

**WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

**COMMITTEE: SUPPORT SERVICES**

**DATE: APRIL 2, 2008**

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<b>COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:</b>	<b>OTHERS PRESENT:</b>
SUPERVISORS SHEEHAN	JULIE PACYNA, PURCHASING AGENT
VANNESS	PAUL DUSEK, COUNTY ATTORNEY
GOODSPEED	AMY CLUTE, ADMINISTRATOR, SELF-INSURANCE
STRAINER	REPRESENTING CAPITAL FINANCIAL GROUP, INC.:
TAYLOR	JOHN WEBER, PRESIDENT
	LORI L. BURCH
<b>COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:</b>	KRISTY LANEY
SUPERVISORS GIRARD	FREDERICK H. MONROE, CHAIRMAN
SIMMES	HAL PAYNE, COMMISSIONER OF ADMINISTRATIVE & FISCAL
	SERVICES
	JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD
	TODD LUNT, HUMAN RESOURCE DIRECTOR
	KEVIN GERAGHTY, BUDGET OFFICER
	SUPERVISOR BELDEN
	DEBRA L. SCHREIBER, SR. LEGISLATIVE OFFICE
	SPECIALIST

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Mr. Sheehan called the Support Services Committee meeting to order at 10:25 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. VanNess, seconded by Mr. Taylor and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the February 27, 2008 Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Joan Sady, Clerk of the Board, who requested transfers of funds, as follows:

- from the Legislative Board-Contract (A.1010 470) to Legislative Board-Equipment in the amount of \$283, for the purchase of a new telephone; and
- from the Auto-Supplies & Repair (A.6610 441) to Auto-Supplies & Repair (A.6610 230) in the amount of \$100 to purchase a pair of equipment access ramps for the Weights & Measure Department vehicle.

Paul Dusek, County Attorney, requested a transfer funds from Supplies (A.1420 410) to Office Equipment (A.1420 220) in the amount of \$199 to purchase an office dictating machine. Since this request was submitted, he stated, a couple of issues had arisen with his Department's budget that he would like to discuss with the Committee at the end of the meeting.

Motion was made by Mr. Goodspeed, seconded by Mr. VanNess and carried unanimously approving the three requests as submitted, and to refer same to the Finance Committee for consideration. *Copies of the resolution request forms are on file with the minutes.*

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Privilege of the floor was extended to Julie Pacyna, Purchasing Agent, who requested permission to attend the annual New York State (NYS) SAMPO Conference in Oswego, New York from May 12 to May 15, 2008. She advised that the cost to attend the conference was \$250 plus two nights of lodging and it was an annual conference that she did not attend last year.

Motion was made by Mr. VanNess, seconded by Mr. Strainer and carried unanimously approving the request as outlined above. *A copy of the Authorization to Attend a Meeting or Convention is on file with the minutes.*

Mrs. Pacyna requested to transfer funds from her Department Sick Leave Incentive Code (A.1345 140) to the Travel/Education/Conference Code (A.1345 444) in the amount of \$400.

Motion was made by Mr. Strainer, seconded by Mr. VanNess and carried unanimously approving the request as outlined above, and to refer same to the Finance Committee for consideration. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

Mrs. Pacyna exited the meeting.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Amy Clute, Self-Insurance Administrator, who advised that John Weber, from Capital Financial Group, Inc. (hereinafter referred to as Capital Financial), was present to update the Committee on the Health/Dental Insurance policies offered by the Warren County. He articulated that they were currently in the middle of two union contracts which necessitated them dividing their health insurance into two divisions and when everything was completed, they would merge them together.

