

## WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

**COMMITTEE:** PUBLIC SAFETY (INCLUDING FIRE PREVENTION & BUILDING CODES, OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES AND SHERIFF AND COMMUNICATIONS)

**DATE:** SEPTEMBER 25, 2008

---

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

SUPERVISORS VANNESS  
BENTLEY  
O'CONNOR  
BELDEN  
HASKELL  
STEC

**COMMITTEE MEMBER ABSENT:**

SUPERVISOR GIRARD

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

BRIAN LAFLURE, FIRE COORDINATOR/DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES  
AMY MANNEY, DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES  
BUD YORK, SHERIFF  
AMY BARTLETT, FIRST ASSISTANT COUNTY ATTORNEY  
JOANN MCKINSTRY, DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OF ADMINISTRATIVE & FISCAL SERVICES  
JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD  
KEVIN GERAGHTY, BUDGET OFFICER  
ROBERT SWAN, UNDERSHERIFF  
MICHAEL GATES, LIEUTENANT, DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS  
SHANE ROSS, CHIEF DEPUTY  
TODD LUNT, HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR  
TOM RANDALL, *THE ADIRONDACK JOURNAL*  
SARAH MCLENITHAN, LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

---

Mr. VanNess called the meeting of the Public Safety Committee to order at 9:45 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Bentley, seconded by Mr. Belden and carried unanimously to approve the minutes from the August 22, 2008 meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Bud York, Sheriff, who distributed copies of the agenda to the Committee members; *a copy of which is on file with the minutes*. Sheriff York requested to amend the 2008 County budget to increase estimated revenues and appropriations in the amount of \$14,313, to reflect the receipt of State Aid through the Wireless 911 Reimbursement Program.

Motion was made by Mr. Belden, seconded by Mr. Bentley and carried unanimously to approve the request to amend the 2008 County Budget, as outlined above and to refer same to the Finance Committee. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes*.

Shane Ross, Chief Deputy, requested to amend Resolution 412 of 2003. Mr. Ross explained that the amended resolution would allow the Sheriff's Office to participate in the Local Enhanced Wireless 911 Grant Program each year rather than having to continue to request Board approval.

Motion was made by Mr. Belden, seconded by Mr. O'Connor and carried unanimously to approve the request to amend Resolution No. 142 of 2003 as outlined above and the necessary resolution was authorized for the October 17, 2008 Board meeting. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes*.

Sheriff York requested authorization for Cynthia S. Ross, Senior Account Clerk for the Sheriff's Correction Division, to enroll in Advanced Bookkeeping at Adirondack Community College (ACC). He noted that Ms. Ross had been given the task of looking into areas where the Corrections Division could save money, such as unnecessary items prescribed to inmates. Sheriff York explained that as per Federal Guidelines, the County was mandated to pay for all doctor prescribed items and if they were able to avoid having prescriptions written for items available through commissary the County would save funds.

JoAnn McKinistry, Deputy Commissioner of Administrative & Fiscal Services, questioned whether Ms. Ross had started attending the course to which Sheriff York replied affirmatively. Mrs. McKinistry asked if Sheriff York was aware that authorization was required from the Board prior to the start of the class and he replied in the affirmative; however, he added his Committee didn't meet last month due to the Budget meetings.

Motion was made by Mr. Belden, seconded by Mr. Bentley and carried unanimously to approve the request to enroll in a job-related course as outlined above and to refer same to the Personnel Committee. *A copy of the Application for Approval to Enroll in Job-Related Courses by Employee is on file with the minutes.*

Sheriff York advised that \$449.28 remained in the Sheriff's Office budget to cover the fuel expenditures for the remainder of the year. He noted that there had been insufficient funds budgeted for fuel in the 2008 budget due to the unexpected increase in the costs. He said he would return to the Committee at a later date to request a transfer of funds to cover the cost of fuel for the remainder of the year.

Mr. Haskell entered the meeting at 9:32 a.m.

On an inquiry by Mr. VanNess, Sheriff York stated that \$200,000 had been budgeted in 2008 for fuel and he had requested \$440,000 for the 2009 budget; however, he added, this amount had been decreased to \$350,000. He commented that even with the decrease in consumption, the average monthly cost of fuel was \$25,000 to \$30,000.

