

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: FIRE PREVENTION & CONTROL

DATE: AUGUST 23, 2007

Committee Members Present:

Supervisors VanNess
Bentley
Belden
Haskell
Geraghty
Sokol

Others Present:

Karen Putney, Administrator, Fire Prevention &
Building Code Enforcement
Hal Payne, Commissioner of Administrative & Fiscal
Services
JoAnn McKinstry, Deputy Commissioner of Administrative
& Fiscal Services
Joan Sady, Clerk, Board of Supervisors
Marvin Lemery, Fire Coordinator/Director of the Office
of Emergency Services
Supervisor Caimano, Budget Officer
Supervisor Stec
Supervisor F. Thomas
Richard Missita, Queensbury
Katy Goodman, Secretary to the Clerk

Committee Member Absent:

Supervisor Girard

Mr. VanNess called the Fire Prevention & Control Committee meeting to order at 10:30 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Sokol, seconded by Mr. Geraghty and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the previous meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Karen Putney, Administrator, Fire Prevention & Building Code Enforcement Department, who distributed copies of her Agenda packet to the Committee members. A copy of the packet is on file with the minutes.

Mr. VanNess welcomed Mrs. Putney to her first Committee meeting since becoming the Administrator of the Fire Prevention & Building Code Enforcement Department. Mrs. Putney acknowledged the welcome and she thanked the Committee members for their support of her appointment to the position.

Mrs. Putney proceeded with review of her Agenda. She spoke first on the Department's Monthly Activity Report for July. A copy of the Report was included in the Agenda packet. She reminded the Committee members at the last meeting it was reported that the number of (building) permits sold per month had been running about 24% behind for the year. However, Mrs. Putney apprised the figures for the month to-date had improved to 22%. She stated they knew there were some large projects in the County that would be requiring building permits, and she elaborated thereon for the information of the Committee members.

Next, Mrs. Putney outlined requests for approval of resolution requests (Agenda Items No. II A

and B). The first request, she stated, was to purchase digital cameras for the Department's three building inspectors. Mrs. Putney advised although the cameras were on State contract they could be purchased at a lower cost at Wal-Mart for \$99 each, compared to the State contract price of \$214 each. She apprised in order to make the purchases she would need to transfer funds in the budget from the .4's Travel, Education and Conference code to the .2's Equipment code. Mrs. Putney requested approval of a Transfer of Funds in the amount of \$350 to purchase the camera, and a rechargeable battery unit.

Motion was made by Mr. Belden, seconded by Mr. Haskell and carried unanimously to approve the Transfer of Funds, as presented, and to refer it to the Finance Committee. A copy of the Transfer of Funds is on file with the minutes.

Mr. Stec entered the meeting at 10:35 a.m.

Pursuant to Agenda Item No. II B, Mrs. Putney requested approval to amend Resolution No. 652 of 2004 which was the most recent amendment to the Department's fee schedule for building permits. She advised upon review of the Department's Local Law with Trish Nenner, Second Assistant County Attorney, they discovered that the fee schedule did not include a fee for fire safety inspections and that did need to be added to the schedule. Mrs. Putney noted a copy of the amended fee schedule was included with the Resolution Request Form in the Agenda packet.

Mrs. Putney stated, in addition, under the current fee schedule the fees for garage permits were \$50.00 for one, two and three car garages and \$75.00 for four or more car garages. However, she advised, they had been receiving a number of permit requests for three car garages that included space for extra work or storage which increased the size of the garages quite a bit. As a result, Mrs. Putney stated, they thought the fees should be changed to \$50 for one and two car garages and to include the three car garages in the existing fee of \$75 for four car or more garages. She noted the change would not have much of an impact on the people who bought the permits because it was a flat fee for storage buildings instead of per square foot.

Motion was made by Mr. Belden, seconded by Mr. Bentley and carried unanimously to approve the aforementioned request, as presented, and to authorize the necessary resolution for the next board meeting.

