

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: **FIRE PREVENTION & CONTROL**

DATE: JANUARY 26, 2006

Committee Members Present:	Marvin Lemery, Fire Prevention & Building
Supervisors VanNess	Code Enforcement Administrator
Bentley	Wm. Thomas, Chairman
Belden	Joan Parsons, Administrator/Clerk
Haskell	Richard Mason, Supervisor
Barody	Carlene A. Ramsey, Sr. Legislative Office
Geraghty	Specialist
Girard	

---

Mr. VanNess called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Bentley, seconded by Mr. Belden and carried unanimously to accept minutes of the previous meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk.

Mr. VanNess said he wanted to thank Chairman Thomas and Supervisor Bentley for the opportunity to chair the Fire Prevention & Control Committee. He said he felt he had some "big shoes to fill" and he would do his best to do so.

Marv Lemery, Fire Prevention & Building Code Enforcement Administrator, distributed an agenda packet to each of the Committee members and a copy is on file with the minutes. He extended a welcome to the new members of the Committee, Supervisors Girard and Geraghty. He noted, with the membership increased from 5 to 7 members, he expected the Committee may be able to get even more accomplished in the coming year.

Turning to Agenda review at Item I. Building Codes, Mr. Lemery noted the 2005 Annual Report included the December monthly report. He pointed out his Department issued 1,401 permits during the year 2005, which was a 9% increase from 2004 and a new record high.

In addition, Mr. Lemery stated, the 2005 revenues of \$179,977, represented a 45% increase over the 2004 revenues. He noted some of the increase was due to the increase in fees while the remainder was a reflection of the number and/or size of the jobs issued permits.

Responding to Mr. Belden's question, Mr. Lemery estimated the 2005 revenue would cover approximately one-half of the Department's overall budget. He stated the only time the Department had been completely cost-free to the County was in 1984 and 1985. He clarified that Warren County was the first county in New York State to transition to county-wide code enforcement and the State had provided funding to help

offset the costs of the Department during the first 2 years.

Mr. Lemery commented the Department had been bringing in over \$100,000 since 2002. He also mentioned there were still 1,275 active permits within the County right now.

Motion was made by Mr. Belden, seconded by Mr. Barody and carried unanimously to accept the annual report, a copy of which is included with the Agenda packet.

Mr. Girard queried how the permit issuance and the follow-up sessions took place. Mr. Lemery explained his Department sends a copy of any permits issued to the respective Town, along with a copy of the certificate of occupancy. At that point, he said he understood the matter would be referred to the town assessor's office for follow-up. He clarified his Department did not follow-up on what the permits net in assessed valuation, nor were the permits issued based on the cost of the project.

Mr. Mason commented the Town of Chester had the largest number of new permits issued, which surprised him. Mr. Lemery verified the permits were basically on single family homes. He also noted the Town of Bolton had also seen a high amount of residential activity. However, he said he expected to see more commercial activity in the Town of Johnsbury, Lake Luzerne and Lake George.

General discussion ensued.

Mrs. Parsons entered the meeting at 10:42 a.m.

Mr. Lemery stated the national building publications indicate the high level of building activity was not expected to end any time soon, at least for the next 2 or 3 years. He cautioned the Committee to bear in mind his Department would be needing a new full-time inspector within the next year or so.

Returning to Agenda review at Item IB, Request for Personnel, Mr. Lemery explained the part-time building inspector had resigned due to medical reasons and he presented a Notice of Intent to Fill Vacant Position.

In response to questions from various Supervisors, Mr. Lemery explained the two full-time inspectors were currently working with the active 1,275 permits. He noted that one inspector carried close to 800 permits and the second inspector carried over 400 permits. Given the size of the northern portion of the County, he commented both of the inspectors logged in a huge number of miles each day, to accomplish 14-16 inspections each day.

Mr. Lemery expressed his concern the volume of inspections were infringing on their ability to provide high quality inspections each and every time. He also noted the Department's mileage appropriation for 2004 was \$15,000 and in 2005 was at

\$18,000. Therefore, he said, he was currently researching cost effectiveness of either leasing or purchasing 2 vehicles for the inspectors.

A brief discussion ensued.

Mr. Mason left the meeting at 10:45 a.m.

Mr. Belden remarked that he felt it was important the inspectors had enough time to perform the high quality inspections. He also pointed out the building codes require inspections be performed after virtually each step in the construction process.

Motion was made by Mr. Belden, seconded by Mr. Barody and carried unanimously to authorize the request to fill vacant position be forwarded to the Personnel Committee. A copy of the Notice of Intent form is on file with the minutes.

