

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: **FIRE PREVENTION & CONTROL**

DATE: SEPTEMBER 29, 2006

Committee Members Present:

Supervisors VanNess
Bentley
Belden
Haskell
Girard

Others Present:

Marvin Lemery, Fire Prevention & Building
Code Enforcement Administrator
Joan Parsons, Commissioner of
Administrative & Fiscal Services
Joan Sady, Clerk
Supervisor Stec
Supervisor Caimano
Kathleen Sonnabend, Queensbury
David Strainer, Queensbury
Matthew Sokol, Queensbury
Carlene A. Ramsey, Sr. Legislative Office
Specialist

Committee Members Absent:

Supervisor Geraghty

Vacant: Town of Queensbury

Mr. VanNess called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m.

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

Marvin 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.

Mr. Lemery began his review with Agenda Item I, Building Codes. He noted the Monthly Activity Report showed the permit totals were 7% higher than the previous year's totals, and the revenue was up by 5%. Therefore, he projected the Building Codes revenue for 2006 would be 15% higher than originally budgeted for.

Mr. Belden said he felt any increase in revenue was good news for the County.

At Item I.B., Request to fill vacant position, Mr. Lemery reported that Bob Moon had officially resigned his part-time position of Code Enforcement Officer. Mr. Lemery presented a Notice of Intent to Fill Vacant Position and he verified the funds were in the budget.

Mr. Lemery pointed out that Mr. Moon would remain as the First Deputy Fire Coordinator, just as he had done for the past 46 years. He said Mr. Moon had also served the County as a Volunteer Firefighter for the past 61 years.

Motion was made by Mr. Haskell, seconded by Mr. Belden and carried unanimously to approve the Notice of Intent to Fill Vacant Position of Part-Time Code Enforcement Officer, at an annual base salary of \$8,159, and to forward same to the Personnel

Committee for review. Copies of the Notice of Intent to Fill Vacant Position and the Request to Fill Vacant Position are on file with the minutes.

Messrs. Caimano and Stec entered the meeting at 11:11 a.m.

Mr. Lemery continued Agenda review at Item I.C., Auto expenses, as he reminded the Committee members of the question regarding any vehicles "left over" on State contract. He reported that when he consulted with the County Purchasing Agent, and researched the OGS (Office of General Services) website, he located several "left over" Jeep Liberty vehicles. He said the vehicles were available under State contract at a purchase price of \$14,700 each, which was a \$9,000 reduction off the regular "lot price."

Mr. Lemery stated the 2006 Building Codes Budget did not include the funds for this purchase. However, he said the 2007 Building Codes Budget had \$25,000 for mileage reimbursement. He stated those funds would be cut, considerably, if the County purchased vehicles for the Department. He further noted the mileage reimbursement for 2006 had been budgeted at \$22,000, which was running out. He said the next Agenda Item was a request to transfer funds into this account.

Responding to questions from various Supervisors, Mr. Lemery mentioned the vehicle's price on the 2007 State contract would be approximately 9% higher (than the \$14,700 for 2006). He confirmed the 2007 Budget included funds for insurance, gas, oil, maintenance, etc. He also mentioned that the County's Vehicle Maintenance Policy was so effective, he predicted the vehicles would last a minimum of five to six years.

Motion was made by Mr. Haskell and seconded by Mr. Bentley to authorize the vehicle purchase, provided the funds were available.

Joan Parsons, Commissioner of Administrative and Fiscal Services, explained the account entitled Transfers-Capital Projects (A.9950.9) may have funds available for this purchase. She said the County had a Capital Project for purchasing vehicles, and if the funds were transferred, the purchases could be made within the 2006 Budget. She said she felt the County would ultimately save money via the purchase of vehicles in lieu of mileage reimbursement.

Mrs. Parsons left the meeting at 11:18 a.m. to retrieve the detailed account information.