Next, Mrs. Putney spoke on the Department's Budget (Agenda Item No. III). She referred the Committee members to the Department's Budget Performance Report year-to-date through August 20th that was included in the Agenda packet. Mrs. Putney reminded the Committee members of the discussion at the last meeting that pertained to which code the part-time employee was paid from. She recalled she had thought the salary was in the .130 Salaries - Part Time; however, she said, it was in the .1s Salaries - Regular. Mrs. Putney explained she had amended the Budget and she wanted that to be known when the Budget was reviewed by the Budget Officer. Mrs. Putney questioned if an executive session would be needed to discuss this matter further. Mr. VanNess advised executive session would be needed if the situation involved

a particular employee; and, Mrs. Putney stated it concerned the vacant position. Mr. VanNess advised in that case an executive session was not needed at this point. Mrs. Putney noted an executive session would be needed later in the meeting that would concern a particular employee.

Mrs. Putney advised that aside from the aforementioned change in the Budget, the Budget Performance Report agreed with everything else in the Department's records. Mr. Belden queried on the status of the Department's revenues. Mr. Caimano, Budget Officer, responded that through the end of 2006 the revenues were 119% and through August 16th of this year they were 48%.

Mr. VanNess noted in other Committee meetings the Departments had reported they were not receiving their State reimbursement in a timely manner. He asked if that was the case for this Department. Mrs. Putney replied they did not receive State reimbursement and the revenues were only from the sale of the building permits. She recalled she had discussed the status of the current revenues earlier in the meeting and the review of the 2008 Budget would show that she had reduced the estimated figure by 20% in order to be on the safe side.

Relative to the proposed 2008 Budget, Mrs. Putney advised the Salary Schedule provided to the Department with the Budget package was for 2007; therefore, it did not reflect the Department's personnel changes that took place in July. She stated she had prepared a sheet that showed the actual 2007 and 2008 salaries for the current personnel and the sheet was included in the Budget package following the 2007 Salary Schedule. Mr. VanNess concurred with Mr. Caimano that the Budget would show an incorrect increase until it was adjusted after the end of the month. Joan Sady, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors, explained the adjustments would be done manually and the Salary Schedule would not reflect those changes.

Mr. F. Thomas entered the meeting at 10:40 a.m.

Mrs. Putney proceeded with review of the Budget Worksheet Report. She reminded the Committee members at the last meeting it was decided the vacant part-time Code Enforcement Officer position would not be filled and that a new full-time position would be requested in January. Mrs. Putney explained if that change did occur she had adjusted the .2s Equipment Code to include the cost to purchase a vehicle for the Department.

Mrs. Putney continued and advised she had been working with the County Purchasing Agent relative to the State contracts for vehicles. Although, she said, the contracts were not yet completely available at the present time the lowest priced vehicle would be a 2008 Ford Ranger single-cab truck that would cost approximately \$13,000 plus delivery charges, etc. In view of that estimate, Mrs. Putney stated she had budgeted \$14,000 to purchase a vehicle. She advised the State contract also included an option to lease the type of vehicle they would need for around \$300 a month. Mrs. Putney advised she had budgeted the higher figure for now until it was determined whether to lease or purchase.

Mr. VanNess recalled the lease versus purchase issue was discussed when the vehicles for the Building Inspectors were purchased and the figures obtained then showed it was better to purchase. He noted he thought that had proven to be correct and that it had saved money. Mrs. Putney confirmed that was correct. Mr. Belden queried if the vehicle being considered was a 4-wheel drive. Mrs. Putney replied it was and it had a regular cab and a short box. Mr. Haskell asked if a Jeep Liberty could be obtained; and Mrs. Putney replied that vehicle would not be on the State contract. She advised the equivalent vehicle was a Ford Escape for around \$17,000.

Motion was made by Mr. Belden to approve the purchase of the Ford Ranger truck. Mr. Haskell recommended they should wait to see what other vehicles would be available on the State contract. Mr. Belden concurred, and he amended his motion accordingly. Mr. Caimano advised a motion was not necessary because the vehicle would be included in the Department's 2008 Budget when it was approved. Mr. Belden withdrew the motion. Mr. VanNess agreed with Mrs. Putney; at this point the \$14,000 to purchase a vehicle would remain in the proposed Budget.

