

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: BUDGET

DATE: SEPTEMBER 16, 2009

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS GERAGHTY
BELDEN
O'CONNOR
CHAMPAGNE
KENNY
MERLINO
TAYLOR
STEC

COMMITTEE MEMBER ABSENT:

SUPERVISOR SHEEHAN

OTHERS PRESENT:

FREDERICK MONROE, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
HAL PAYNE, COMMISSIONER OF ADMINISTRATIVE & FISCAL SERVICES
JOANN MCKINSTRY, DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OF ADMINISTRATIVE & FISCAL SERVICES
RICK MURPHY, DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OF FISCAL SERVICES
JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD
SUPERVISORS BENTLEY
GOODSPEED
PITKIN
STRAINER
THOMAS
VANNESS
FRANK O'KEEFE, TREASURER
ROB LYNCH, DEPUTY TREASURER
TODD LUNT, DIRECTOR, HUMAN RESOURCES
JULIE PACYNA, PURCHASING AGENT
BRIAN LAFLURE, DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES
PAT AUER, DIRECTOR, PUBLIC HEALTH
KAREN PUTNEY, DIRECTOR, FIRE PREVENTION & BUILDING CODE ENFORCEMENT
ROB METTHE, DIRECTOR, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
KATE HOGAN, DISTRICT ATTORNEY
MIKE SWAN, DIRECTOR, REAL PROPERTY TAX SERVICES
LEXIE DELUREY, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, REAL PROPERTY TAX SERVICES
BUD YORK, WARREN COUNTY SHERIFF
SHANE ROSS, CHIEF DEPUTY
MIKE GATES, CAPTAIN, CORRECTIONS DIVISION
WILLIAM MONTFORT, COMMISSIONER, BOARD OF ELECTIONS
WILLIAM LAMY, SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
PAM VOGEL, COUNTY CLERK
SHEILA WEAVER, COMMISSIONER, DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
DON LEHMAN, *THE POST STAR*
THOM RANDALL, *THE ADIRONDACK JOURNAL*
AMANDA ALLEN, SR. LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

Mr. Geraghty called the meeting of the Budget Committee to order at 9:40 a.m.

Copies of the meeting agenda were distributed to the Committee members and a copy is also on file with the minutes.

Agenda Item 1, Mr. Geraghty announced, pertained to a review of the Summary of Budget Committee Meeting document which was included in the agenda. He explained that all Departments were asked to submit a 2010

Budget Request reflecting a 0% increase from the 2009 Appropriation and the Summary document reflected the actual increases or decreases in Departmental submissions. Hal Payne, Commissioner of Administrative & Fiscal Services, stated that the Department Heads had done a very good job of meeting the 0% increase goal set by the Budget Committee and a decrease of \$834,634 from the 2009 Appropriations had been derived through their efforts. Mr. Geraghty noted that there was a large increase in the 2010 Budget Request submitted by the Board of Elections and this was attributed to election law changes; he added that the funding increase could be removed from the 2010 Budget, but they would have to find a way to support the increased charges as there was no way to avoid them.

Mr. Taylor pointed out the \$92,420 increase in the Mental Health budget and he questioned whether this program was State mandated. Mr. Geraghty replied that the increase was due to decreases in State funding and advised that in prior meetings with the Mental Health care providers it had been announced that although cuts in State funding had been indicated, the monies might still be received. Mr. O'Connor, speaking as Chairman of the Mental Health Committee, stated that some of the anticipated funding may still be received from the State; however, he added, they had received no assurances of the amount that would be realized. He added that the majority of the services provided within the Mental Health budget were State mandated and were funded by a number of different sources. Mr. O'Connor stated that although every effort had been made to reduce the Mental Health budget, it was difficult to maintain operations in light of the considerable reductions in State funding. Mr. Geraghty said that it might behoove the Committee to hold another meeting with the health care providers to discuss consolidation of the services provided to decrease the budgetary costs. Mr. Champagne stated that regardless of the situation, he felt the 218% budget increase indicated was unacceptable and should be reduced to a 0% increase as required for all County Departments.

In order to further review the budget, Mr. Kenny questioned whether more detailed information, including decreases in revenues and increases in expenses, could be provided on a Departmental basis at the next Committee meeting and Mr. Geraghty replied affirmatively.