Messrs. Haskell and Bentley agreed to amend their motion to authorize the purchase of three vehicles, provided funds were available for transfer, as suggested by the Commissioner of Administrative and Fiscal Services.

Mrs. Parsons re-entered the meeting at 11:22 a.m.

Mrs. Parsons reported the 2007 budget did include funds for the purchase of vehicles.

She noted that if the purchase was made in 2006, then the 2007 budget could be reduced accordingly.

Mr. VanNess called the question and the motion was carried unanimously to proceed with the vehicle purchase with 2006 funds and reduce the 2007 budget request accordingly. *[Subsequent to the meeting it was determined a Request for Transfer of Funds in the amount of \$47,000 from Transfers - Capital Projects (A.9950.9) into Building and Fire Code A.3620 shall be forwarded to the Finance Committee for review. A copy of the Request form is on file with the minutes.]*

Mr. Haskell said he felt it was important that the Building Code Inspectors would now arrive at the inspection sites in a vehicle marked with the County Seal, while wearing their County uniform shirts. He expected the private homeowners would appreciate it as well.

Returning to Agenda review at Item I.D. Transfers, Mr. Lemery reported the postage and mileage reimbursement expenses had exceeded the original budgeted amounts. However, he said, the contractual expenses had a small surplus of funds. He proposed to transfer \$5,500 (out of Fire Prevention and Control Contracts) to increase Postage by \$500, and mileage reimbursement by \$5,000.

Motion was made by Mr. Belden, seconded by Mr. Bentley and carried unanimously to approve the Request for Transfer of Funds in the amount of \$5,500 from Fire Prevention and Control Contract (A.3410.470) to increase the Building and Fire Code Postage (A.3620.424) by \$500, and increase the Building and Fire Code Travel, Education, Conference (A.3620.444) by \$5,000; and to forward the request to the Finance Committee. A copy of the request form is on file with the minutes.

Next, Mr. Lemery reported on Agenda Item II, Fire Prevention & Control. Item II A, he said, was a resolution request to re-apply for the SMSI (Shared Municipal Services Incentive) Grant. He reminded the Committee members the OGS had increased the available funds from \$3 million (in 2006) to \$35 million (in 2007) with a maximum of \$200,000 per county. Therefore, he said, the new joint application would be for \$400,000 (\$200,000 for Warren County and \$200,000 for Washington County). He noted the application deadline was October 23, 2006.

Mr. Lemery mentioned the SMSI grant application would be prepared by the Laberge Group, the same firm who prepared the original application. He said the fee for the new application would be \$2,000 (50% lower than the previous application). Since the fee would be split between the two counties, he presented a resolution request to authorize the contract with Laberge Group be extended in the amount of \$1,000 for professional services.

Motion was made by Mr. Belden and seconded by Mr. Girard to approve the two resolution requests for Items II A and B, as follows:

- a. authorize a grant application (jointly with Washington County) to be submitted

to the Shared Municipal Services Incentive (SMSI) Program in the amount of \$400,000 (\$200,000 for Warren County and \$200,000 for Washington County); and

b. authorize the contract with Laberge Group be extended in the amount of \$1,000 for professional services related to the joint application for SMSI grant funds.

Motion was carried unanimously, as presented, and to authorize the necessary resolutions be prepared for the October Board meeting. Copies of the two resolution request forms are on file with the minutes.

Mr. Belden pointed out that Senator Little had sponsored the bill to increase the available funds for the SMSI Program. He said he felt the County needed to call upon the Senator for her help and support with the Counties' application.

Mr. Haskell queried how many times the Laberge Group had been hired to prepare grant applications for County departments. He suggested that someone should track the success records for the various consultants who prepare such applications for the County. However, he said, he was pleased to learn the fee for the second application was 50% lower than what they charged for the first application (that brought in zero dollars for either County).

Motion was made by Mr. Belden to authorize the Chairman of the Board to send a letter to Senator Little requesting her support for the SMSI application.

