

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: SUPPORT SERVICES

DATE: JUNE 25, 2008

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COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:	OTHERS PRESENT:
SUPERVISORS SHEEHAN	REPRESENTING THE BOARD OF ELECTIONS:
VANNESS	MARY BETH CASEY, COMMISSIONER
GIRARD	WILLIAM MONTFORT, COMMISSIONER
SIMMES	AMY CLUTE, SELF-INSURANCE ADMINISTRATOR
GOODSPEED	PAUL DUSEK, COUNTY ATTORNEY
STRAINER	AMY BARTLETT, FIRST ASSISTANT COUNTY ATTORNEY
TAYLOR	HAL PAYNE, COMMISSIONER OF ADMINISTRATIVE & FISCAL SERVICES
	JOAN SADY, CLERK, BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
	SUPERVISORS GERAGHTY
	TESSIER
	TODD LUNT, DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES
	AMANDA ALLEN, SR. LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

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Mr. Sheehan called the meeting of the Support Services Committee to order at 9:30 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Strainer, seconded by Mr. Girard and carried unanimously to approve the minutes from the May 29, 2008 Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Mary Beth Casey, Commissioner of the Board of Elections, who distributed copies of the agenda to the Committee members. *A copy of the Board of Elections agenda is also on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Casey advised that Agenda Item 1 pertained to a survey response to the State Board of Elections (SBOE) regarding voting system information, a copy of which was included in the agenda. She explained that she and William Montfort, Commissioner of the Board of Elections, had been hesitant to complete the survey independently as they were unsure how to respond to the questions therein because a decision had yet to be made with respect to the placement of voting machines. Ms. Casey pointed out that because of the lack of such information many of the survey questions would have to be answered in the negative, which had the potential to jeopardize the grant funding intended for the purchase of the new voting machines.

Subsequent to extensive discussion on the matter, it was the consensus of the Committee that Mr. Sheehan and the Chairman of the County Facilities Committee would meet with Ms. Casey, Mr. Montfort and Hal Payne, Commissioner of Administrative & Fiscal Services, to complete the survey appropriately.

Proceeding to Agenda Item 2, Ms. Casey explained that on the day prior to the upcoming Presidential Election, 22 BMD (Ballot Marking Device) voting machines would have to be delivered throughout the County. She noted that it would be impossible for the current elections staff to distribute the new BMD voting machines, as well as the old ones, to all of the polling locations because the machines required different transportation methods. Therefore, Ms. Casey said, they had determined that it would be appropriate to secure an alternative method for delivery of the 22 BMD voting machines. She apprised that she had contacted surrounding Counties to inquire as to the methods used and had acquired a copy of the

RFP (Request for Proposal) used by Tompkins County in gaining quotations for the delivery of their voting machines over the past few years. Ms. Casey suggested that a similar RFP be used by Warren County for the same purpose.

Mr. Payne asked if the services could be provided on an in-house basis by County staff and Ms. Casey replied affirmatively. However, she noted, special consideration and care would have to be taken in delivering the voting machines as they were computerized and were more fragile than the older voting machines.

Mrs. Simmes asked if the delivery of the BMD voting machines could be assigned to the individual Towns and Ms. Casey replied affirmatively. Ms. Casey added that although she felt this was a valid suggestion, her Department had no authority to mandate such and the Towns would have to be contacted to determine their willingness to comply with this request. She reiterated that the new BMD voting machines were very expensive and had to be transported with care to avoid damage to them.

Mr. VanNess stated that he was in favor of advancing the RFP as it would incur no costs to the County and would give an idea of how much the transportation would cost. In the meantime, he added, they could contact each of the Towns to determine their willingness to transport the machines individually at their own cost.

Motion was made by Mr. VanNess, seconded by Mr. Girard and carried unanimously to authorize an RFP for services relating to the transport of BMD voting machines to the various Towns of Warren County.

Ms. Casey advised that Agenda Item 3 consisted of a request to create two new part-time positions with the title of Voting Systems Support Specialist, both of which would include a salary of \$17.50 per hour. She explained that the responsibilities of these positions would include the programming and testing of the BMD's for the 2008 Presidential Election and would be in addition to the current Voting Machine Technician positions which were responsible for the older voting machines. Ms. Casey stated that because the use of two different voting systems was being mandated for 2008, two support staff teams were necessary. She advised that the additional positions had been discussed with Mr. Payne and that there were sufficient funds within the existing Budget to support the positions.