Approximately two years ago, Mr. Weber apprised that Capital Financial took complete control of the County health insurance by performing all the billing, corrections, renewals, service calls and the Treasurer's Office just paid the bills. He briefly touched upon some of the services that their organization rendered on behalf of Warren County, a list of which is on file with the minutes. He reported that in 2006, the Federal Government decided that any retirees that had a drug card allowed the County to receive a subsidy. Since 2006, he said, the County had been reimbursed \$198,600 in Medicare drug card subsidies. Mr. Weber related the County would not receive any further subsidy if they switched these individuals to the new Medicare Sub Plans that provided similar services for half the cost.

Moving along to the Warren County Call Log, Mr. Weber stated that this was a list of calls their office received from Warren County employees between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. He noted that many of the calls concerned questions either during the enrollment period or just after the first of the year and did not include phone calls by Capital Financial to doctors offices.

Mr. Weber explained the sheet entitled Warren County Open Enrollment/Terminations for 2008 reflected those employees that had insurance coverage in 2007 and which health insurance carrier they had chosen for 2008. He further noted that an enrollment form was generated each time an employee changed to a different insurance carrier and it appeared as though the majority of

employees had switched from Mohawk Valley Physicians (MVP) to Capital District Physicians Health Plan (CDPHP).

Mr. Weber stated that according to the sheet entitled Warren County Health & Dental Insurance After Open Enrollment for 1/1/2008, which depicted the insurance plan chosen by each County employee, retiree or survivor, approximately 90% of the current employees selected CDPHP. He said it was his observation that CDPHP offered good coverage, provided either free or in expensive insurance, and only had a \$25 co-pay. In addition, Mr. Weber apprised, that 38.33% of the County employees requested an individual dental plan compared to 61.36% who requested the family plan. Based on this analysis, he noted that 31% of the employees elected no health insurance coverage even though ten new employees were added to the County payroll. Referring to page 2 and 3, Mr. Weber indicated "C" = CSEA; "N" = non-union employees; "A" = Alliance union; and "P" = Police Benevolent Association (PBA).

Mr. Weber indicated that County personnel were broken down by union, the number of employees in each union, the premium for each union, family/individual coverage, which assisted the County Attorney during contract negotiations. He related that the County budget increased between 13% and 15% when the HMO renewals came in last year and the only way to lower those rates would be to increase co-pays; however, he said, after negotiations with the unions, there was only a 3% increase.

Referring to the sheet entitled Warren County Health & Dental 2008 (No changes PBA & Alliance), Mr. Weber informed the Committee that the County Attorney's Office was currently discussing the PBA and Alliance union contracts. He stated the amount reflected under the "Employee" column was the employee's cost for health insurance. The contracts usually required them to go by the lowest co-payment cost, which ultimately saved the County a significant amount of money because it was a cheaper plan, added Mr. Weber. When these unions became part of the new contract, he said, the County's liability costs would decrease. Kristy Laney, from Capital Financial, commented the goal was to get the PBA and Alliance to agree to a contract that would lower the County contribution for them as well.

Continuing on, Mr. Weber distributed copies of the 2007 and 2008 Health Costs reflecting their budget and the rates. He noted the CSEA and Non-Union employees under one contract while the Alliance, PBA and the retirees under a separate contract. Mr. Weber explained that in the 2008 Health Costs analysis for CSEA and Non-Union employees, the total yearly premium cost to the County was \$4,579,911, while those individuals covered under the Alliance, PBA & Retirees contract resulted in a total yearly premium cost to the County of \$3,122,842. He said the total cost of insurance benefits for 2008 was \$7,702,753 compared to \$7,442,999 for 2007, an increase of \$259,754.

Mr. Weber stated they were working on the Alliance and PBA contracts, as well as the retirees. He said in September they must decide whether they wanted to move the retirees to the Medicare Supplement Plans, which had already been done with some of the larger groups, thereby saving the County a significant amount of money. Whenever there was change amongst the retirees, they

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always received some reluctance; however, he said, once they were “counseled”, they normally did not hear any further complaints. Mr. Weber stated this meeting was for informational purposes and if there were any changes, they would request another meeting and bring the Committee up to date.