Mr. Belden noted that the decision had been made to abolish positions within Countryside Adult Home and questioned why the 2010 Budget Request reflected an increase for this Department, regardless of the decrease in staffing. JoAnn McKinstry, Deputy Commissioner of Administrative & Fiscal Services, replied that although the decision had been made at the Committee level to abolish the positions, the final approval would not be granted until the September 18th Board Meeting; therefore, she added, the decreased salary total could not be included in the totals presented. Mr. Payne interjected that if approved, the position abolishments would further decrease the total by approximately \$75,000. Mr. Kenny advised that regardless of the \$75,000 decrease, the Countryside Adult Home 2010 Budget Request would still be more than the 2009 Appropriation. Mr. Payne advised that the only increase in the 2010 Budget Request was the 3.5% salary increase given to employees within the bargaining unit by virtue of union contract and Mr. Kenny countered that the majority of the Department Heads had to absorb these increases in their Budget Requests and were still able to achieve a 0% increase and he felt that the same should be expected of the Countryside budget. Mr. Champagne agreed with Mr. Kenny's comments and suggested that the Countryside budget be reduced to reach a 0% increase.

Referring to the notation attached to the Office of Emergency Services (OES) budget request which indicated that the total included a salary increase for the Coordinator, Mr. Belden questioned why any position was receiving a salary increase when a previous decision had been made to eliminate all salary increases for non-bargaining unit positions. Mr. Geraghty responded that the salary increase had been included pursuant to a decision made by the Public Safety Committee to allow the salary increase, provided that it could be included while achieving a 0% increase for the total Departmental budget, as per the minutes from the August 27, 2009 Public Safety Committee meeting. Mr. VanNess, Chairman of the Public Safety Committee, interjected that this issue had been discussed

at length during the August 27th Committee meeting and he confirmed that the Committee's decision had been to allow a salary increase of \$4,848 for the OES Deputy Director, provided that a 0% budget increase could be achieved. He added that Mr. Belden had been present at that meeting and had voted in favor of the salary increase; therefore, he said, he did not understand why he would oppose the action now. Mr. Belden replied that in light of the worsening budget situation he felt that no salary increases should be given, aside from those for employees within the bargaining unit, and that was why he had changed his view on the matter. Mr. Pitkin stated that he agreed with Mr. Belden's comments and felt that the salary increase should be removed from the 2010 Budget Request.

Mr. Geraghty said that in his opinion the OES Department had not been set up appropriately at inception and needed a complete revision. He added that although he did not remember all of the conversation surrounding the salary increase for the OES Deputy Director position, he seemed to recall that sufficient revenues were generated by the position to fund the increase in pay; however, he stated, if it was the pleasure of the Committee, the salary increase could be removed from the 2010 Budget Request.

Mr. Kenny stated that he meant no disrespect to the person holding the OES Deputy Director position and felt the person did an exceptional job, but he did not feel that the Committee could justify giving any position a \$5,000 raise during a year in which they intended to lay off a number of County employees to reduce the budget deficit.

Brian LaFlure, OES Director, apprised that this was not actually a pay increase as the OES Deputy Director would continue to receive the same amount of pay they current received, the \$4,848 difference was previously paid by the STOP-DWI program and would be now coming from the OES budget. He noted that other portions of the OES Budget Request had been reduced to offset the amount. Mr. Kenny stated that he disagreed with the statement that this was not a salary increase as the OES Deputy Director would be relinquishing all of the Traffic Safety duties accompanying the \$4,848 stipend; therefore, he said, this was a pay increase. Mr. LaFlure responded that the OES Deputy Director had a number of responsibilities and deserved to be paid commensurate with the work being done, to which Mr. Kenny replied that he was not questioning the job performance of the OES Deputy Director, but rather was stating that salary increases should not be given to any employees during a time when they were considering laying off a number of employees.

Motion was made by Mr. Belden, seconded by Mr. Kenny and carried by majority vote, with Mr. Merlino voting in opposition, to remove the \$4,848 salary increase for the OES Deputy Director position from the 2010 OES Budget Request.