Moving along, Sheriff York stated that in excess of \$52,000 had been expended for repairs at the Public Safety Building due to lightning strikes that had occurred during the summer that had not been budgeted for. He advised that the County had been reimbursed a total of \$73,521.42 of the \$73,771.43 that had been expended due to lightning strikes that occurred in the summer of 2007 and the funds had been deposited to the General Fund. He noted that due to the unexpected costs incurred in 2008 from lightning strikes, it might become necessary to request a transfer of funds from the General Fund to the Sheriff's Office budget.

Mr. VanNess queried whether the funds could be returned to the Sheriff's Office budget and Mrs. McKinistry replied that funds received from insurance claims were deposited back to the General Fund and that requests for funds were dealt with on a case by case basis.

Brian LaFlure, Fire Coordinator/Director of the Office of Emergency Services, was asked to address the Committee on the lightning strike to the Public Safety Building in 2007. He stated that the voltage had come into the building through the phone system and had damaged both the phone and security systems of the building. Since that time, he advised, a consultant had

accessed the building and the grounding system and had suggested improvements which were put into effect in an attempt to avoid future lightning strikes; however, he noted, there was no way to prevent a direct lightning strike.

In reference to the lightning strike to the Prospect Mountain Tower that occurred over the summer, he stated, a 'suicide device' had been put into place that had prevented the lightning strike from causing millions of dollars worth of damage. Referring to the lightning strike that occurred at the Public Safety Building over the summer which caused damage to the security and phone systems, he said additional protection in the wiring had been put into place in an attempt to avoid future damages. He pointed out that the next step would be to put a lightning system on the building; however, he added this would cost in excess of \$30,000. He pointed out that this would prevent damages from direct lightning strikes, but not a surge from another source.

Reporting on the status of Warren County becoming an HIDTA (High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area) northern hub destination, Sheriff York pointed out that this would not be occurring and no funding would be received.

Mr. Ross announced that the State of New York had been vouchered for \$12,897.05 for the Warren County portion of the snowmobile grant funding. He said that he would return to the Committee with a request to amend the County Budget when the amount of the grant was known. Mr. Haskell queried whether the funds received would be used to cover the cost of equipment or salaries and Mr. Ross replied that the largest portion would be used to fund salaries and the remainder would be used for equipment costs.

Mr. Stec entered the meeting at 10:01 a.m.

On the request of Chairman Monroe, Sheriff York stated, Michael Gates, Lieutenant, Department of Corrections, had compiled an overview on the potential advantages and disadvantages of boarding Federal inmates, *a copy of which is on file with the minutes*. Referring to page six of the report, he reported that if the County boarded six Federal inmates a day, \$127,020 in revenue could be generated each year. He pointed out that the report outlined the disadvantages of boarding Federal inmates such as, exposing the current jail population and the corrections officers to foreign diseases, interpreter costs, and the increased risk of escape, suicide and mental health issues. Sheriff York advised the Committee that all of the information provided had been confirmed by Lt. Gates when he had attended the New York State Sheriff's Association Jail Administrators Conference which took place from September 23-24, 2008.

Mr. VanNess questioned how the County would be reimbursed for the boarding of Federal inmates and Lt. Gates replied that the County would be compensated on a per diem rate based on the number of cells that were designated for the boarding of Federal inmates. Mr. VanNess queried whether the cells could be occupied by other inmates when there were no Federal inmates requiring the designated cells and Lt. Gates responded that the cells could be occupied by local inmates; however, he added, if it became necessary to board a Federal inmate the County would need to make arrangements to board the local inmates elsewhere. Mr. Stec questioned whether the County would be reimbursed if the cells were not occupied by Federal inmates and Lt. Gates replied in the negative.

Mr. Stec pointed out that if the County had cells that were continually vacant he would be in favor of boarding Federal inmates to occupy the cells; however, he continued, since that was not the case he advised the Committee that he was opposed to the concept of boarding Federal inmates.

Mr. O'Connor noted that Sheila Weaver, Commissioner of the Department of Social Services (DSS), had advised the Supervisors that if the County were to board the Federal inmates it could have a possible negative impact on the DSS, due to the fact that many of the inmates families would relocate to the area to be closer to their loved ones and some of those families would require financial assistance from DSS. He also noted that he did not agree with the decision made by Washington County to board Federal inmates, as some of the families would likely move to the Glens Falls and Queensbury areas and would most likely require the assistance from Warren County DSS.