Motion was made by Mr. Belden and seconded by Mr. Barody to authorize Mr. Lemery to investigate the cost benefits of lease vs. purchase of two vehicles for the inspectors.

Extensive discussion developed.

As one final point under Building Codes, Mr. Haskell queried how the inspector's uniform issue was progressing. Mr. Lemery explained that so far, a steel-toed work boot had been selected. They were now selecting a three-season jacket (with a zip in liner) that will say Warren County Building Codes; the Identification Badges were being worn, and both long- and short-sleeved polo shirts were being ordered.

Mr. Girard queried whether or not the Budget Officer had approved of the proposed new full-time inspector and change over to vehicles instead of mileage reimbursement. He pointed out it was only January and were already discussing matters that he would have expected to be handled at the budget review time.

Mr. Lemery clarified that if a new part-time inspector could be hired relatively quickly to ease the burden even a little bit, he noted the full-time position may not be necessary. As for the mileage vs. vehicles, he said, the year end totals helped to bring the matter to the foreground. He pointed out the lease of two four-wheel drive small pick-up trucks, through State contract, may cost less than \$14,000 a year (with gas included).

Returning to Agenda Item II, Fire Prevention & Control, Mr. Lemery reported on Item A, Training Center. He stated the joint committees with Warren and Washington Counties had been very active and productive. In fact, he stated, a Shared Municipal Services Grant application had been submitted and he passed the application around for the Supervisors to review. The consulting firm, LaBerge Group, from Albany, had been hired to prepare the proposal. He noted the firm had an architect, a planner and an engineer on staff who were involved with the application.

Mr. Lemery reported the initial design, with all the "bells and whistles" had been priced out at \$1.7 Million. He declared the joint Committee's intention was to pare down the design in such a way the cost to the two Counties would be under .5 million dollars each. He noted the application was for a \$200,000 grant (with \$100,000 per County) and each County had to match it with \$10,000. Therefore, he noted that if the application proved to be successful, that would mean an additional \$180,000 in the Capital Project Code [ ]. He stated both Washington and Warren Counties had \$70,000 set aside, respectively. At some point, he noted the Washington County funds would be transferred to Warren County so that Warren County maintains the lead agency status on the project. That way, the future contractors would only have to be concerned with one auditing department, one purchasing agent, etc.

Mr. Lemery mentioned the joint committee had already met with the maintenance personnel & facility management staff at Adirondack Community College; the property has been visited; and a professional drawing of the proposed facility has been developed.

Mr. Wm. Thomas left the meeting at 10:55 a.m.

Continuing, Mr. Lemery stated a meeting was scheduled in the afternoon with the Washington and Warren County Committees, Chairman Thomas and Chairman Trinkle (of Washington County) and the ACC Board of Trustees. He explained the College had set aside a 6-acre lot and the joint Committee's request was for a 10-acre parcel. In addition, he said a short Power Point presentation on the project would be shown to the Trustees. He predicted the project was in line for a late spring 2007 ribbon cutting.

Mr. Lemery said he was optimistic that additional grant funds would be secured. Letters of support have been requested from every possible office, he noted, and soon he would bring an outline letter to the Supervisors seeking their support as well.

However, he explained the project was competing with the Warren County Probation Department, the Town of Queensbury, the City of Glens Falls, and the Lake George Town and Village have all filed for the grant.

Mr. VanNess commented that he felt the LaBerge Group had done a fantastic job on the grant application.

Mr. Belden suggested that Mr. Lemery consult with the Planning and Community Development Department to ensure that every possible avenue for funding had been researched. Mr. Lemery confirmed he would speak with Ms. Tatch, the Planning Director.

Mr. Lemery observed that two pages of the grant application were dedicated to the associates degrees being developed at ACC in Fire Science or Fire Management. Such programs, he said, were not currently available within close vicinity to Warren County

residents and the College views the programs as a way to increase its enrollment and revenue raised through registration. He confirmed the College intended to maintain the building, grounds, etc. once the facility is built, in addition to administering the programs, scheduling the training, instructors, etc.

Mr. Lemery reported the current plan did not call for any live, class A fire training, which meant no lumber, hay, or other product would be brought in to burn. The building, he noted, would host only propane fires and theatrically generated smoke which would avoid any environmental impact, no water runoff, etc.

Following an extensive discussion on the building particulars, Mr. Lemery agreed to provide a copy of the grant application to each of the committee members for a more in-depth review.