William Lamy, Superintendent of Public Works, noted that the figures listed for the Public Works Department in the Summary of Budget Committee Meetings document reflected a \$245,482 increase, which was inaccurate. He explained that he had been working with Mr. Payne and Mrs. McKinstry to develop an accurate figure representing the difference between the 2009 Appropriation figure and the 2010 Budget Request and had determined that the total 2010 Request was actually \$105,000 less than the 2009 Appropriation. Mr. Lamy apprised that the 2010 Request figure of \$10,998,230 did not account for the approximately \$200,000 in deductions for services to other governments, in addition to other budget reductions which led to the \$105,000 reduction. He advised that the figure did not reflect any position eliminations, which would reduce the budget by another \$200,000 in salary and benefit savings. Once all of these factors were taken into consideration, Mr. Lamy stated that a total reduction of over \$300,000 should be realized in the 2010 Budget Request. He concluded that he continued to review the budget in order to produce a final document that would reflect all of the reductions made for the 2010 Request.

Chairman Monroe noted that a deficit in excess of \$3 million had been projected for the Solid Waste facility and he questioned whether this was accounted for in the Public Works 2010 Budget Request. Mr. Lamy replied

affirmatively, noting that the projected 2010 cost of \$4.1 million, which was based on 2009 expenditures, was included in the 2010 Budget Request. Mr. Geraghty asked how much the increase projected for Waste Management operations was and Mr. Lamy replied that there appeared to be a \$178,000 increase for 2010. Mr. Lamy apprised that during the last meeting with Steve Lynch, Solid Waste Coordinator, he had indicated that he would provide more accurate numbers respective to the anticipated costs for Solid Waste Management in 2010 in the near future; however, he said, this information had not yet been received. Mr. Champagne interjected that Mr. Lynch had developed the information and he had been given a copy but had not brought it to the meeting. He said he recalled that the documentation reflected a projected 2010 cost of \$3.8 million, which was somewhat less than the \$4.1 million included in the 2010 Budget Request, and he said he would forward the information to Mr. Lamy subsequent to the Committee meeting.

In response to a question posed by Mr. Pitkin respective to the estimate provided by Mr. Lynch, Mr. Champagne advised that prior estimates provided by Mr. Lynch had typically been higher than the realized costs and he felt that this might be the case for the 2010 estimate also. Mr. Lamy cited that the \$3.8 million figure estimated by Mr. Champagne consisted of the County's contribution to the burn plant and did not include additional operation costs which included the purchase of containers for the towns serviced. He added that these costs were roughly \$60,000 per year and that amount had been accounted for in his 2010 Budget Request.

Mr. Geraghty asked if there were any consulting fees included in the total Public Works 2010 Budget Request and Mr. Lamy replied that consulting fees were required for each and every Capital Project, as well as for the services required in connection with local bridge project design and for other projects as well, such as to engineer the replacement of the electrical switch in the Municipal Center Building. Mr. Geraghty stated that the DPW employed a very good engineering staff and hoped that their abilities were being used to the fullest extent in order to perform as much work as possible on an in-house basis to reduce the costs to the County. He reminded the Committee of the work the DPW staff had done in connection with the washout repairs for the railroad which had saved the County a considerable amount of money and he said that the DPW staff should be commended for the excellent work they had done. In reply, Mr. Lamy thanked Mr. Geraghty for the compliments to his staff and said that he continued to review upcoming projects to ensure that as much of the work was being done by County staff as they were able to do in order to maintain and reduce project costs.

In light of the inaccurate figures listed in the Summary document for the Public Works Department, as well as the recommendation that the Countryside Adult Home Budget Request be further reduced, Mr. Taylor questioned whether these were the final budget figures and Mrs. McKinstry replied in the negative, noting that each of the budgets would be reviewed line by line to determine whether further reductions could be made. Mr. Taylor then questioned why the meeting was being held if the figures presented were not accurate and Mr. Geraghty apprised that the purpose of the meeting was to provide the Committee with an update on the status of the budget review and reduction process and to keep them apprised of other related situations.

Chairman Monroe stated that it was important to keep in mind that the 2010 Budget was a work in progress and there was far more work to be done before a finalized document could be produced. Additionally, he noted, the Committee should understand the magnitude of the budget deficit they faced as it was much worse than initially thought in light of lower than estimated sales tax figures, increased retirement and health insurance costs and a number of other contributing factors which continued to raise the budget deficit to a figure much higher than the \$3 million initially anticipated. Mr. Geraghty stated that a number of factors contributing to the deficit, such as health and retirement costs increases, were beyond their control.