Mr. Lemery explained the Chairman of the Board had already signed a letter that would be sent to all of the County's elected representatives which would: 1) ask for their support; and 2) ask them to write letters on the behalf of the County. In addition, he said, each of the Supervisors would be asked to send a letter in support of the application, as well. He said he would distribute the letter at the October 13th Board meeting.

Mr. Belden withdrew his motion.

Continuing, Mr. Lemery said, he recently spoke with Kyle Mender, of OGS, to determine why the first application had been denied. He said he learned that the first application's weak areas included letters of support. Consequently, he reported, he had obtained letters of support from all of Warren County's (and Washington County's) fire departments and emergency medical services (EMS) providers, each of the Town Boards, and all of the elected representatives.

In addition, Mr. Lemery said, the application would be further strengthened by amendments which illustrated the additional cost savings, along with the alternate site locations being considered.

Responding to Mr. Belden's question, Mr. Lemery indicated he would forward the proposed letter of support to each of the Town Supervisors, for their review prior to the October Board meeting.

Returning to Agenda review at Item IIC, Mr. Lemery said he wanted to amend the 2007 Budget request to increase the Fire Prevention and Control Contract (A.3410 470) by \$50,000. If appropriated, he said, the funds would be transferred into the Capital Project for the Fire Training Center (H254.9550 280). He noted that \$50,000 was appropriated in the 2006 budget, \$20,000 in 2005, and Washington County had matched these funds.

Mr. VanNess said he understood Washington County planned to appropriate the \$50,000 for this year, as well.

Responding to questions from various Supervisors, Mr. Lemery said the requested \$50,000 would bring Warren County's appropriated fund balance to \$116,000, to match Washington County's \$116,000. He said the available funds would be used for the engineering and design of the Emergency Services Training Center. He further noted the RFP (request for proposal) had been issued, the bids received and a decision would need to be made relatively soon.

Mr. Lemery reported that he recently met with Kevin McLaughlin of the National Development Corporation, along with Len Fosbrook of the Economic Development Corporation. He said they discussed different options that may be available to the County for a training center. Prior to awarding the bid, he said he intended to meet with Mr. McLaughlin and the key individuals for each of the possible site locations. Following all of these meetings, he said he would report back to the Committee with a recommendation regarding the bid award.

Mr. VanNess explained that Mr. McLaughlin was working with the two counties in hopes of finding a way to build the training center at zero expense to the taxpayers.

Mr. Lemery noted one of Mr. McLaughlin's suggestions was as follows:

- ✓ the two counties should form a 501C3 Not For Profit Corporation that would build the facility with tax free dollars;
- ✓ the County would lease the facility back to the corporation for a specific period of time; and
- ✓ ownership would then revert to the corporation.

Mr. Lemery said he expected to have some type of plan to bring back to the Committee by the end of the year.

Responding to questions from Mr. Belden, he explained the visits to different facilities had helped them scale back the initial plans, considerably. As an example, he noted, the 5-story structure had been reduced to just 3 stories with a completely clean-burn facility. He said they also learned a prefabricated building could further reduce the costs. Therefore, he said, he would not venture a guess as to what the total costs may be, since the site location would also impact the costs.

Following extensive discussion, motion was made by Mr. Girard, seconded by Mr.

Bentley and carried unanimously to approve the request to increase the Fire Training Center Capital Project H254.9550 280 in the amount of \$50,000; with the source of funding being a transfer from Fire Prevention Contract (A.3410.470), and to refer the same to the Finance Committee. A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.

Mr. Lemery resumed Agenda review at Item III, EMS, and he noted Item A pertained to MCI (mass casualty incident) equipment the County EMS had accumulated and the storage dilemma. Currently, he said, the Deputy EMS Coordinator, Chris Norton, had loaned his home-made 4x6 trailer to transport the equipment around the County.

Consequently, Mr. Lemery reported, the EMS Coordinator, Gary Scidmore, had researched the costs for a more appropriate trailer to house the equipment. He said an MCI trailer had been located, which was available under State contract, in the amount of \$5,700.