Mr. Lemery remarked the current training courses includes two Firefighter I courses (So. Qby. Firehouse and Chestertown Firehouse) with 49 rookie firefighters enrolled; an Introduction to Line Officer course in Lake Luzerne with 26 students; and Rescue Technician course in Bolton Landing with 27 students. He noted the 2005-2006 training hours (447 hours) have been expended and the new session begins April 1 for 2006-2007, with applications submitted for additional pool hours for a Victims Extrication training course, a Fire Police course and an Emergency Vehicle Operation course. The County currently had 3 State fire instructors who can each teach 150 hours a year, and he noted, the State had just authorized a 4<sup>th</sup> fire instructor for the County which meant he would be searching for a candidate. In addition, Mr. Lemery pointed out that Supervisor Girard had, himself, been a State Instructor.

On February 2<sup>nd</sup>, Mr. Lemery commented he would be meeting with a group of representatives from the New York State Chiefs Association, to survey the former Howard Johnson's Motel on Aviation Road in Queensbury. He noted, the Association was hoping to use the site for their live-burn training program which was scheduled for the week prior to the Fire Chief's Conference in June 2006.

On January 31<sup>st</sup>, Mr. Lemery reported, the Training Committee members will meet with the State Chief's representatives to discuss possible funding assistance. He also reported that the Executive Director of State Chiefs, Thomas LaBelle, was a former lobbyist, who had offered his assistance in seeking grant funds for the Training Center, as well.

General discussion ensued.

Mr. Tessier entered and Mrs. Parsons exited the meeting at 11:14 a.m.

Mr. Haskell pointed out he had recently met with Assemblywoman Theresa Sayward and learned she had proposed a bill to allow the children of volunteers to attend a SUNY college for free. He commented a similar bill had passed for the children of the

9/11 volunteers, yet the State Legislature seemed reluctant to extend the program to volunteers in other areas. He queried whether or not there was anything the County could do to support the volunteer community.

Mr. Lemery observed that a number of individual municipalities have granted property tax-breaks to firefighters, with the approval of the State Legislature. He stated, to his knowledge, such relief had never been proposed in Warren County.

Following an extensive discussion, Mr. Lemery agreed to look into possible incentives the County could do to entice volunteers for firefighters and emergency medical services. He noted that FASNY (Firemen's Association of the State of New York) may be a good resource regarding recruitment incentives.

Mr. Bentley observed the population quoted in the grant application, was only 61,000. He said he felt, if it was a joint application with Washington County then the population figure should be the combined population, which would be closer to 130,000 total.

Mr. Lemery stated he would inquire as to how to amend the application.

Returning to Agenda Item II. B, HAZMAT/WMD Equipment (hazardous materials/weapons of mass destruction), Mr. Lemery apprised the City of Glens Falls had recently elected to provide EMS services, and purchase new equipment for the program. He expressed his concern that the City may soon decide it no longer has the space available to house and maintain the County's HAZMAT/WMD trailer and tow vehicle.

Mr. Lemery urged the Committee to consider alternative housing for the equipment. He reminded the Committee of past attempts to contact the property owner of the lot adjacent to the Broad Street Firehouse and solicited their suggestions and comments.

General discussion ensued as to other possible locations.

Mr. Kenny entered the meeting at 11:23 a.m.

Mr. Lemery acknowledged that Mr. Kenny was the City of Glens Falls Ward 4 Supervisor, where the Broad Street Station was located. Mr. VanNess briefly reviewed the discussion on the floor and Mr. Kenny agreed to assist in the communications.

Mr. Girard, as a City of Glens Falls firefighter and Ward 1 Supervisor, spoke in favor of the County's efforts to keep the equipment at the City's Broad Street Station. He agreed to do what he could to encourage the City's involvement, as well.

Messrs. Tessier and Iusi entered the meeting at 11:26 a.m.

Following further discussion, motion was made by Mr. Belden, seconded by Mr.

Bentley, and carried unanimously to authorize Mr. Lemery to contact the pertinent City Officials regarding the lot adjacent to the Broad Street Firehouse, as well as other city parcels that may be suitable alternatives for the WMD truck facility.

Returning to Agenda review at Item II. C, Contracts with Dive Teams, Mr. Lemery presented resolution requests to authorize the renewal of the contracts for 2006-2007. Motion was made by Mr. Barody, seconded by Mr. Haskell, and carried unanimously to authorize the contract renewal between Warren County and the Town of Horicon; and the Town of Lake George. Copies of the resolution request are on file with the minutes and the necessary resolutions were authorized for the next Board meeting.

There being no further business to come before the committee, on motion by Mr. Barody and seconded by Mr. Belden, Mr. VanNess adjourned the meeting at 11:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Carlene A. Ramsey, Sr. Legislative Office Specialist