Discussion ensued.

Mr. Dusek entered the meeting at 10:08 a.m.

Resuming the agenda review, Mr. Geraghty skipped to Item 3 which pertained to positions previously submitted to the Budget Committee for abolishment to achieve a 0% budget increase, some of which had been reinstated by the Standing Committees, as well as a listing of additional positions to be considered for abolishment. He noted that a document entitled Position Status had been developed to outline these positions, a copy of which was included in the agenda. Mr. Geraghty stated that the 22 additional positions recommended for abolishment would lead to a \$947,450 salary cost savings to the County and would serve as the second round of position cuts if implemented. He said that he had contacted as many Department Heads as possible to discuss the additional position reductions and it was his opinion that the County could survive without the 22 positions indicated; however, he noted, if the Committee sought to further reduce County staff the services and programs offered would be affected. Mr. Geraghty suggested that another meeting be scheduled for the following week to allow the Committee members the opportunity to review the positions indicated and consider the matter before making any decisions.

Mr. Stec stated that in prior weeks, when the budget deficit indicated had been much less, he had been much more comfortable with the budget situation and the process that would be implemented to bridge the deficit faced. In light of the new information received which indicated a budget deficit of \$8.9 million, he said that it seemed that more drastic measures would have to be taken to achieve an acceptable 2010 Budget and he felt the first step would be to stand firm on the listing of additional positions proposed for abolishment and to be prepared for a third round of position reductions. Mr. Stec said that by making the decision to abolish all of the positions indicated, it gave them the ability to abolish vacant positions, which was favorable to laying off active employees.

Mr. Kenny questioned whether an alternate approach to budget reductions had been considered which would allow the Department Heads to determine which positions would be reduced based on a total reduction figure provided by the Budget Committee. Mr. Geraghty replied in the negative and noted that he had contacted each of the Department Heads to determine what the affect would be on the Department. Mr. Kenny said that he thought there might be an argument from the Department Heads that they required the position indicated in the listing but could do without another which could be abolished; therefore, he said, he felt it would be more appropriate to provide each Department with a figure to reduce the budget by and allow them the flexibility to abolish the positions they felt were least necessary, based on their direct knowledge of Departmental operations. Mr. Geraghty replied that this approach had been attempted in the past but had not worked; he added that the listing of positions proposed for abolishment would affect some Departmental operations and included both hourly and management positions. He stated that if the proposed list was not enforced, he did not feel that further position reductions could be made.

Mr. Belden stated that before any decision was made, he would like to see a report which indicated the total savings to be achieved through the abolishment of the 22 positions suggested, including salary and benefits, as well as the reduction in revenues that would occur as some of the positions indicated might receive Federal or State reimbursement. Mr. Geraghty replied that this information could be provided at the meeting to be scheduled for the following week.

Expounding on the issue of providing the Department Heads with a figure for further reduction of Departmental Budgets to be made at their discretion, Chairman Monroe apprised that this approach had been taken early in the budget process but had not worked as the Department Heads had reduced their budgets in areas that were not appropriate. He said that the Budget Committee would have the final say as to where the budget and position reductions would occur and he noted that the longer the matter was delayed, the less savings would be achieved. Chairman Monroe stated that a determination on position reductions should be made as quickly as possible in order

to retain salary costs for the remainder of 2009, as well as for the 2010 Budget.

Mr. Pitkin asked if the \$947,450 indicated as the total to be saved by abolishing the additional 22 positions in the second round of cuts included funding for the subsequent unemployment costs and Joan Sady, Clerk of the Board, replied in the negative, noting that the figure was solely representative of salaries and did not include unemployment or fringe benefits.

Mr. Goodspeed said he agreed with Mr. Stec's comments in that he felt the Committee should move forward with the listing of additional positions to be abolished and should be prepared for a third round of position reductions with the understanding that this would impact the services provided by the County and might eliminate some of the non-essential programs offered.