Motion was made by Mr. VanNess, seconded by Mr. Girard and carried unanimously to approve the request to create the two new positions of Voting Systems Support Specialist and refer same to the Personnel Committee. *A copy of the request is on file with the minutes.*

Concluding the agenda review, Ms. Casey addressed Agenda Item 4 which consisted of a request for information on the elevator upgrades necessary to meet 2008 specifications for handicap access to the voting machines in the basement. She noted that if the voting machines were to be located in the basement of the Municipal Center, upgrades to the existing elevators would be necessary.

Mr. Payne advised that the elevators had been reviewed and it had been determined that both would require new sleeves which would cost approximately \$38,000. He noted that the company with which the County currently contracted for routine elevator maintenance had declined to re-bid the maintenance contract until the sleeves were installed. Mr. Payne explained that the sleeves were necessary for safety measures as they were intended to keep the elevators from falling uncontrolled. He said that a new Capital Project would be

established to upgrade the elevators and bring them into compliance with 2008 standards.

Mr. Taylor asked if the elevators would have to be repaired, regardless of whether or not they were needed for access to the voting machines and Mr. Payne replied affirmatively.

Ms. Casey pointed out that the elevators were currently operated through the use of a key and she asked if one of these would be issued to the Board of Elections and Mr. Payne replied affirmatively.

Mr. Montfort advised that if the decision was made to store the voting machines on the first floor of the Municipal Center they might be able to access grant funds to install a ramp at an additional entrance for handicap access. Mr. Taylor asked if grant funds were available to assist with the costs of upgrading the existing elevators and Mr. Montfort replied that he would inquire as to the ability of the funds for this use; however, he noted, the amount available would not be sufficient to fund the elevator upgrades as it was in the neighborhood of \$7,000.

Ms. Casey noted that at a recent Department Head meeting they had been advised that any purchase orders over \$1,000 would be reviewed by the County Administrator. She advised that approximately 90% of their Budget remained intact as the voting season had not yet arrived and she explained that many times they were not aware of the total costs of their purchases until the items were delivered and she asked if this policy related to purchase orders for standard election necessities. Mr. Payne advised that the limit had been placed for capital type equipment purchases and did not apply to purchases related to routine operation of the Department.

Mr. Geraghty suggested that due to the current financial climate of the County all Departments should monitor their spending to try and reserve as much of their budget as possible without interrupting their operations.

Todd Lunt, Director of Human Resources, entered the meeting at 10:07 a.m.

Mr. Goodspeed pointed out that documentation included in the agenda reflected that the new BMD voting machines could take up to 20 to 40 minutes to use and Ms. Casey confirmed this statistic. She added that this time frame was indicated for handicapped voters only who would require special consideration for independent voting. Ms. Casey advised that they had received three of the new BMD voting machines, all of which had been subjected to full testing where it had been discovered that none of the three worked correctly 100% of the time. She said that they had already notified all of the pertinent parties of the issues with the machines, and planned to hold payment for them until the issues were rectified. Ms. Casey said that they had visited the SBOE in Albany, NY to determine whether the machines were defective or if they were being tested incorrectly and at that time the State had admitted to several issues, such as those with the printers, software and instructions, which they were attempting to resolve.

Mr. Goodspeed suggested that a resolution be forwarded to the appropriate parties at the State level to notify them of the issues being faced and the displeasure with the chosen voting machines.

Discussion ensued.

Ms. Casey and Mr. Montfort thanked the Committee for their attention to the matters presented and they exited the meeting at 10:18 a.m.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Amy Clute, Self-Insurance Administrator, who distributed copies of the Self-Insurance agenda to the Committee members. *A copy of the Self-Insurance agenda is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Clute reminded the Committee members that during their previous meeting they had directed her to contact the surrounding Counties to gain additional information with respect to Safety Officer positions. She said that the chart included in the agenda reflected the findings derived from the eight Counties that had responded to her inquiry.

