digital system. He added that they would likely need to wait for the subscribers (*Fire and EMS groups*) to upgrade their equipment before a digital system could be sought. Mr. Girard opined it seemed the new equipment planned for purchase would be a good investment because it could be used on either a digital or analog communications system and Mr. Neale agreed.

Undersheriff Lamouree recalled that during the presentation made by Televate representatives in October of 2014, estimations were made that the cost for the communications system upgrade would be in the range of \$6 to \$8 million, with the digital communications system falling into the higher cost range. He noted that recently, agencies across the United States had been required to narrowband their communications systems which required many Fire and EMS agencies that did not have a lot of funding to begin with to purchase new equipment. Undersheriff Lamouree stated that changing to a digital communications system now would be somewhat of an unfunded mandate as those same Fire and EMS agencies that had just purchased new equipment for the narrowbanding would be required to repeat these purchases for the digital system; he added they had based the decision to proceed with an upgraded analog communications system on this concern. Mr. Neale indicated they realized that at some point in the future, Warren County's communications system would be more digital than analog, but for the time being, and probably for the next four to five years, the system would remain primarily analog. He noted they planned to suggest that all equipment purchased in the future be of a type that could be used in both an analog and digital capacity to prevent a large expense when they moved to a digital system. Mr. Neale stated that right now he did not believe they were in a position to make this move as many Fire and EMS agencies had equipment which was only suited for an analog system.

Mr. Taylor recalled prior discussions where they had talked about the portable vehicle units not being able to receive communications upon leaving a vehicle and he questioned whether not moving to a digital system would worsen this issue. Undersheriff Lamouree replied that \$100,000 of the total requested would cover the costs of installing vehicle repeaters in the law enforcement vehicles. He noted that part of the Televate presentation had focused on their recommendation that the County refrain from relying on portable units and instead install repeater units in every vehicle requiring radio communication, including those used by Fire, EMS and DPW personnel; however, Undersheriff Lamouree advised, their focus through this program would be to improve communication for the law enforcement vehicles. He noted they had attempted to utilize repeater units which were probably 10 or more years old that had been removed from the law enforcement vehicles under the prior Sheriff's administration, but there were not enough units to install one in every vehicle and some of them were failing due to age.

Sheriff York pointed out that the last two pages of the Agenda included pricing information for the communication upgrade project. He noted that the cumulative totals for the new antenna sites in Warrensburg, Lake Luzerne and Stony Creek, as well as the \$100,000 for the vehicle repeaters, represented the total phase 1 project cost of \$959,600. Undersheriff Lamouree commented on the price differences for each new antennae site, explaining that the price for the Warrensburg site was less because they would be using some existing equipment; he added that the cost for the Luzerne site was lower because they would be partnering with Saratoga County to use a tower already in place. Undersheriff Lamouree commented that the Stony Creek site would be the most expensive because this would be a wholly new site for which all new equipment would be purchased once a suitable location was chosen.

Undersheriff Lamouree advised they had applied for grant funding to support the upgrade costs, requesting a total of \$1.9 million. He said earlier that morning he had discovered that 50 counties had submitted applications, representing a total of \$170 million in requests; however, he stated, there was only a total of \$50 million in grant funding available to be distributed State-wide. Undersheriff Lamouree commented that they were hopeful grant funding would be awarded, but he was unable to

confirm they would receive the amount requested. He noted that the funding agency was suggesting upgrades to a digital system and Warren County was walking a fine line by upgrading to what was classified as a "digital-capable" system. Undersheriff Lamouree advised they would not receive any indication as to whether grant funding would be awarded until the end of the year, which meant that if they waited for this determination they would have bypassed an entire season when the work could have been completed to make these new antenna sites operational. Sheriff York added that they were presenting the request for funding in order to proceed with these new sites as quickly as possible, rather than waiting for a determination on grant funding.

Mr. Girard pointed out that during the Televate presentation the Board had been encouraged to begin the communications upgrade project sooner, rather than later, due to the County's significant problem. He then questioned whether any funding had been allocated in the 2015 Budget to address the project and Sheriff York replied in the negative, advising they were requesting the funding to begin the phase 1 portion of the project and to determine where the funding could be found. Ms. Wood apprised this item would need to be referred to the Finance Committee to determine the source of funding; she added the action of the Public Safety Committee would be solely to decide whether they were comfortable with the amount requested and that they were in favor of commencing the work.

Ms. Seeber asked if the grant funds could be applied retroactively for monies already spent or if it would only apply for expenses incurred after the funds were granted. Undersheriff Lamouree responded this was a very good question and he confirmed that the funds could only be used for expenses incurred after the grant funds were awarded. Ms. Seeber then inquired as to whether the funding requested was available in the 2015 Budget, given the costs the County anticipated incurring for various things such as the court expansion project and continued Westmount operations. Mr. Thomas, *speaking as Budget Officer*, advised this was a decision that would be made by the Board of Supervisors and would likely involve the County's Unappropriated Surplus Funds; however, he said they could probably cover the principal and interest on the bond for the court expansion project and fund one other project. Ms. Seeber asked if the grant required any matching funds and Undersheriff Lamouree replied in the negative.

A discussion ensued, during which a motion was made by Mr. Girard and seconded by Mr. Simpson to approve the request and refer same to the Finance Committee to determine a source of funding for the \$959,600 necessary to complete the phase 1 work.

Ms. Seeber questioned what the typical life span of the radio equipment was and how long it would be before this new equipment was deemed obsolete and in need of replacement. Mr. Neale answered that the equipment usually lasted about seven years, but could last longer if it was well cared for; he added that subscriber equipment, especially their portable units, typically lasted for only about three to five years. Mr. Neale noted the current antenna equipment on the mountain sites had been in place for about ten years.