Rob Metthe, Director of Information Technology (IT), stated that he was very disappointed to see that his position was included on the list of additional positions presented for abolishment. He added that he had not been approached by Mr. Geraghty respective to the matter or given the opportunity to find an alternate solution for budget reduction, and felt that it would be a mistake for the future of the County if the position was eliminated. Mr. Metthe said that when he began his employ with the County, the Department was in a severe state of decentralization with IT staff members being added on a Departmental basis. He apprised that his job had been to centralize and manage the existing six IT staff members, to which he had added two technicians with inexpensive salaries during his tenure. Mr. Metthe stated that his Department's telecommunications expertise had led to savings of almost \$2 million while achieving efficiency gains reaching into the hundred thousands of hours. He said the projects running this year incurred well over \$100,000 in benefits to the County and the IT Department was now receiving \$250,000 in revenues, which had increased from the \$10,000 being received when he started with the County, and covered the majority of the work done by the IT Department. Mr. Metthe advised that the benefits to the County from the IT Department added up to a multi-million dollar figure over the past six years. He said that they were in an opportunity rich environment as work was currently being done in a backwards fashion which led to higher expenses, causing Warren County to be one of the highest total costs of government per capita in the State of New York a factor which was very much related to the level of the IT Department which was one of the smallest in New York State. From a taxpayers standpoint, Mr. Metthe said that he felt that it was somewhat inefficient to disregard the technology needs of the County, especially based upon the age in which we live when everything is becoming increasingly technology based. He concluded that he would be very dismayed to see the IT Department take a step backwards where there was so much positive work being done and leadership was required for the Department that had brought these benefits forward.

Mr. Geraghty stated that he was certainly willing to meet with Mr. Metthe and the Chairman of the Support Services Committee to discuss this matter further.

Sheila Weaver, Commissioner of the Department of Social Services (DSS), stated that she did not have the opportunity to speak with Mr. Geraghty prior to the Committee meeting as she had been unavailable. She noted that Agenda Item 2, which was not reviewed, listed the Positions Abolished for 2008-2010 and included two positions she had voluntarily abolished and recreated at lower salaries, leading to a \$30,000 savings. Ms. Weaver apprised that she had been directed by the Social Services Committee to research the possibility of reorganizing her Department, which she had done and had determined that a \$150,000 savings could be attained. Proceeding to the Position Status listing under Agenda Item 3, she pointed out that the listing of positions proposed for abolishment included a Sr. Support Investigator position, which was not a valid title; she added that there was a person who was considering retirement in March of 2010 and she thought that this might be the position indicated for abolishment. Mr. Payne advised that this was the title given to him by Ms. Weaver's secretary and Ms. Weaver

replied that the title was incorrect and was not a position that she had considered eliminating.

Referring to the positions listed under the section of the report identified as "positions tabled at full Board Meeting on 8/21/09", Ms. Weaver stated that the position tabled was actually entitled Case Supervisor Grade B, not a Caseworker, as indicated in the report. She noted that at this time she was unable to abolish any further Caseworker positions as the four vacancies within her Department were all related to services for children who would be put at risk if the positions were not filled. Ms. Weaver reiterated that a Caseworker position had not been tabled and she had attempted to reorganize the DSS in an effort to avoid reducing services to children within the County. Mrs. Sady apprised that the Caseworker title had been used based on the resolution that had tabled the filling of the position and she said that it was possible that the resolution would have to be amended to include the correct title. Mr. Geraghty said that he appreciated Ms. Weaver's efforts to reorganize the DSS to attain savings for the County while maintaining services.

Mr. Lamy noted that one of the positions proposed for abolishment was that of the Director of Parks, Recreation & Railroad and he had not had the opportunity to speak with Mr. Geraghty on the matter prior to the meeting. He noted that 16 positions had been deleted from the Public Works Department over the past 15 months, and he had been allowed to provide his input and recommendations for all of them. Mr. Lamy stated that he would request the same dialogue be allowed for this position, as well as any other positions to be abolished, to allow his opinions to be considered, as well as to gain some direction as to how the Department could be reorganized to operate without the Director of Parks, Recreation & Railroad position. Mr. Geraghty stated that he had been unable to meet with Mr. Lamy as he was away from the office but had spoken with Mr. Belden, Chairman of the Public Works Committee, on the matter and would be glad to meet with Mr. Lamy to address his concerns. Mr. Lamy advised that he had already categorized and evaluated all of the 114 Public Works employees and he would like to share this information, as well as his vision for the future of the Department, before final cuts were made.

