

# WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: FIRE PREVENTION & CONTROL

DATE: FEBRUARY 6, 2007

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COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:	OTHERS PRESENT:
SUPERVISORS	MARVIN LEMERY, FIRE PREVENTION & BUILDING CODE ENFORCEMENT
VANNESS	ADMINISTRATOR
BENTLEY	REPRESENTING LABERGE GROUP:
BELDEN	RICHARD LABERGE
HASKELL	DON RHODES
GERAGHTY	JIM CLARKE
GIRARD	WILLIAM THOMAS, CHAIRMAN
SOKOL	PAUL DUSEK, COUNTY ATTORNEY
	JOAN PARSONS, COMMISSIONER OF ADMINISTRATIVE & FISCAL SERVICES
	JOAN SADY, CLERK
	SUPERVISORS: CAIMANO
	GABRIELS
	KENNY
	MERLINO
	STEC
	F. THOMAS
	PATRICIA NENNINGER, SECOND ASSISTANT COUNTY ATTORNEY
	BRIAN LAFLURE, WARREN COUNTY DEPUTY FIRE COORDINATOR
	JULIE PACYNA, PURCHASING AGENT
	NELSON CHASE JR., WASHINGTON COUNTY'S CO-CHAIRMAN OF THE WARREN/WASHINGTON COUNTIES EMERGENCY TRAINING CENTER COMMITTEE
	CHIP MELLON, WARREN COUNTY'S CO-CHAIRMAN OF THE WARREN/WASHINGTON COUNTIES EMERGENCY TRAINING CENTER COMMITTEE
	JAMES LINDSAY, SUPERVISOR FOR THE TOWN OF KINGSBURY, WASHINGTON COUNTY & MEMBER OF THE WARREN/WASHINGTON COUNTIES EMERGENCY TRAINING CENTER COMMITTEE
	KEN TALKINGTON, SUPERVISOR FOR THE TOWN OF HEBRON, WASHINGTON COUNTY & MEMBER OF THE WARREN/WASHINGTON COUNTIES EMERGENCY TRAINING CENTER COMMITTEE
	STEVE ALEXANDER, SUPERVISOR FOR THE TOWN OF SALEM, WASHINGTON COUNTY & MEMBER OF THE WARREN/WASHINGTON COUNTIES EMERGENCY TRAINING CENTER COMMITTEE
	HAL PAYNE, ADMINISTRATOR - WESTMOUNT HEALTH FACILITY
	MAURY THOMPSON, THE POST STAR
	AMANDA ALLEN, LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

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Mr. VanNess called the special meeting of the Fire Prevention & Control Committee to order at 9:30 a.m.

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Mr. VanNess apprised that the special meeting had been called to address the Committee's questions with respect to the proposal submitted by Laberge Group for the Warren-Washington County Regional Emergency Services Training Center.

Mr. VanNess reminded those in attendance that the Warren/Washington Counties Emergency Training Center Committee, as appointed by Warren and Washington Counties, had worked feverishly on the project, which had been an on-going discussion since early in the 1970's. He apprised that when first suggested in the 1970's the project had been nixed due to a lack of funding, and had seemed to come up against some kind of road block halting its progress ever since.

During the prior Committee meeting, Mr. VanNess apprised that a proposal had been presented by Laberge Group in the amount of \$527,000 for pre-schematic design and engineering fees. He noted that in reviewing these figures, the Supervisors of Warren and Washington Counties had decided to call a halt to the project pending clarification on the proposal. Mr. VanNess stated that it was important to remember that the Committee had received a \$400,000 grant to proceed with the project and in addition each County had contributed \$120,000.

Mr. VanNess introduced Richard Laberge, of Laberge Group, who distributed documentation describing the project to each of the Committee members; *a copy of this documentation is on file with the minutes.* Mr. Laberge began by explaining that the documentation included a synopsis of the project as well as the fee proposal and the preliminary site locations. He noted that while the project included a large fee proposal Laberge Group would work with the Committee on all aspects to achieve the lowest costs possible for the project. Mr. Laberge advised that his firm offered assistance in procurement of funds for projects such as this one and had been working with the Committee for the past two years to develop grant applications and concepts for the proposed emergency training facility. Mr. Laberge stated that his firm had been instrumental in achieving the \$400,000 Shared Municipal Services Initiative Grant noted by Mr. VanNess and his firm continued to search for additional grant funding. Mr. Laberge advised that the emergency training facility was a project which would continue to develop in phases, as funding allowed, and it was the goal of the Laberge group for the facility to be built as affordably as possible.

Mr. Laberge apprised that one of the major factors in the progression of the project was site selection. He explained that a five to ten acre site would be ideal and three such sites had been identified; a map portraying these three sites was included in the documentation distributed, he added. Mr. Laberge noted that each of the three sites would need to be evaluated to determine which would best suit the needs of the project. He advised that through the grant process they had determined the programming needs of the facility and a listing of 17 possible components had been comprised based on those needs; that listing was included on the first page of the documentation distributed, Mr. Laberge added.