Ms. Laney distributed copies of the 2008 Health Benefit Comparisons that reflected the current health care benefits within the County. She noted that there would normally be only one spread sheet; however, she added, this year there were four. Although the Alliance and PBA had the same health insurance choices, their dental insurance was at different rates. She said the retirees, PBA and Alliance had mandatory \$20 co-pays while the CSEA and non union employees had a \$25 co-pay. Mr. Weber indicated that any differences amongst the plans were highlighted so there were no surprises when the unions negotiated their contracts.

The representatives from Capital Financial exited the meeting.

Ms. Clute apprised that the next item on the agenda was a discussion of the proposals that were received for a Safety Services Consultant/Company. She noted that the Committee members should have received a large packet of the proposals within the last week. She explained that a contract with a Safety Services Consultant/Company had been authorized by the previous Insurance Committee in November 2007. She stated that they had discussions with a consultant on the Workers’ Compensation Plan and had wanted to see if more could be done as far as safety. As a result, she continued, the Committee had authorized the Request for Proposal (RFP). She added that the RFP had been issued with a detailed scope of services that was similar to an employee’s job description.

Ms. Clute expounded at this time the Committee had authorized changes to the excess Workers’ Compensation Insurance with the Self-Insurance Plan purchases, as well as terminating the employers liability, which had saved the Plan approximately \$78,000 in premiums for 2008. She expressed that the idea had been to take some of the savings and use it to fund some safety programs.

Ms. Clute indicated that she would explain how the Self-Insurance Plan worked and added that it was not part of the County budget, it was a separate fund. She explained that each year they estimated the amount of money that would be necessary to fund Workers’ Compensation claims, administrative expenses, insurance, etc. in order to operate the Plan. That amount was then billed out, she continued, to the Towns, the County, the City and those who participated in the Plan, based on their prior claims. She related that the money was then put into the Self-Insurance Fund to be used for the purpose of paying the claims.

Ms. Clute reported that the proposals ranged in price from \$29,500 to \$161,000 and had been reviewed by both herself and Mr. Dusek. She added that the proposals varied in level of services as vastly as they did dollar amount. Mr. Dusek apprised that it was difficult to determine precisely what services were offered by each company, due to the way that the RFP had been formatted. He related that he had suggested to Ms. Clute that she interview all six companies so that she would be able to ask them all the same questions and compare their answers. He said that the County had followed the same advice when they were researching an Employee Assistance Program, and had found it beneficial.

Ms. Clute stated that the RFP had been written for the Self-Insurance Plan and would be open to the

individual Towns for their safety needs. In answer to a question of whether the individual Towns would pay a portion of the Safety Services Consultant's fees, Ms. Clute replied that the Towns would be paying indirectly because the fees would be funded by the Plan, which they pay into. In answer to a question concerning projected savings, Ms. Clute responded that she had not calculated the projected savings; however, she added, in general, safety programs saved money by reducing the number of accidents. Mr. Strainer noted that the largest difference in the proposals was the safety training that would be offered. Ms. Clute pointed out that some of the companies had also limited the number of hours of service. She added that two of the companies would hire a person dedicated to the Warren County Self-Insurance Plan.

Discussion ensued.

Ms. Clute apprised that she used to do some of the safety training herself and added that her office did not have the manpower to accomplish the job adequately. She said that safety training would reduce the amount of Workers' Compensation claims. Mr. Geraghty noted that Cool Insurance would provide risk management in certain areas, as well as provide a certain amount of training. He acknowledged that for all intents and purposes, Warren County did not have a dedicated safety program in place. He said that the purpose of a safety program was to prevent accidents and added that they were helpful. In answer to a question concerning whether there would be a reduction in the cost of the insurance if safety training was provided, Ms. Clute replied that because the County was Self-Insured, if they prevented accidents then they prevented costs. She added that a safety program would also look favorable to the insurance company that was underwriting our insurance.