Respective to increased health care costs, Mr. Bentley stated that when the County contracted with the current insurance broker the promise had been made that lower insurance costs would be achieved; however, he said this had never come to fruition and he felt it might be time to search for another broker. Mr. Strainer said he agreed with this comment and asked if there was a contract in place which kept the County from taking its business elsewhere. Mr. Taylor stated that he felt there was a misunderstanding as to the control the insurance broker held over the price of insurance coverage. He advised that regardless of the broker chosen, they were only able to offer the lowest prices given to them by the insuring companies through a bid process. Mr. Taylor concluded that regardless of the broker chosen, the prices bid by the insuring companies and subsequently offered to the County would be the same.

Paul Dusek, County Attorney, apprised that there were events occurring that a number of the Committee members might not be aware of with regards to health insurance coverage. He said that the insurance broker, Capital Financial Group, Inc., had sought bids for insurance coverage, as he had for each of the past few years he had been associated with the County. Mr. Dusek stated that the County's HMO coverage had always been less expensive than the experience rated coverage and that is why they had continued with that coverage; he added that the good part of this arrangement had been that one of the carriers, CDPHP, had amassed a group of members which consisted of the majority of County employees due to their lower premium costs. As a result of this large grouping of members, Mr. Dusek stated that Capital Financial had been successful in attaining viable proposals for experience rated coverage from two carriers, those being CDPHP and Blue Shield, which they believed would reduce increases in insurance premiums previously estimated from 10% to 5%. He advised that when he had negotiated the Union contracts, he had included a clause that would allow him to reopen the contract if a viable alternative could be found for health insurance and although the Unions did have the option to object, he felt that they should be

amenable to the change in coverage. Mr. Dusek said that meetings with the Unions had been set up for the following week to discuss the changes that would accompany the experience rated coverage which would include higher deductibles with reimbursement from the Municipalities.

In light of this new information, Mr. Bentley noted that the insurance increases should not be as drastic as those indicated in the previous information received. Mr. Geraghty stated that the amounts indicated in budget reports were indicative of those previously received from Capital Financial and could change based on the new coverage being considered.

Mr. Kenny stated that when considering changing to a comparable insurance coverage it was important to consider how changes in coverage would affect each individual. For example, he said, a small change in the prescription plan may not affect one person, while it may have drastic effects on another. Mr. Dusek replied that these aspects were being addressed, and when they had reviewed coverage with higher deductibles they had also researched the implications of reimbursing employees for the difference between the deductible of the new and old programs. He said that representatives of Capital Financial would be present at the meetings to provide information confirming that the coverages offered by both programs were comparable.

Mr. Geraghty advised that a similar type of coverage had been implemented by the Town of Warrensburg and they had determined that savings were achieved regardless of the fact that they were now reimbursing employees directly for the difference between the coverage deductibles. Mr. Pitkin said that he had contacted a Washington County representative who had indicated that they had saved approximately 30% in insurance coverages by making a similar change to experience rated coverage.

Continuing to Item 4, Mr. Geraghty advised that the agenda included a listing of non-mandated programs broken down by Department, including the implications of not providing the services and the 2010 anticipated costs.

Mr. Bentley pointed out that Westmount Health Facility was included on this list but had no associated cost and Mrs. McKinstry replied that this was because Westmount was financially supported by their fund balance and incurred no cost to the County.

Mr. Stec stated that although the Department Heads had done a very good job of achieving 0% budget increases as directed by the Committee, the savings achieved were not enough to bridge the gap created by the budget deficit and further reductions would have to be made and he felt they should look to severely cut or eliminate some of the non-mandated programs currently being offered to further reduce the budget. He pointed out that the figure listed for the Sheriff's Road Patrol was anticipated to be \$7.3 million for 2010 and although he did not want the service to be eliminated, he thought they should review the services to see if they could be reduced to achieve budget savings. Mr. Taylor said that he agreed with Mr. Stec's comments and added that all of the non-mandated programs listed should be closely reviewed to determine what reductions could be made.

Pat Auer, Director of Public Health, advised that Health Services - Disease Control/Immunizations was a mandated program and could not be eliminated.

Referring to the Sheriff's Road Patrol costs, Mr. Geraghty said that he and Bud York, Sheriff, communicated daily and were reviewing all of the costs associated with the Sheriff's Office to see where changes could be made to reduce the Departmental budget. He added that Sheriff York was very aware of the budget issues faced by the County and was making every effort to assist in rectifying them when he was able.