Referring to the chart provided by Ms. Clute, Mr. Strainer pointed out that Suffolk County funded six Safety Personnel positions, each with a base salary of \$56,000. Ms. Clute confirmed these figures as the totals reported in response to her inquiry and she noted that Suffolk County employed 11,500 employees which contributed to the amount of Safety Personnel needed.

Mr. VanNess asked if a job description was available for the Safety Officer position and Ms. Clute replied affirmatively, noting that she had received several examples. She added that the RFP issued previously for the position had included the job description also.

Mr. Taylor asked what savings were likely to be attained through the addition of a Safety Officer and Ms. Clute replied that, as reported at the previous Committee meeting, she estimated a low end figure of 10%, or \$70,000, in savings throughout the Self-Insurance Plan participants. She reminded the Committee that the savings, as well as the costs of the Safety Officer, would be spread out amongst the 54 participants of the Self-Insurance Plan, limiting the cost impact to each group.

Mr. Goodspeed stated that he supported the concept of the addition of the Safety Officer but felt that it would be best to add the position with zero impact to the County Budget in order to maximize the savings realized through the addition of this position. He suggested that by eliminating another position in order to fund the Safety Officer position, or by utilizing an employee already on staff, they could eliminate additional costs and realize the largest amount of savings.

Discussion ensued.

Mr. Geraghty commented that in every industry employee safety was a very important factor and he felt that the number of claims experienced by Warren County was a direct result of the fact that there were no structured safety programs in place. He reminded the Committee that there had been a fatality on a County work site not long ago and although he could not say that safety programs would have prevented it from occurring, they surely could not hurt. Mr. Geraghty stated that the best approach might be to hire an outside consultant to develop a safety program which could then be given to the Department Heads to enforce amongst their employees in order to prevent future claims.

Mr. VanNess stated that in light of recent attempts to reduce costs, which had led to some reduced positions, it was not appropriate to add another staff position. He said that he preferred to seek the services of a private

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consultant and he suggested that Ms. Clute be directed to review the proposals received regarding this matter and make her recommendation to the Committee.

Mr. Lunt apprised that the Departments most involved with safety issues were DPW, Westmount Health Facility, Countryside Adult Home and the Sheriff's Office, and he noted that these Departments also had the highest number of claims. He said that all of these Departments had safety plans in place and provided training as required by the State. Mr. Lunt noted that the idea of engaging a Safety Officer, thereby changing the County's stance on safety from a reactive approach to a proactive approach was favorable. He advised that many ridiculous claims had occurred in the past and further follow-up and prevention measures were necessary to stop these accidents from reoccurring. Mr. Lunt stated that it might be beneficial for the Safety Committee to continue discussion with regards to the suggestion of not filling positions in the larger Departments to fund the costs of a Safety Officer in order to change the County's approach on employee safety.

Discussion ensued.

Motion was made by Mr. VanNess, seconded by Mr. Taylor and carried by majority vote, with Mr. Goodspeed voting in opposition, to authorize Ms. Clute to review the proposals for the Safety Consultant and bring a recommendation to the Committee.

As there was no further Self-Insurance business to present, Ms. Clute thanked the Committee members and exited the meeting at 10:52 a.m.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Joan Sady, Clerk of the Board, who presented a request to fill a vacant Senior Legislative Office Specialist position to the Committee members, a copy of which is on file with the minutes.

Mrs. Sady apprised that a key member of her staff had recently resigned in order to take a position with the Department of Social Services, which had caused the vacancy of a Senior Legislative Office Specialist position. She noted that her Department had suffered a considerable loss, as this had been a long term employee who had been responsible for many duties, the most noteworthy of which was the preparation of the annual Proceedings book.

As one of her current staff members was willing to assume the tasks required, Mrs. Sady requested authorization to promote a current Legislative Office Specialist to the Senior Legislative Office Specialist position and to subsequently backfill the Legislative Office Specialist position that would be vacated due to the promotion. She reminded the Committee that during the 2008 Budget process a position in her Office had been eliminated, and the Table of Organization restructured, to more accurately reflect the titles and duties assigned within the Department. Consequently, Mrs. Sady stated, the current structure of two Legislative Office Specialists and two Senior Legislative Office Specialists was essential to maintain the responsibilities and workload required of her Department.