Mrs. Parsons confirmed that since the price was under \$10,000, the purchase could be made through State contract. She concurred with Mr. Lemery regarding the need for a more suitable trailer. In addition, she said she felt the purchase of an MCI trailer may be an appropriate use of the Contingency Fund.

Motion was made by Mr. Belden and seconded by Mr. Haskell to approve the Contingent Fund Transfer Request in the amount of \$5,700 for A.4022 EMS Other Equipment and to forward same to the Finance Committee.

However, Mr. Belden said he wondered if the MCI trailer could be purchased with the HAZMAT/WMD (hazardous materials/weapons of mass destruction) grant funds.

Mr. Lemery explained the HAZMAT/WMD funds were strictly for the purpose of HAZMAT/WMD and had no connection to the MCI equipment. However, he pointed out, the Warren County Public Health Department had been very successful with its applications for funds regarding BioTerrorism.

Mr. Belden said he would like to amend his motion such that, in the event an alternate source of funding could not be secured through the Public Health Department, then the Contingent Fund Transfer Request would be sent to the Finance Committee.

Mr. VanNess called the question and the motion was carried unanimously to approve the Contingent Fund Transfer Request in the amount of \$5,700 for A.4022 EMS Other Equipment to be forwarded to the Finance Committee; provided that an alternate source of funding could not be secured through the Public Health Department. A copy of the request form is on file with the minutes.

Mr. Lemery requested direction from the Committee with regards to the deployment of the HAZMAT/WMD team for two different incidents (an incident in North Creek and a practice drill in Essex County). He explained he needed a method of billing the

insurance carrier (for the North Creek incident) to obtain reimbursement of the related costs. He stated, such costs included the overtime and staffing for the HAZMAT team; five different fire departments; foods supplied by the North Creek Fire Department; fuel, materials, and two damaged HAZMAT suits that need to be replaced. He said he was not sure of exactly how he should go about billing the insurance carriers.

Mrs. Parsons explained the County had a Revenue Code specifically for Insurance Recoveries. She said both sides of the Fire Prevention and Control Budget would be increased, and then the funds would be available to distribute to the suppliers.

Mr. Stec mentioned that this discussion had reminded him of an issue with the North Queensbury Fire Department. He pointed out the wind storm that struck the County in late February had caused significant damage in Northern Queensbury, and the power outage lasted for several days. He reported that the North Queensbury Fire Department had itemized approximately \$11,000 worth of expenses related to the event. He said it was his understanding the County had declared a State of Emergency and he questioned if there was any mechanism available for reimbursement to the Fire Department.

Mr. Lemery acknowledged the County had declared a County-wide emergency although he was aware of only one situation that resulted in a bill being presented to his Department. He said he discussed the bill with the County Attorney, Paul Dusek, and learned the County did not have any liability for the damages. In addition, he said he understood that once the State of Emergency was declared, an application needed to be sent to the State for reimbursement. If the State approved the application, he noted, then reimbursement could follow.

After an extensive discussion, Mr. Lemery mentioned that the Natural Disaster and Civil Defense Director, John Farrell, was the individual he would expect to complete this type of application. *[Subsequent to the meeting Mr. Farrell confirmed that no invoices had been received, and no documentation had been filed with either the Federal or State Agencies with regards to this incident.]*

Mr. Girard questioned whether or not an RFP would be issued for the Cause and Origin Team. Mr. Lemery said the current contract would expire on December 31, 2006 and he would report on that matter in November.

Mr. Haskell pointed out the County Attorney's Office was extremely busy and would probably need at least a month to develop the specifics for the RFP. Mr. VanNess suggested last year's RFP might be suitable for a template of this year's.

There being no further business to come before the committee, on motion by Mr. Bentley and seconded by Mr. Belden, Mr. VanNess adjourned the meeting at 11:45 a.m.

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