Mr. VanNess questioned if the County would be better served if they hired a Safety Officer as opposed to an insurance company that offered safety training. Ms. Clute replied that most counties did have a safety officer on staff and she mentioned Washington County as an example. In answer to a question pertaining to the salary that was paid to the Washington County Safety Officer, Ms. Clute replied that he was paid \$18.92 per hour or approximately \$39,000 a year plus benefits. In answer to a question as to how much Washington County saved by employing a Safety Officer, Ms. Clute responded that she would look into it and report back to the Committee. She added that Schoharie County had those numbers available from when they had hired a Safety Officer. In answer to a question concerning the comparison between Warren County's Self-Insurance Plan and another county that purchased their insurance on the open market, Ms. Clute responded that it was approximately half the price and added that she could supply paperwork from the audit last year that would attest to the savings. Mr. VanNess apprised that by the time the cost of benefits were added to the salary for a new Safety Officer, it would cost the County approximately \$75,000 per year. Ms. Clute suggested that if a part-time person was hired, using the same hourly rate as Washington County, plus retirement, social security and medicaid, the position would cost the County approximately \$22,900 per year. Mr. Strainer noted that if an insurance carrier were used for safety training, if there was an accident it would be the insurance companies fault and would not raise our insurance rates.

Mr. Geraghty explained that the County had two different types of insurance. The first, he continued was the Self Insurance Plan and the second was property and casualty insurance, which had been obtained from a broker. He added that Warren County also had an employee that was responsible for teaching defensive driving. He noted that the Safety Services Consultant that was currently being

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discussed was to cover all other aspects of employee safety.

Mr. VanNess clarified that the discussion was to decide whether the County should hire an individual employee as the Safety Officer or hire an insurance company who would send someone to train our employees. Ms. Clute expounded that the position would not only be responsible for training; other duties would include but not be limited to; investigating accidents, performing hazard identifications, walking through the departments safety procedures, trending (to see where the problems were) and developing and executing the safety programs. Mr. VanNess said that he did not think these duties could be accomplished by a part-time employee. Mr. Geraghty suggested that a person could be hired, who was in the safety field to take an overall view of the current safety procedures and work up a program for Warren County that could be dedicated to each department. He said that the County could probably find a part-time person who was, for example a retired safety officer.

In answer to a question concerning what action had been taken by other New York State counties, Ms. Clute replied that she had inquired of the county network and had found that none of the other counties had put out an RFP for a Safety Services Consultant or Company. She added that the majority of the counties had an in-house safety officer. She remarked that she was unsure how many counties had not hired any form of safety officer.

Ms. Clute indicated that she had surveyed upstate New York counties as to the job description and salary of their safety officer and had received at least six replies. She added that she would be attending the State Conference in May and would try to obtain further information. Chairman Monroe suggested that a Safety Officer could be 'shared' between Warren and Washington Counties and work part-time in each county. Mr. Goodspeed commented that he did not think the County needed another layer of bureaucracy. He pointed out that John Wappett, Public Defender, had a real problem in his office with employees who worked 55+ hours per week. He questioned if the County had an actual need for a Safety Services Consultant and if so, could the position be shared between two or three counties rather than create another benefitted position in Warren County. Mr. Sheehan apprised that the Committee would need to review the number of accidents in previous years to decide how much of a need Warren County had to create this position. Mr. Goodspeed acknowledged that certain positions, such as highway workers, were at risk every day; however, he added, office workers did not have as great a need for safety training. Mr. Sheehan suggested that there should be some training that would allow each department to monitor their own safety procedures.

Discussion ensued.

Mr. Geraghty stated that communication between departments as it related to safety would also need to be improved and accident reports should be shared. Mr. Goodspeed reiterated that there was a large percentage of the County's workforce that was not at the same degree of risk of having an accident as other departments. He added that there were regular anticipated injuries such as back injuries in the nursing homes. He voiced his opinion that he did not feel that the need was great enough to justify spending \$70,000 or more on a new contract or to employ a new full-time employee with benefits. He added that if it was possible to share a Safety Services Consultant with two or three other counties for around \$20,000, then he would be in favor of it. Mr. VanNess

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suggested that injuries within the departments be presented at the Department Head meeting as part of each department's report.