Sheriff York publicly commended Lieutenant Gates for taking the time to compile the overview of the possible impact from boarding Federal inmates.

Lt. Gates referred the Committee to pages 4 and 5 of the report, pointing out that they contained statistical data that had been produced for the New York State Commission of Corrections to account for classification, facility threat level, admissions, double bunking and mass arrests. He noted that 28 of the last 44 months the Warren County jail had boarded 156 inmates or more per day. Mr. Bentely questioned whether Warren County continued to board inmates from other Counties and Lt. Gates responded affirmatively and added that they would continue to board as many inmates as possible while maintaining a safe and secure facility.

It was the consensus of the Committee to recommend to the full Board that Federal inmates should not be boarded in the Warren County jail.

Sheriff York asked the Committee to give him some direction as to whether the Office of Emergency Services (OES) would be included under the supervision of the Sheriff. Mr. Stec replied that his feeling was that it should be viewed as Mr. LaFlure was an employee of the OES, and added that the position should not be supervised by the Sheriff's Office. Mr. Stec said that in speaking to Fire Chiefs in the Town of Queensbury, they had advised they did not feel that the Sheriff's Office should be supervising the OES and that the two Departments should be kept separate. Sheriff York clarified that it was his understanding the Fire Coordinator would be kept separate; however, he added, it was questionable whether Emergency Services should be supervised by the Sheriff's Office.

Mr. VanNess suggested that a meeting be arranged with the parties involved to decide as a group what direction to go and report back to the Committee. Mr. Haskell suggested that the Town Supervisors meet with their Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Captains to get suggestions from them and report back to the Committee.

Mr. Geraghty pointed out that due to budgetary restraints a reorganization of the EMS Department could not be effective until 2010.

Discussion ensued.

Subsequent to the discussion it was the consensus of the Committee that the OES should

continue to be staffed as it was currently with changes to be made as needed.

Sheriff York requested an executive session to discuss the medical history of a particular employee.

Motion was made by Mr. Haskell, seconded by Mr. Belden and carried unanimously, that executive session be declared pursuant to Section 105 (f) of the Public Officers Law.

Executive session was declared from 10:25 a.m. to 10:36 a.m.

Pursuant to the executive session, it was determined that no action was necessary.

This concluded the Sheriff's Office portion of the meeting and Sheriff York, Messrs. Gates, Ross and Swan exited at 10:38 a.m.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Mr. LaFlure, who distributed copies of the agenda to the Committee members, *a copy of which is on file with the minutes*. He thanked the Committee for their time and support during the change in administration.

Amy Manney, Deputy Director of the OES, referred the Committee to a copy of an email received from the State Emergency Management Office (SEMO) that was included in the agenda packet. She stated that the email pertained to a request that had been made to the Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA) requesting an extension to initiate the Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP). She noted that as long as the requirements that were stated in the e-mail were met the grant could be extended until September 1, 2010. She pointed out that the requirements could be met as long as they had the support of all of the Towns, the Village and the City and that once the plan was put into place all of the jurisdictions would be eligible for additional grant funding.

Mr. VanNess queried how far along the County was on the plan and she replied that a Request for Proposal (RFP) had been issued and two responses had been received; however, she added, no action had been taken due to the time restraints that were originally established. She said that with the extension they would need to set up a meeting with the low bidder, Friends of the North Country, to discuss if they would be willing to perform the services required, since it had been some time since the original RFP was prepared.

Mr. Haskell questioned the amount of work the Towns would be required to perform for the HMP and who would be responsible. Mrs. Manney replied that a representative from each municipality would be needed to advise on the layout of the Town and where mitigation issues may be present. She pointed out that SEMO had requested the OES to make themselves available to assist the Towns with the process.

Mr. VanNess requested Mrs. Manney research the possibility of additional grants that might be available to be used for the creation of the Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Motion was made by Mr. Belden, seconded by Mr. Haskell and carried unanimously to award the contract for development of the HMP to the low bidder, Friends of the North Country as outlined above and pending a meeting with Amy Manney to determine that the bid amount was still valid and the necessary resolution was authorized for the October 17, 2008 Board meeting. Note: Subsequent to the Committee meeting it was determined that Friends of the North Country would be awarded the contract to provide Warren County with FEMA approved

HMP, commencing October 17, 2008 and terminating September 1, 2010 in an amount not to exceed \$33,250 with up to an additional \$500 for out of direct expenses. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

In reference to an update on the trailer and tow vehicle that were purchased through a grant from Senator Little's office, Mr. LaFlure referred the Committee to pictures that were included in the agenda packet. He stated that gas fumes were no longer an issue for storage of the generators due to them now being stored in the trailer, ready to respond when necessary. Mr. LaFlure noted that the tow vehicle was waiting for the installation of the necessary lighting and radios.