There being no further discussion, Ms. Wood called the question and the aforementioned motion was carried unanimously.

Resuming the Agenda review with the Topics for Discussion section, Sheriff York apprised three positions in the Corrections Division had been filled due to two resignations and one new hire; he advised the impact to the County Budget was a savings of \$7,272.35.

Undersheriff Lamouree addressed the second Topics for Discussion item, apprising that the 400 gallon hot water tank for the Corrections Kitchen was being replaced at a cost of \$19,844 as an emergency repair. He explained that months ago a leak in the 10-11 year old tank was detected and they had pursued quotes to fix it as there was serious concern that significant damage could occur if the leak

worsened. Undersheriff Lamouree advised he had spoken with Martin Auffredou, *County Attorney*, about the matter and Mr. Auffredou had made the decision to identify this as an emergency repair. He noted that the current 400 gallon tank was now being replaced by a set of 200 gallon tanks for ease of future repairs. Undersheriff Lamouree stated that BPI Mechanical Service was selected as having submitted the lowest quote for this work at the total of \$19,844. Additionally, he advised it had been discovered that the damper controls for the HVAC system in the Sheriff's Office, which adjusted the mix of fresh air brought into the building for both heating and cooling, were failing in a number of areas. He explained that a bid process had been undertaken to address repair of the damper controls with the lowest bidder being Trane US Inc., at a price of \$25,963; he noted that only two bids for this work had been received with the second bid being from BPI at \$27,390.

Mr. Girard asked if these repairs were funded in the 2015 Budget and Sheriff York replied in the negative, advising these were unforeseen repairs that they had not accounted for. Mr. Girard commented that given the age of the Public Safety Building, he believed these types of repairs needed to be considered and he questioned whether the County's Buildings & Grounds staff worked with the Sheriff's Office to project what the future needs might be. Undersheriff Lamouree responded that they had people on staff that had been trained by different vendors to address these concerns. He pointed out it was one thing to know what repairs might be projected for future years, but both of the aforementioned issues were unforeseen. With regard to the damper controls, Undersheriff Lamouree apprised the failures had caused a strain on the system and during the past two summers they had experienced issues with the air conditioning system actually failing. He further noted that because the system was working inefficiently, it was driving up electricity costs. Mr. Girard commented that possibly a thorough review of the Public Safety Building could be preformed in an effort to predict where repairs might be needed; he added that they might also consider creating and funding a line in the budget to cover these types of expenses.

Mr. Beaty asked if unforeseen maintenance issues could be funded using drug forfeiture monies and Sheriff York replied in the negative, advising this was inappropriate because it would be considered supplanting the budget. Mr. McDevitt questioned how much drug forfeiture money was available and Sheriff York responded that he had not checked the actual total in some time, but said he believed there was a considerable amount. Sheriff York apprised that these funds were used to purchase equipment for drug enforcement needs, and to supplement the K-9 Unit; he added that the forfeiture monies were used to support many costs that would not otherwise be funded through the regular budget. Sheriff York stated that he had kept a listing of all expenditures of asset forfeiture monies since he had taken Office in 2008 which was available for review; he added that he believed since 2008 they had received about \$1.2 million and they had expended approximately \$750,000 to \$800,000 of that total.

Mr. McDevitt noted issue of body cameras used by police forces was repeatedly reported upon in the National news media and he requested an update on the status of purchasing this type of equipment for use by the Warren County Sheriff's Office. Sheriff York stated it had been almost a year since they had started researching the body cameras and he noted they would eventually be purchased using drug forfeiture monies. He advised there were many vendors selling these body cameras and they wanted to make sure that the unit they chose was worth the cost, even if it was more expensive than other versions. Sheriff York said they believed at some point the Federal government would step in and require their use. Mr. McDevitt commented that he did not envy Sheriff York in this task because it would not be easy to effectively and positively implement this change. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Brock asked the cost of a body camera and Undersheriff Lamouree responded the higher end units cost about \$1,000 each. Undersheriff Lamouree apprised they had done a lot of research on the cameras and had put together a panel comprised of Patrol Officers, Investigators and Sergeants who had asked to be involved in the policy development, as well as the test and evaluation process for the

different units. He noted they were currently testing two cameras from different vendors, both of which had their own benefits and drawbacks; he added one factor was the video storage component as certain cameras might be less expensive, but incurred an ongoing expense for data storage. Undersheriff Lamouree indicated that they were considering developing an in-house secure server to retain this data and avoid such storage costs. He apprised he had recently been approached by one company that required ongoing data storage with an offer to discuss the possibility of allowing the Sheriff's Office to purchase their equipment, but provide for their own data storage. Sheriff York interjected that many law enforcement agencies were immediately jumping on board to purchase equipment without sufficiently researching it first, which he was not in favor of. He said he believed they should review the options available to make sure they were purchasing the best equipment possible. He concluded that cost was not the relegating factor in making this decision as they were seeking to purchase the equipment that would last the longest.

Ms. Seeber commented that it may be worthwhile to provide a brief presentation at a future meeting relative to asset forfeiture monies, specifically relating to how they were received and how they could be used appropriately as there were certain guidelines that had to be followed. Sheriff York agreed that he could make this presentation and would forward the guidelines to anyone wishing to review them.

As there was no further business to come before the Public Safety Committee on motion made by Ms. Seeber and seconded by Mr. Simpson, Ms. Wood adjourned the meeting at 10:17 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah McLenithan, Deputy Clerk of the Board
As typed by Amanda Allen, Clerk of the Board