Ms. Clute stated that she sent the Self-Insurance Plan reports to the Committee members each month and noted that there had been 160 lost work days in February and one-third of those were County loss work days. Mr. Goodspeed remarked that it would be interesting to review a county that had hired a Safety Officer and compare the difference in the number of lost work days before and after the new position had been created. Mr. Taylor reported that insurance companies often used additional training hours as a bargaining chip.

It was the consensus of the Committee that Ms. Clute contact Washington and Saratoga Counties to obtain further information as to what they were doing for safety programs.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Paul Dusek, County Attorney, to discuss the Budget Performance Report for his Department; a copy of which is on file with the minutes. Mr. Dusek apprised that everything within the County Attorney budget was on track with the exception of Consulting Fees (A.1420 437) of which 89% had been spent. He stated that invoices for \$37,010 had been anticipated; however, he added, the actual amount was closer to \$34,000, which would leave \$8,000 remaining in the budget as opposed to \$5,000. He explained that Consulting Fees were the amount that was paid to have abstracts done for the foreclosure actions. He said that the \$45,000 that had been budgeted was based on an assumption for the total number of abstracts, which they usually assumed would be around 300 abstracts and this year there had been 400 abstracts. He explained that normally the abstracting would have begun in the fall and would have cost approximately \$25,000 to \$30,000, with an additional \$15,000 to \$20,000 in the spring. Last fall the list of taxpayers who were in default, he continued, was late coming out of the County Treasurer's Office and only \$7,000 worth of abstracts had been completed in the fall. He indicated that \$23,950 for the Consulting Fees Code (A.1420 437) from the 2007 County budget had been placed back into the General Fund, as a result. He expounded that more funds than had been anticipated had been expended in the spring of 2008, due to the lateness of the abstracts in the fall of 2007 and as a result he would now be short of funds to complete the 2009 abstracts in the fall of 2008. He noted that the costs of the abstracts were passed onto the delinquent taxpayers, which was why \$45,000 had been budgeted for revenue. He stated that he would need approximately \$36,000 in additional appropriations in order to complete the abstracts for 2009 and therefore, an additional \$29,000 to \$30,000 would need to be put into that account by fall of 2008.

Mr. Belden stated that the County Land Action generated approximately \$200,000 in revenue for the County and asked if some of that revenue could be used to replenish the Consulting Fees account. Mr. Dusek responded that the portion of the revenue that was from the abstracts was allocated to his Department's budget; however, he added, the remainder of the revenue was part of the County Treasurer's budget. He noted that he wanted to inform the Committee of the issue and added that technically the funds were still available but they had been returned to the General Fund at the end of 2007. Mr. Geraghty stated that the \$23,950 from the 2007 County budget should have been encumbered rather than put back into the General Fund. Mr. Dusek countered that he was only allowed to encumber those funds that would be expended within any particular year. He remarked that another solution would be to only do the amount of abstracts that could be done with the funds remaining in the budget and hold off on doing the remaining fall abstracts until the spring of 2009.

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In answer to a question concerning the length of time that a property had to be delinquent prior to starting the foreclosure process, Mr. Dusek said it was at least one year for a business and three years for a residence. Chairman Monroe apprised that the County was duplicating work that had already been done, as an abstract would have been completed by the bank for the mortgage or the title insurance company. Mr. Dusek agreed that the work was being duplicated and added that those companies would not be willing to give the County a copy of the abstract. He further added that the abstract should be as current as possible prior to foreclosure.

