

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: SUPPORT SERVICES - BOARD OF ELECTIONS, SELF-INSURANCE

DATE: JANUARY 27, 2011

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COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:	OTHERS PRESENT:
SUPERVISORS TAYLOR	MARY BETH CASEY, COMMISSIONER, BOARD OF ELECTIONS
GIRARD	BILL MONTFORT, COMMISSIONER, BOARD OF ELECTIONS
STRAINER	AMY CLUTE, SELF-INSURANCE ADMINISTRATOR
LOEB	DANIEL G. STEC, CHAIRMAN
MCCOY	PAUL DUSEK, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR/ATTORNEY
MCDEVITT	JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD
	KEVIN GERAGHTY, BUDGET OFFICER
COMMITTEE MEMBER ABSENT:	SUPERVISORS THOMAS
SUPERVISOR VANNESS	BELDEN
	LOEB
	JOANNE COLLINS, LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

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Mr. Taylor called the meeting of the Support Services Committee to order at 11:00 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Strainer, seconded by Mr. McCoy and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the previous 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 (BOE), who distributed copies of the agenda to the Committee members, a copy of which is on file with the minutes.

Commencing the Agenda review, Mrs. Casey reported a positive outcome for both the September and November elections for which only one issue was raised with regard to privacy, and noted she would address that later in the meeting.

Mrs. Casey presented a request to authorize charge-backs for Villages, Towns and schools to use the County voting system. The Village of Lake George, she apprised, had no other choice and the ballots and the necessary staff would be prepared for their March election. She added that she had created an estimate of the costs which had not included the ballots or election inspectors. Mr. Taylor asked if the total amount of \$640 was for each location and Mrs. Casey confirmed that it was per district or jurisdiction. She further noted that the Queensbury Union Free School District (QSD) had requested the County voting system; therefore, she said, the costs were prepared based on Queensburys' figures. Mr. Strainer asked why a municipality would choose the lever machines and Mrs. Casey explained that cost was the issue, and noted the new machines would not be mandatory until 2012. She noted the County could not absorb the increased cost of the new machines used by the municipalities which was the fiscal responsibility of that municipality. The advantage of using the new machines prior to 2012, she said, was the opportunity for increased familiarity; however, she reiterated, the cost could not be absorbed by the BOE. Mr. Strainer inquired if the new Queensbury Middle School building would be used in the future as a voting site and noted the parking issues at the current location. Mrs. Casey acknowledged the parking issues at the current site and explained it was selected because it was the only building not under construction. Responding to a question from Mr. Taylor, Mrs. Casey apprised that the total number of anticipated charge-backs for the QSD was \$640 to cover in-house ballot programming, machine delivery and set-up.

Mrs. Casey cautioned of a transportation issue which could arise if several school districts requested use of the machines. The new machines, she explained, required additional handling measures unlike the lever machines and the County would not have the resources, such as vehicles and manpower, which must be paid for by the municipality or school. Furthermore, she stated, the care, custody and control of the machines was the responsibility of the BOE to ensure insurance and warranty integrity.

Mr. Loeb asked if the cost had been calculated only for the QSD and Mrs. Casey replied affirmatively. She noted that the Glens Falls School District (GFSD) had inquired and could save several thousand dollars by using the lever machines in 2011 prior to the 2012 mandate requiring the new machines. Mr. Loeb stated he felt it was appropriate to fairly distribute the expenses to the appropriate schools and/or municipalities and to conduct other elections at those locations. Mr. Girard expressed his agreement with Mr. Loeb and recommended that school and Town budgets reflect such election expenses accordingly. The responsibility, he said, was ultimately on the taxpayers. Mrs. Casey pointed out that paper ballots would be acceptable after 2012. A discussion ensued relative to the need for uniformity within the County relative to the new electronic scanning systems which utilized pixel technology.

Motion was made by Mr. Loeb, seconded by Mr. Girard and carried unanimously to authorize charge-backs for schools, the Village of Lake George and special elections, and the necessary resolution was authorized for the February 18, 2011 Board meeting. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

Addressing the BOE Office relocation, Mrs. Casey asserted that timing was critical due to the preparation required for elections. She stated that the relocation must occur on or before April 1<sup>st</sup>. Mr. McCoy stated that as Chairman of the County Facilities Committee, he would address the issue with Frank Morehouse, Superintendent of Buildings. Paul Dusek, County Administrator/Attorney, acknowledged the April 1<sup>st</sup> request and apprised that the County awaited the final review from Clark Paterson Lee Engineering regarding the Heating/Ventilation and Cooling (HVAC), and sprinkler systems in the Human Services Building. He noted that the goal was to expedite all Office relocations and he was optimistic that the deadline for the relocation could be met.

Mrs. Casey addressed a privacy issue which was raised with the sit-down booths and noted it was the only issue regarding the new machines. She said she was currently working with Legislators and vendors to consider the purchase of metal stand-up voting booths for all locations. She reported that 161 handicap booths had been purchased and based on that figure, Help America Vote Act (HAVA) funds could be used to purchase 60 additional stand-up booths. Unfortunately, she said, the manufacturer had absorbed the right to sell booths and raised the price. She stated that she would continue negotiations to that end, and noted that municipalities could purchase their own booths for their Towns.

Mrs. Casey presented a request for herself and Bill Monfort, Commissioner of the Board of Elections, to attend the Annual New York State Board of Elections Conference, to be held at the Desmond Hotel and Conference Center in Albany, NY from April 25 to April 27, 2011. She stated that the expenses for the conference were included in the budget and the formal request including details would be submitted prior to travel.