Mr. Bentley questioned whether the \$7.3 million figure reflected all of the reductions in road patrol staff and Mrs. McKinstry replied that it included some of the reductions, but not all of them. Mr. Pitkin stated that the accurate figures were required to make reduction decisions and Mr. Geraghty replied that the information provided had been compiled in a very short time frame with what was available at that time. He added that a more accurate accounting would be provided at the next Committee meeting.

Mr. Goodspeed stated that he was not agreeable to reducing non-mandated services relating to health care and public safety which were necessary to some Warren County citizens, while trivial services such as those offered by the Fish Hatchery continued to receive funding and he felt that they should prioritize the non-mandated services provided to reduce or eliminate those that did not pertain to the health and well being of County residents. He said that he had spoken with sportsmen in the area who have indicated that although the Fish Hatchery was a nice facility to have, they would prefer to see its services reduced, rather than to see more employee layoffs. Mr. Goodspeed stated that he understood that the Fish Hatchery provided a tourism impact to the county; however, he said, he felt it would be a travesty to eliminate or reduce health and public safety programs while the Fish Hatchery remained intact.

Proceeding, Mr. Geraghty announced that Agenda Item 5 pertained to a summary of agencies and the proposed costs associated for the 2010 Budget. He explained that the summary reflected all of the outside agencies that received funding from the County, as well as the amounts proposed for 2010.

Mr. Stec stated that none of the items listed were mandated and should be reduced or eliminated. He said that the summaries included in the agenda packet reflected millions of dollars in budget reductions that could be made and in light of the tremendous budget deficit it was time to start making those painful cuts.

Discussion ensued.

Mr. Pitkin proposed that each of the Department Heads be contacted and directed to reduce their approved budgets by an additional 10% in an effort to allow them to determine where the additional cuts would be made. Mr. Stec agreed with this suggestion and added that they should be advised that if they did not make the reductions, the Budget Committee would make them on their behalf. Mr. Geraghty responded that the Department Heads had followed the direction given to them in achieving a 0% budget increase and if the Committee desired further reductions they were certainly able to move in that direction. Mr. Stec stated that he was not calling into question the efforts provided by the Department Heads in submitting their budget requests as directed; he was simply stating that the budget deficit was more than originally anticipated and it was time for the County's Departments as a whole to work together with the Committee in order to bridge the gap created by the deficit. Mr. Geraghty responded that he was not opposed to requesting further budget reductions and he said that if the Committee determined a percentage for reduction, a memo to that effect could be sent to all Department Heads.

Mr. Taylor stated that he was not opposed to further budget reductions either, but felt that they should first review the non-mandated programs and expenditures to determine what could be reduced or eliminated. He cited that it might be appropriate to remove funding for Extension Services as that could potentially save up to six positions from elimination. Mr. Strainer responded that if the Extension Services funding was reduced they would still be eliminating positions as the program could not sustain without County funding. He added that in light of the current state of the economy Extension Services was a program that people needed and he did not feel it was appropriate to eliminate the program. Mr. Strainer went on to state that he felt it was shameful for any County employees to accept a raise in salary during these troubled times and yet there was no way for the County to avoid them due to the Union contract currently in place. He said he felt it was time for County employees to speak out

and give up their raises for 2010 in an effort to assist the County in light of the fact that many of their colleagues would be losing their jobs due to the budget situation. Mr. Geraghty stated that he did not feel that it was appropriate to lay the blame for the budget situation on the employees who would not object to their Union imposed raises.

Mr. Thomas stated that although his comments would not help the budget situation, he hoped that all of the Supervisors in attendance kept this situation in mind when it came time to negotiate the next Union contracts. He advised that they should be more aggressive in developing the next Union contract and should include a tiering system that would increase employee contributions for health coverage and would eliminate paid lunches. Mr. Stec reminded the Committee members that an effort had been made to request assistance from the Unions; however he said, the Unions had refused to agree to the contracts being opened for revision. Mr. Geraghty confirmed Mr. Stec's statement adding that discussions with the CSEA regarding possible changes to the Union contract had begun early in the budget process but had not been productive.