Currently, the multi-phased project was expected to be funded through combined Warren/Washington County appropriations and the on-going search for appropriate grant programs, Mr. Laberge apprised. He noted that the current Conceptual Budget for the training center was estimated at \$4.8 million, with \$1.7 million devoted to the first phase of the project and \$3.1 million for the second. Mr. Laberge stated that it was important to note that these figures had been developed for grant application purposes and the program would be built around a budget affordable for the first phase and incorporating additional grant opportunities as discovered.

Mr. Laberge introduced Jim Clarke, who was the proposed project manager, to provide more detailed information on the proposed emergency training center. Mr. Clarke apprised that the training center had the potential to become a multi-building campus incorporating upwards of seven structures

depending on the programming facilitated at the site and in terms of the certification programs conducted therein. As mentioned by Mr. Laberge, the preferred site would include five to ten acres to accommodate the training center currently proposed and any additions for the future, Mr. Clarke stated.

As for the phasing of the project, Mr. Clarke advised that the total project costs were currently estimated at \$4.8 million, broken into two phases; however, he noted, the exact phasing and costs would be determined by the availability of the appropriate funds upon determining the site and the funds available to build the necessary components of the project. Mr. Clarke said that it was important to understand that even if a multi-phase project were intended, a master plan for the entire site must be produced in order to build towards the final product. All of these types of necessities were built into the fee structure listed on the second page of the documentation provided, Mr. Clarke apprised.

With respect to the \$4.8 million price tag on the project, Mr. Kenny asked one of the Committee members to explain where this fee had come from, as he and other Supervisors not serving on the Committee had been advised that the estimated costs for the project, inclusive of engineering fees, was in the neighborhood of \$1.2 million. Mr. VanNess explained that initially the Committee had estimated \$1.5 to \$1.8 for the first phase of the project which would give the emergency services groups the ability to train for their respective positions. Phase two, he continued, would incorporate costs in the area of \$3.1 million, but would allow the inclusion of additional components for the future; Mr. VanNess added that the second phase of the project would begin at the County's leisure and discretion.

Mr. Kenny asked if the engineering fees would be based on the two phases combined and Mr. Clarke replied that the total engineering fees, in the amount of \$527,000, had been proposed in two pieces, the combination of which would cover the entire project. Mr. Clarke explained that the first phase incorporated engineering fees in the amount of \$27,000 for pre-schematic design services as follows:

- Site/building programming and data collection
- Site investigation and recommendation (for three sites)
- Site master plan (for the chosen site)
- Public meetings and information workshops
- Concept project budgeting
- Concept project scheduling (two phases are anticipated)

Mr. VanNess stated that as he understood the fee proposal, the County would pay for each phase of the project as it progressed, meaning that the County would pay \$27,000 initially to begin phase one and would not be required to provide the \$500,000 for phase two until they decided to proceed with the project, if ever.

Mr. Laberge stated that the actual fee was developed based on the RFP (Request for Proposal) which did not necessarily phase the project as the grant application had. In responding to the RFP, the fees were broken down into two phases, the first of which was intended to decide what the project would include and where it would be placed, he apprised. Mr. Laberge noted that once these deciding factors had been chosen, it was entirely possible for the cost of phase one to decrease based on the final project plans.

Mr. Clarke stated that when the \$4.8 million conceptual budget was developed for grant submission purposes, it was produced inclusive of soft costs and contingency monies associated with trying to produce such figure without detailed information pertaining to the intended site.

Mr. Kenny advised that two primary concerns expressed by the taxpayers were site and cost, and they

seemed to be very concerned about both. He noted that the estimates related to the Supervisors not serving on the Committee had been much lower than those reflected in the proposal and Mr. Kenny added that his constituents would never accept the project at such high costs.

Mr. VanNess reiterated that the \$4.8 million estimated included both phases of the project. He advised that the Committee was currently considering only the first phase of the project which was estimated at \$1.7 million; the second phase of the project would not be considered until phase one was completed and would require additional debate over the project fees as they were much higher, Mr. VanNess added.

Mr. Kenny asked if the engineering process for phase two would proceed regardless of the extent of the project and Mr. Clarke replied in the negative. Marvin Lemery, Fire Prevention & Building Code Enforcement Administrator, stated that if the project never proceeded beyond the first phase there would be absolutely no costs incurred for the second phase. He noted that the Warren/Washington Counties Emergency Training Center Committee had already begun to scale back some of the unnecessary items included in the first phase and, likewise, there were several items intended for the second phase which would also be discarded. Mr. Lemery stated that due to the items reduced from phase one, it was entirely possible that the cost for that portion of the project would be less than the \$1.7 million estimated. Also, he noted, if they were able to attain the construction necessary for the training facility, they may never proceed to the second phase.