Motion was made by Mr. Girard and seconded by Mr. McCoy to approve the request for travel as outlined above.

Mr. Loeb asked of the necessity of overnight accommodations for an Albany location which was typically a commutable distance. Mr. Montfort stated the importance of the conference which included discussions and information exchanges which historically took place following the scheduled agenda, as well as during the pre-event early morning breakfast hour. Mrs. Casey pointed out that the State BOE hosted the conference, and their presence for discussions and questions on both a group and individual basis presented the opportunity to glean valuable information. She reminded the Committee that there were two new Deputy's in the BOE Office, and apprised that the conference also offered specific sessions for the Commissioners in this regard. She noted that the most useful information was obtained during meetings held outside of the conference agenda. Lastly, Mrs. Casey impressed to the Committee that she had made decisions throughout the year to forego other conferences, in order to attend and gain full value from this critical annual event for which the vendors offered training sessions and hosted user group discussions following the scheduled events.

Mr. Taylor cautioned of setting a precedent for conferences held in Albany and the proximity. Mr. Belden noted the availability of hotels, such as the Holiday Inn located near the Desmond which offered significant cost savings for accommodations. Mr. Girard opined that the changes occurring in the BOE with the new voting machines justified the need for full information exchanges and Mr. Strainer concurred noting the time savings when all conference activities and meals were conducted in one facility. Mr. Strainer suggested that conferences be addressed on a case-by-case basis. Mr. Belden stated that he had attended a conference at the Desmond for which he stayed longer for informal discussions, but subsequently stayed overnight at a less expensive hotel in the close vicinity. Mr. Loeb stated he felt expenses should be itemized and accommodations compared for cost savings. Because he felt it was setting a precedent, Mr. Loeb said he could not support the request. Mr. Girard noted that the BOE had held back requests for several other conferences in order to justify this very valuable conference. Mr. McCoy felt the overnight was justified and underscored the importance of the educational process that this conference offered. He apprised that the BOE had consistently shown cost saving efforts and Mr. McDevitt concurred.

Mr. Taylor called the question and the motion was carried by majority vote to approve the request for travel as outlined above, with Mr. Loeb voting in opposition.

Mrs. Casey informed of the retirement of Connie Service, Deputy Commissioner, to be replaced by Emily McCabe who would begin January 28, 2011. She invited the Committee and all Warren County staff to stop by the Office on the 28<sup>th</sup> to wish Mrs. Service well, and to welcome Ms. McCabe.

Returning to the issue of the voting machines, Mr. Geraghty suggested that a brief informational letter be sent to school districts indicating the amounts to be included in their 2012 budgets for use of the machines. Mrs. Casey informed that School Superintendents were notified of all pertinent information by the NYS Department of Education and Warren County would send letters to respond to inquiries only. Mr. Thomas asked the fate of the old lever machines which were currently stored at the Town and Mrs. Casey recommend they be retained until litigation regarding the matter was settled.

With regard to the recent election held in the Town of Lake George, Mr. McCoy asked Mrs. Casey to review the ballot purchasing process. Mrs. Casey explained that ballots could be purchased based on 110% of the number of registered voters, or 300% of voter history. The former method was used, she said, which was the least expensive method and noted that additional voter history using the new machines would be needed in order to calculate voter history for the purchase of ballots. Mr. Montfort added that less voting errors would occur after the population adjusted to the new

machines, thereby streamlining the ballot ordering process. Mr. McCoy commended the BOE for the precise ballot purchase completed for the Lake George election.

This concluded the BOE portion of the Support Services Committee meeting and privilege of the floor was extended to Amy Clute, Self-Insurance Administrator, who distributed copies of the agenda, a copy of which is on file with the minutes.

Beginning with Agenda Item 3, Mrs. Clute presented a request to amend Resolution No. 46 of 2011 to correct the deductible for flood and earthquake insurance from \$10,000 to \$1 million.

Motion was made by Mr. McCoy, seconded by Mr. Girard and carried unanimously to approve the request to amend Resolution No. 46 of 2011 as outlined above and the necessary resolution was authorized for the February 18, 2011 Board meeting. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

Mrs. Clute informed of requests received from the Towns of Stony Creek, Hague and Thurman asking the Board of Supervisors to explore the formation of a group of Warren County Towns for the purpose of reducing health insurance costs.

Mr. Dusek stated that research had been done in the past and the findings had indicated that it was not cost effective. He informed that he would continue to research the issue with John Weber of Capital Financial Corporation, and he would keep the Committee apprised. Mr. Belden noted that health insurance costs for the Town had increased by 41% over the last three years and felt the Town should have the option to join the County plans. Mr. Taylor pointed out that the County was experience rated which would impact the process. Todd Lunt, Human Resource Director, stated that the Towns would also need to be experience rated. He explained that experience rates were based on claims history, and the rate structure for non-experience rated plans differed significantly with higher premium rates. Mr. Thomas stated that in 2005 the Town of Stony Creek had negotiated a contract with the union to place a cap on health insurance costs to avoid future increases. Although the cost incurred to the Town was capped, he stated, costs continued to rise for employees. With rising costs and declining coverage, he asserted, there was a need to maintain better levels of health coverage for employees at a reasonable cost.

Mr. Belden thanked Mrs. Clute for her hard work and dedication to the County and commended her for the level of service she consistently delivered.

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

Respectfully Submitted,  
Joanne Collins, Legislative Office Specialist