Referring to the Summary of Non-Mandated Programs document included in the agenda, Ms. Weaver apprised that Northeast Parent & Child provided preventive services to families and if the program was eliminated, the DSS staff would be required to provide the services. She added that the division that would have to handle the work had already been reduced by one position and although the remaining staff could provide the services, she said she could not guarantee that adequate quality services would be provided. Ms. Weaver announced that St. Anne Institute provided sex abuse validations and counseling, as well as evaluations for children who were the victims of sexual abuse and testified in court on their behalf and provided counseling for those children. She advised that the Probation contract was not mandated for the DSS but was for the Probation Department and provided services for JD (juvenile delinquent) and PINS (persons in need of supervision) youths and if the program was cut they would be reducing the Probation Department staff. As for the COPS Youth Bureau program, Ms. Weaver said that this was the Youth Court program and had been included at the DSS Committee's direction.

Mr. Belden noted that the DSS budget was the largest Departmental budget and was funded by 50% County contribution. He asked if a listing of positions had been provided reflecting those which received Federal and State funding and those that did not. Ms. Weaver replied that the only portion of the DSS budget that did not receive funding was the Countryside Adult Home; she added that all remaining portions of the DSS budget received some form of Federal or State funding, although the percentage rate varied by division. Mr. Belden questioned whether a listing of DSS positions and the percentage of reimbursement received for each was available and Mr. Geraghty replied that a report listing this information had been provided in the past. Mr. Belden stated that he thought it was important to review this report when making decisions as to which positions would be eliminated to ensure that positions receiving the least amount of funding were being abolished.

Mr. Merlino noted that Ms. Weaver had done an exceptional job of maintaining the services provided by her Department while making changes to reduce costs and increase productivity during her brief tenure as Commissioner and although he understood that the majority of the programs offered by the DSS were State mandated, he questioned who determined the amounts provided to recipients for rent, oil and grocery assistance. He suggested that if all of the allotments provided by the DSS could be reduced by 1% it would help the budget situation and would even out the effects felt by everyone. Ms. Weaver apprised that the amounts provided to recipients were based on the standards approved by the State Senate and Assembly and were not controlled on the County level. Sheriff York pointed out that a Sheriff's Investigator had been transferred to the DSS to investigate possible fraudulent cases and since that time the number of actual recipients of DSS benefits had decreased significantly. Ms. Weaver confirmed this statement and noted that previous to the addition of the Investigator they had been funding housing expenses for approximately 30 to 35 homeless persons weekly and that figure had been subsequently

reduced to about five cases per week.

Mr. VanNess said that prior discussions had been held regarding the possibility of mandating furloughs for County employees as they were attempting to do in Albany County and he questioned if any further information had been received on this matter. Mr. Dusek advised that he had placed a call to the Albany County Attorney to get a status update on this issue but had yet to receive a return call. He said that the Albany County issue was currently being litigated as the Union had filed a grievance as soon as the mandatory furlough policy was implemented. Mr. Dusek apprised that another County had tried to implement this procedure in the past but had not enforced the policy due to the amount of litigation that had ensued. Mr. VanNess questioned whether there would be a savings to the County if they were to close all non-mandated Departments for the day following Thanksgiving Day and Mr. Dusek replied that he did not feel this could be done because it was similar to the furlough issue in that the County would be forcing employees to take a day off with no compensation.

With respect to the Voluntary Furlough program that had been instituted earlier in the year, Mr. VanNess stated that he felt it was unfortunate that there had not been more employee participation and he felt this was due to the erroneous rumors that had been circulating. He said one of the rumors he had heard was that the Supervisors were closely monitoring the employees able to take advantage of the program and those would be the first positions to be eliminated as those employees apparently did not need their jobs if they were able to take time off without pay, which he said, was not true. Mr. VanNess noted he had also heard that information outlining the program was supposed to have been circulated to employees but was not shown to some bargaining unit employees as the Union was not in favor of the program. Mr. Payne replied that this was incorrect because the notification had been provided to all Department Heads and had been posted on bulletin boards for all employees.

Subsequent to further discussion, Mr. Geraghty advised that another meeting of the Budget Committee would be scheduled for the following week to further discuss the position and program reductions outlined in the agenda.

As there was no further business to come before the Budget Committee, on motion made by Mr. Stec and seconded by Mr. Belden, Mr. Geraghty adjourned the meeting at 11:31 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Amanda Allen, Sr. Legislative Office Specialist