

BOE, a copy of the Warren County BOE's response to that letter and a copy of the anticipated expenses from the Special Election were included in the agenda packet. She stated that the cost of the Special Election had not been budgeted for and would create a shortfall during preparation for the September General Election.

Ms. Casey said that the next item on the agenda pertained to the re-certification of the testing lab. She advised that there was a notice in the agenda packet from the State Commissioner of the Board of Elections stating that the testing laboratory had been re-certified in February and they were in the process of certifying the voting systems for the 2009 elections. She explained that the State was advising that the BOE should purchase equipment and supplies for the current voting system while simultaneously preparing for the roll out of the new voting system in 2010. She added that the BOE had decided to use the Ballot Marking Devices (BMD) and lever machines for the 2009 elections. She said that since there was no certified voting system currently in place it was difficult to anticipate the necessary purchases. She explained that unless the State chose to decertify the lever machines by August, the BOE was anticipating the use of BMD and lever machines for the 2009 election cycle.

Ms. Casey said that a chart had been included in the agenda packet, which outlined the amount of HAVA (Help Americans Vote Act) funds that were received, the County match and the remaining balances for each county in New York State. She noted that as of June 23, 2008 Warren County had a balance of \$376,695.76. She stated that the next page of the agenda contained a breakdown of how those funds would be expended. She added that Warren County BOE was in a good position financially for the roll out of the new voting system as they had begun preparations six years prior. She advised that there were additional costs as the funds would also be used to purchase an election management software program and a setup that would cost approximately \$100,000. She added that additional voting machines would also need to be purchased as some locations only had one machine and the new roll out would require that they have two machines; one machine that would be available for handicapped voters and one tabulator. She stated that there were funds remaining in a Capital Project that could be used for the purchase of computer hardware.

Ms. Casey apprised the Committee that if the State did certify the voting system and the required additional machines were purchased, it would create an additional problem of storage space. She said that 25 machines were currently stored in the basement beneath the Old Jail; however, she added, if the number of machines increased to 61, which was the amount needed for the full roll out, there was not sufficient storage space available. She said that a copy of the survey which had been completed last year and was on file with the State BOE, was included in the agenda packet. She advised that the State wanted the BOE to order the machines prior to the certification. She said that if the price increase was approved the machines would need to be ordered by March 15, 2009 in order to receive the current pricing. She added that after April 1, 2009 the machines would cost an additional \$1,300 each. She said that there would be a State Board meeting on Tuesday, March 10, 2009 and the decision on the price increase would be made at that time. She advised that if the price increase was not approved, the BOE would wait until after certification before purchasing the additional machines. Mrs. Simmes voiced her opinion that the price of the machines was excessive and Ms. Casey agreed, noting, however that none of the other counties had complained. Ms. Casey continued by saying that when they had sent the response letter to the State, they had sent copies to each of the other counties in New York State, with the hope that other counties would express their displeasure,

as well.

William Montfort, Commissioner of the Board of Elections, said that if the lever machines were decertified and became necessary to use paper ballots, the cost per ballot was approximately \$.57, which would cost in excess of \$80,000 per election. Ms. Casey stated that the issue of the certification of the lever machines had been ongoing for four years and for the last two years it seemed as if only optical scan voting systems would be allowed. She advised that the State charged \$3,900 for pre election day, election day and post election day support during an election and she added the BOE refused this service in order to reduce costs.

Discussion ensued.

Ms. Casey explained that when the State changed to the optical scan voting system, the voters would fill in the bubbles on a preprinted ballot. She added that the current average voting time per voter was 90 seconds and the optical scan voting system would increase the average voting time to four minutes. She advised that the Warren County BOE would be responsible for the purchase and storage of the voting booths unless the individual Towns acted to purchase their own booths. She said there were pictures and prices for the optical scan voting system booths in the agenda packet. She stated that the least expensive was an economy corrugated privacy shield, which cost \$17 each and were intended for use on lunchroom style tables. She noted that one voting booth had to be available for every 250 voters. She advised that in 2010 everyone would have to use the optical scan voting system.

Ms. Casey stated that if the voting booths were purchased using HAVA grant funding the County would be responsible for maintaining and storing the booths. She said that if the individual Towns purchased their own voting booths, they could be stored on-site, reducing transportation costs. She added that the Towns would be able to choose whichever voting booth style was suitable for their polling places. Mrs. Simmes asked if one of the voting booths styles shown had to be purchased and Ms. Casey responded that the voting booths had to allow the voters privacy. Mrs. Simmes questioned if the Towns could construct their own voting booths and Ms. Casey responded affirmatively and added that the height and width requirements would have to be followed. Ms. Casey reiterated that the BOE was hopeful that they would not need to purchase optical scan voting systems until 2010; however, she added, if the State decertified the lever machines it could become necessary to make the purchases by November 2009.

Mr. Taylor questioned the need to purchase enough ballots for each voter to make two mistakes. Ms. Casey responded that it was a requirement that three ballots be ordered for each voter and she added that a town in New Jersey had only ordered enough ballots for 150% of their voter population and had run out of ballots by 10:00 a.m. on election day. In answer to a question concerning the unused ballots, Ms. Casey responded that the unused ballots had to be stored for 22 months following the election. Mr. Montfort stated that each box of ballots weighed approximately 35 pounds and over a period of time they would be storing 400 to 500 boxes. Mrs. Simmes asked why the unused ballots needed to be stored and Ms. Casey responded that both cast ballots and unused ballots needed to be stored for 22 months because that was the length of time that the election was challengeable.

Ms. Casey stated that the voting booths and the storage facility were two issues that would

need to be discussed further at future meetings. She questioned the best way to survey the Supervisors to determine if the optical voting booths would be purchased by the individual Towns or the County. Mr. Sheehan stated that they would request that Hal Payne, Commissioner of Administrative & Fiscal Services, send the information to the Supervisors.

Ms. Casey requested authorization for the Commissioners and Deputy Commissioners of the Warren County Board of Elections to attend the New York State Board of Elections Annual Conference at the Holiday Inn in Albany, New York on April 27-29, 2009.

Motion was made by Mr. Strainer, seconded by Mr. Taylor and carried unanimously to authorize attendance at the conference as outlined above. *Copies of the Authorization to Attend Meeting or Convention forms are on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Casey noted that copies of the bid tabulations sheets for machine supplies, ballots and BMD for all three elections were included in the agenda packet.

As there was no further business to come before the Support Services Committee, on motion made by Mr. VanNess and seconded by Mr. Strainer, Mr. Sheehan adjourned the meeting at 11:45 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Charlene DiResta, Sr. Legislative Office Specialist