Mr. Belden stated that between the grant funding received and the contributions from each County, a total of \$640,000 was available for the project. He noted that if the \$527,000 in engineering fees were paid the majority of those funds would have been spent leaving little to apply to the production costs. Mr. Belden said that he had been confused by the high engineering fees projected as he, like Mr. Kenny, had thought that the total project cost would be \$1.7 million. Mr. Belden suggested that grant funding be sought for the entire cost of the project on both State and Federal levels; he added that it would be ridiculous to spend the amount proposed for engineering costs only to halt the project for lack of funding.

Mr. Lemery stated that the schematic design phase must be finished in order to decide whether to proceed with the project or not. He noted that the expertise was not available within either the joint Committee or the Board of Supervisors to determine whether the building could be produced until site selection studies or master plans were developed. Mr. Lemery said that to make a decision on the production of the building based solely on projected costs was not fair to either of the Counties or to the emergency services faculty. The whole reason for the RFP had been to gain a proposal, site studies and other information such as reflected by phase one of the Laberge proposal, Mr. Lemery added.

Mr. Caimano asked if \$527,000 quoted would be required to begin phase one of the project and Mr. Clarke replied that it would not. He explained that in order to proceed with the first phase of the project the County would be charged \$27,000; Mr. Clarke added that if the project never proceeded beyond phase one, no additional engineering fees would be charged.

Mr. Laberge stated that the first step in phase one would be to assist the Committee in determining the appropriate site for the training center, and once that had been decided a reasonable budget could be projected. Mr. Laberge added that from his estimates, the budget would be in the range of \$1.7 million. Other decisions, such as what could be pre-planned and designed for the future, for example water mains and electricity, would have to be made and approved by the Committee, he explained. Once this had been done, a final project plan and budget would be developed, Mr. Laberge appraised, and upon the Committee's approval of the final plans, a design and engineering fee would be produced. He stated that he thought that the final engineering costs for the second phase of the project would be less than the

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\$500,000 estimated as the fees would scale back along with those items removed from the project plans. Mr. Laberge stated that he did not think the Committee was asking the Counties to commit to jointly funding the project immediately. He said he thought they were simply asking for permission to engage his firm to begin the first phase of pre-schematic design services for \$27,000 and then reconfigure a workable budget based on the determinations made in phase one.

Mr. Geraghty noted that the costs of environmental studies were not included in the engineering fees for phase one and might lead to escalated costs. Mr. Laberge stated that this was correct and noted that there had been some difficulties in developing a proposal as they were unsure as to how they would estimate environmental testing costs for all three sites. He explained that site studies could proceed in several different ways and they would begin by determining which sites would be most viable from public acceptance, engineering and environmental standpoints prior to proceeding with any costly testing. Mr. Laberge added that he thought further discussion should be held with respect to some of the public acceptance issues.

Mr. Girard asked which of the 17 components listed on the documentation provided by Mr. Laberge would be included in phase one of the project. Mr. Lemery replied that if the grant application submitted to the State were followed, phase one would include a five story burn building, which may be scaled back and pre-manufactured; a two story mask confidence building; a burn pad; and the site development, the total of which was estimated at \$1.7 million. Mr. Lemery stated that the remaining items listed might never be incorporated within the training facility. He noted that the main concern, as it had been since 1974, was to produce a facility for the training of the emergency services staff in the most inexpensive and economical way possible, and phase one initially fit all of those requirements.

Mr. Geraghty asked if engineering costs proposed reflected 10% of the total project costs and Mr. Laberge replied that they did not necessarily use a percent of construction basis to determine fees. Mr. Laberge pointed out that if the Committee decided to purchase a pre-fabricated structure for the burn building, as noted by Mr. Lemery, the engineering fees would decrease as this building would not need to be designed.

Mr. Clarke noted that the engineering fees were based on a lump sum and if construction costs were to move, the fee would not be changed respectively.

Mr. Stec asked if the \$1.7 million estimated for phase one included engineering soft costs and Mr. Clarke replied affirmatively.

Mr. Belden stated that a site needed to be determined for the facility prior to making any further decisions. Mr. VanNess agreed and stated that was the purpose of the meeting. Mr. Kenny said he also agreed with Mr. Belden and noted that of the three sites listed only one seemed to be viable as the first shown (River Street, Queensbury) was a former industrial site, which he felt had a high probability of pollution issues and the second site was ACC (Adirondack Community College) where there seemed to be a public outcry against placement of the facility. He stated that the third site (Park Road, Kingsbury) was an industrial park which he was not familiar with. Paul Dusek, County Attorney, noted that the third site did have wetlands around the site but not in the center where the facility would be placed.