Mr. Girard pointed out that during previous interviews for a Legislative Office Specialist position a certain applicant had been passed over because it had seemed that she was overqualified for the job. He said that while he understood the person may not have been happy in the entry level position due to her level of

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expertise, he felt that it might be a good idea to have someone with these qualifications and capabilities on staff to step into the higher level positions when they became available. Mrs. Sady replied that because the nature of her Department was very unique, extensive training was necessary to appropriately update and train new staff on the responsibilities entailed and that prior experience did not necessarily qualify a person for the position. She added that the employee who had agreed to accept the Senior position was very capable and had some knowledge and experience with the duties required of the position. Mrs. Sady further noted that the Legislative Office Specialist position was subject to Civil Service testing and because there was a list of tested individuals available, she would be required to consider this pool of eligibles when filling the vacancy.

Motion was made by Mr. Taylor, seconded by Mr. Girard and carried unanimously to approve the requests to fill the vacant positions of Senior Legislative Office Specialist, base salary \$33,000, and Legislative Office Specialist, base salary \$30,667, and refer same to the Personnel Committee. *Copies of both Notices of Intent to Fill Vacant Position forms are on file with the minutes.*

Mr. Payne presented the Committee with a request to recognize Herbert Levin, Director of Weights & Measures, with the Employee Suggestion Award of \$100 based on his suggestion that the County switch to purchasing regular gas, instead of premium, to save on gas expenses. He apprised that the decision to purchase the higher octane gasoline had been made some years ago when it had been argued that it was necessary for the vehicles purchased at that time. Mr. Payne advised that the higher octane gasoline was no longer a necessity, a fact that had been confirmed with both the County's mechanic staff and the Sheriff, and that approximately \$72,000 would be saved by altering the type of gasoline purchased by the County, Towns and Fire Departments. He noted that Mr. Levin had recognized this issue when testing the octane levels of the gasoline.

Motion was made by Mr. VanNess, seconded by Mr. Goodspeed and carried unanimously to approve the request to recognize Mr. Levin with the Employee Suggestion Award of \$100 and refer same to the Personnel Committee. *A copy of the request is on file with the minutes.*

Privilege of the floor was then extended to Paul Dusek, County Attorney, who began the County Attorney portion of the Support Services Committee meeting. Mr. Dusek advised that during their May meeting, the Board of Supervisors had approved an inter-municipal agreement with Washington County whereby the two County Attorney Offices would provide services to one another. He said that at the same time the agreement was authorized, the Board members had asked that the issue be addressed by the Support Services Committee for further review and report on status of use.

Mr. Dusek explained that the agreement uses were confined to internal investigations, grievances, disciplinary matters and/or Hearing Officer services from time to time as they were needed. He further explained that, at the direction of the Board of Supervisors, the agreement specified the maximum number hours provided on any occasion should not exceed 16 hours and that further services would not be rendered until there had been a reciprocal payback. Each County was required to name the other as an additional insured on their insurance policies so that there would be coverage while working in the other County, Mr. Dusek noted. He added that the agreement could be terminated with 10 days written notice and would continue until written direction to terminate the agreement was issued.

Mr. Dusek advised that services had been rendered to Washington County by Amy Bartlett, First Assistant County Attorney, totaling approximately 14 hours thus far. He further advised that Warren County had initially sought reciprocal services from Washington County in the form of a Hearing Officer, for which they had requested Roger Wicks, Washington County Attorney. Mr. Dusek said that although Mr. Wicks had immediately agreed to provide the services, the matter had been settled and the services were not necessary. He noted that the receptiveness and willingness to comply with the request was a good sign and his recommendation was to leave the inter-municipal agreement in place for a year, allowing him to report back to the Committee at the end of the term on its success.

It was the consensus of the Committee that the agreement should be left in place, as per Mr. Dusek's suggestion, and that Mr. Dusek should return to the Committee in one year to report on the status and use of the arrangement, or previous to this time if an issue arose.

As there was no further business to come before the Support Services Committee, on motion made by Mr. VanNess and seconded by Mr. Girard, Mr. Sheehan adjourned the meeting at 11:05 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Amanda Allen, Sr. Legislative Office Specialist