Mr. Dusek noted that the budget for the County Attorney's Office had been severely reduced. He reported that Legal/Transcript Fees (A.1420 440) was for retaining outside counsel and added that the account was normally budgeted at \$13,500 but had been reduced to \$3,000. He informed the Committee that \$2,100 had been budgeted for the forest preserve attorney and \$600 was needed for counsel to finish on the Adirondack Soaring case. He explained that there was another case in the Office that was a foreclosure case, in which the County had been sued in a Federal Court. He added that the insurance company had assumed the defense of the case and the case had been dismissed. He further added that the property owner had then sued the County in a State Court for return of the property, which had not been covered by insurance. As a result, he continued, they had stayed with outside counsel for this case and had been told to plan for \$4,000 to \$5,000 in expenditures for the case. He added that this amount was not available within his budget and it was not possible to transfer it from one of their other accounts.

Mr. Dusek expounded that last fall they had planned for a new server for his office to be paid for with Information Technology (IT) funds. He added that the server had arrived this year and an attempt had been made to install it. He further added that the server could not be installed due to a problem with the software program that was the entire file management system for the County Attorney's Office. He said that he had been informed by IT that the new server was not compatible with the software program and the software program would need to be updated in order for the new server to accept the program. He added that the cost of upgrading the software program was \$2,106.99. He indicated that he had suggested to IT that they wait until the next budget year before doing the upgrade and IT had informed him that the risk of the old server going down was high.

Mr. Dusek apprised the Committee that there was one work station in his office that was configured in a unique way. He added that his new staff member was having difficulty with the current chair for that work station because she could not ergonomically find a way to place her hands on the typewriter. He stated that the only solution he could come up with was to purchase a new chair that would allow her to maneuver herself into the correct position. He noted that the cost of this chair was \$322. He advised that Committee that he needed an additional \$8,000 put into his budget in order to make it work.

A brief discussion ensued.

Motion was made by Mr. VanNess and seconded by Mr. Goodspeed to authorize an increase in the appropriations for the Law-County Attorney budget (A.1420) in the amount of \$8,000 to cover the shortfall.

Chairman Monroe advised that it had been his understanding that they would make transfers of funds

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within the existing budget and wait until the end of the year to determine if there was a shortfall. In answer to a question concerning the Legal/Transcript Fees account, Mr. Dusek stated that the account had been budgeted at \$3,000 and \$1,266.61 had been earmarked for the forest preserve attorney. He added that the account was basically already spent and needed an additional \$4,000 to \$5,000. Mr. Geraghty inquired about the possibility of purchasing the chair using funds from the Supplies Code (A.1420 410). Mr. Dusek responded that the Supplies Code included the funds necessary for foreclosure postage and mailing fees. He added that approximately 800 envelopes would be mailed this week using funds from that account. He further added that he could pay for the chair using funds from the Supplies account and request a transfer of funds at a later date.

Mr. Dusek apprised that when he built his budget, he had not inflated any of the accounts and added that the majority of the accounts would be zeroed out by the end of the year. Chairman Monroe noted that the Postage Code (A.1420 424) had \$9,638.96 remaining. He suggested that the funds that were needed should be transferred from the Postage account for now and if there was a shortfall later this year, they would discuss an increase in appropriations, at that time. Mr. Geraghty agreed and added that the Committee could worry about any shortfall in November. Mr. Dusek noted that \$4,000 to \$5,000 of the Postage account may be available to transfer at this time and he would come back to the Committee when he needed additional funds.

Discussion ensued.

In answer to a question concerning the necessary upgrade to the software program, Mr. Dusek stated that they were currently using version 5 and needed to upgrade to version 10.

Mr. VanNess withdrew his motion and Mr. Goodspeed withdrew his second to the motion.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, on motion by Mr. VanNess and seconded by Mr. Strainer, Mr. Sheehan adjourned the meeting at 11:42 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra L. Schreiber, Sr. Legislative Office Specialist  
*As Typed by Charlene DiResta, Legislative Office Specialist*