James Lindsay, Supervisor for the Town of Kingsbury, Washington County & member of the Warren/Washington Counties Emergency Training Center Committee, stated that the third site (Park Road, Kingsbury) was formerly a sewer treatment plant and, although it was a good choice, it was only a two acre parcel and Mr. Lindsay did not think it was big enough as per the Laberge Groups estimation.

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Mr. Kenny noted that already the project was running into trouble as all three of the sites listed were unacceptable, as one was polluted, one was unacceptable to the public and the last was too small. Mr. Caimano noted that the River Street site was being mitigated by the Federal Government and might be acceptable.

Mr. VanNess apprised that he had spoken with Mr. Dusek with respect to the River Street site and was advised that use of the parcel might be limited due to pollution aspects. However, Mr. VanNess stated, he was not an expert in the field and further research needed to be done to determine how extensively the property could be used. Mr. Lemery stated that the Committee could not proceed any further with the project without hiring someone to study the sites and make a suggestion to the two County Boards for the best site to develop the emergency training center, at which point a decision would be made whether or not to proceed with the project.

Mr. VanNess asked if the \$27,000 estimated for phase one included any studies of the possible sites and Mr. Clarke advised that it did. He expounded that the estimate included feasibility studies for three sites, whether they were the three indicated in the report distributed or three others of the Committee's choosing.

Mr. Belden noted that the River Street site had been acquired with several restrictions and he asked Mr. Dusek if permissions would be required from NYSDEC (New York State Department of Environmental Conservation) to use the property. Mr. Dusek replied that although it was true that the deed did include some restrictions, the site was not as bad as previously thought. He said that the County had not acquired the adjoining property, on which a factory had been located, but rather the piece that had been used for parking lots and such. Mr. Dusek stated that the property still needed to be reviewed and the engineers would do this in connection with their studies by reviewing the deeds and speaking with NYSDEC.

Mr. Girard stated that he understood the need for the \$27,000 to proceed in determining site selection and testing; however, he asked if a breakdown of engineering services could be provided to better understand the \$1.7 million production costs for the facility. Mr. Clarke reinforced that the Committee was at an important step in the project as site selection and confirmation of the project inclusions would determine the total costs of the facility in both phases.

Mr. Laberge reiterated that fees could be broken down to reflect firm costs for both phases of the project once the site and the facility details had been determined. He noted that it was very hard to determine costs and fees when they were not exactly sure what they were trying to build or where. Mr. Laberge stated that they could break the fees down by making assumptions on the production and revising the costs accordingly with any changes to the plans.

Discussion ensued.

Motion was made by Mr. Haskell, seconded by Mr. Geraghty and carried unanimously to approve the request for a new contract for a amount not to exceed \$27,000 with Laberge Group to provide professional services for the development of the emergency training facility, and the necessary resolution was authorized for the February 16<sup>th</sup> meeting. *A copy of the resolution is on file with the minutes.*

With respect to Mr. Lindsay's earlier comment, Mr. Kenny asked the Laberge Group if the 2.5 acre Park Road site would be large enough to house the training facility. Mr. Laberge replied that the parcel would be large enough to build the initial portion of the project; however, it would not be large enough for

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future editions. Mr. Kenny asked if the property adjoining the site was available and Mr. Lindsey replied that he did not think it was, and Mr. Lindsay concurred.

Mr. Stec stated that each of the sites had a strength or weakness that might dictate the design of the training facility. He said that the Committee would be balancing between the site and the 17 points listed in the proposal and he suggested that the Committee keep this in mind when making a determination. Mr. Stec noted that public opinion would also be an issue at any site determined and he stated that the height of the project might be a large concern of the surrounding community. He said that he was concerned as two of the proposed sites were located in the Town of Queensbury and he requested that they remain cognizant of those issues for all parties affected by the project.

Brian LaFlure, Warren County Deputy Fire Coordination Officer, stated that he had been one of the front men for this project and had met with many of the neighbors of the proposed sites. He said that because some of the neighbors of the ACC site had been misinformed at the beginning of the project they were against it and needed clarification and presentation from a professional group showing what the site would include and possibly some preliminary drawings of it. Mr. LaFlure said he thought the Committee was on the right track; however, many changes would be made according to the site chosen. The assistance of Laberge Group in dealing with the surrounding communities concerns would be a great asset and possibly improve the communities misconceptions of the project, Mr. LaFlure added.

Mr. VanNess asked if the \$27,000 fee could be extracted separately from the RFP for the services authorized and both Mr. Dusek and Mrs. Pacyna advised that it was acceptable.

Mr. VanNess thanked everyone for attending the meeting and for their input.

As there was no further business to come before the Fire Prevention & Control Committee on motion made by Mr. Haskell and seconded by Mr. Belden, Mr. VanNess adjourned the meeting at 10:23 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Amanda Allen, Legislative Office Specialist