Mrs. Manney presented a request for transfers of funds as follows:

<u>From Code:</u>	<u>From Title:</u>	<u>To Code:</u>	<u>To Title:</u>	<u>Amount:</u>
A.4022 230	EMS- Automotive Equip.	A.4022 410	EMS- Supplies	\$ 1,001.00
A.4022 250	EMS- Technical Equip.	A.4022 410	EMS- Supplies	\$ 452.00

Motion was made by Mr. Haskell, seconded by Mr. Belden and carried unanimously to approve the request for transfer of funds as outlined above and refer same to the Finance Committee. *A copy of the request for transfer of funds form is on file with the minutes.*

Moving along, Mr. LaFlure noted the next item was in reference to the required hazardous materials (HAZ MAT) team annual medical examinations. Mrs. Manney indicated that she had received three quotes; however, she added, she was unsure of whether a contract was necessary; therefore, she was requesting a resolution awarding the contract to the low bidder, Access Health Systems, in an amount not to exceed \$160 per member, proceeding October 20, 2008 with a thirty day termination notice.

Motion was made by Mr. Belden, seconded by Mr. Stec and carried unanimously to authorize the request for a new contract with Access Health Systems, to provide the required HAZ MAT team annual medical examinations as outlined above with the necessary resolution being authorized for the October 17, 2008 Board meeting. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

Included in the agenda, Mr. LaFlure stated was a draft of the 2008 Organizational Chart for the OES that was compiled to outline how the office was structured and managed. He added that many people were under the impression that the OES dealt with fires or HAZ MAT issues; however, he continued, there were many other aspects that the office was responsible for and the County was liable for. He added that this chart would be periodically updated when new information became available.

Mr. VanNess asked for clarification on the job description for the Deputy Director of the OES and Mr. LaFlure responded that the position managed the office in his absence and performed all of the administrative and clerical work. He stated that in response to complaints being made he wanted to clarify that Mrs. Manney was not in charge of responding to fires; however, he added, she would be in charge of contacting the Deputy Fire Coordinator if he was unavailable.

Mr. LaFlure informed the Committee of the following requests to fill vacant positions:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Deputy Fire Coordinator, Employee No. 9412, base salary of \$4,879, due to promotion; and,

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Deputy Fire Coordinator, Employee No. 7011, base salary of \$3,728, due to promotion.

Motion was made by Mr. Belden, seconded by Mr. Haskell to approve the two requests to fill vacant positions as outlined above and refer same to the Personnel Committee. *Copies of the Notice of Intent to Fill Vacant Position are on file with the minutes.*

As per the request made by the Committee Chairman, Mr. LaFlure stated that the 3<sup>rd</sup> Deputy Fire Coordinator position would remain vacant until January 1, 2009. Mr. VanNess noted that some members of local fire departments had expressed an interest in the position and he suggested they contact Mr. LaFlure with their interest.

Mr. Haskell interjected that due to Mr. LaFlure's full schedule if an appropriate candidate for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Deputy Fire Coordinator position became available prior to January 1, 2009, he should bring the request to fill the vacant position to the Committee immediately!

Mr. Bentley requested an update on the Emergency Services Training Center (ESTC) and Mr. LaFlure stated that the joint meeting scheduled for Tuesday, September 23, 2008 had been cancelled to allow the Laberge Group more time to compile additional information. He added that they were in the process of looking into applying for another inter-municipal grant to take effect in 2010 when the current grant expired.

Mr. VanNess interjected that he would like to commend the OES for doing an exceptional job in acquiring the inter-municipal grant. He added that the County Attorney had received a letter requesting representatives from Warren and Washington Counties to attend a seminar in Plattsburgh in reference to the management of the inter-municipal grant. Mr. LaFlure commented that he would attend the meeting along with the Fire Coordinator from Washington County.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, on motion made by Mr. Stec and seconded by Mr. Belden, Mr. VanNess adjourned the meeting at 11:14 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah McLenithan  
Legislative Office Specialist