Mrs. Putney stated the .220 Budget code request for Office Equipment was \$100 compared to the 2007 appropriation of \$93. She noted she had used the \$100 figure to have an even number for the Budget.

Next, Mrs. Putney reviewed various line items in the .4s Contractual Expense Budget code. She noted the request for the .410 - Supplies line item was unchanged from the 2007 appropriation of \$1,700. She apprised the .418 Insurance - General Liability request was \$2,200 as compared to the 2007 appropriation of \$3,600. Mrs. Putney stated the request was based on the rate of around \$550 per car that she had received from the Self-Insurance Office and she had felt comfortable in decreasing the request.

Mr. VanNess asked if the Committee members had any questions about the Budget. Mr. Belden noted the 2007 appropriation for Automotive - Gas & Oil line item (.442) was \$8,500; and he questioned what the costs were to date. Mrs. Putney replied out of the \$9,000 appropriation, \$4,100 had been expended through the end of June. She advised she had requested \$11,000 to reflect the aforementioned additional vehicle.

Mr. Caimano referred to the .441 Auto - Supplies & Repair request; and he questioned the increase. There was no 2007 appropriation as compared to the 2008 request of \$2,000. Mrs. Putney replied the existing vehicles would require more repairs, i.e., new tires for one, inspections for all of them and the costs for oil changes were running very close to the amount (\$500) in the amended Budget. She stated although there might be a shortfall in the code there would be funds available in the Mileage Code that could be transferred due to the vacant Inspector position. Mr. Belden asked where the oil changes were done; and Mrs. Putney responded that was through their contract with the Sheriff's Office's through Warren Tire. Mr. Belden suggested that Mrs. Putney should check with the (County) Department of Public Works (DPW) to see if that department could perform the oil changes. Mr. VanNess advised he had spoken with William Lamy, DPW Superintendent, who had told him that DPW could not do

any more oil changes without hiring another person in the Department. Brief discussion followed.

Mr. VanNess stated before the .1s Salaries in the proposed Budget were discussed he wished to request an executive session to discuss the employment history of a particular person. Motion was made by Mr. Belden, seconded by Mr. Sokol and carried unanimously to declare executive session pursuant to Section 105(f) of the Public Officers Law.

Executive session was declared from 10:48 a.m. to 10:53 a.m.

Committee reconvened. Mr. Payne left the meeting during the executive session.

Mr. VanNess stated no action was necessary pursuant to the executive session.

Budget review resumed, and Mrs. Putney outlined a request to increase the Department's Sick Leave Incentive for 2008 from the 2007 appropriation of \$1,600 as shown on the Budget Worksheet Report to \$2,000 as shown on a separate sheet that was attached to the Budget package. She explained the increase was to cover the Department's five employees. Mr. Belden questioned the amount spent to date; and Mrs. Putney replied it appeared that only three employees would be eligible for the Incentive this year. Mr. VanNess stated no separate action would be needed on the request because it would be included in the total proposed 2008 Budget submission.

Mrs. Putney outlined a request for approval of a personnel change in the Department. She stated she would like to delete the current vacant part-time Fire Prevention & Building Code Enforcement Officer position and to create a full-time Fire Prevention & Building Code Enforcement Officer position. Mrs. Putney explained the part-time position was only 8.5 hours/week and that was not enough time to meet the State's requirements of a minimum of 400 fire safety inspections annually. Mrs. Sady stated the new position would be part of the 2008 budget and it would not take effect until January 1st. Mr. VanNess stated the position change would actually save money and that would be shown later in the meeting.

Next, Mrs. Putney requested approval of a Transfer of Funds (in the amount of \$5,011.89) relative to the aforementioned position change. She advised for the remainder of the year the present Building Code Enforcement Officers would be asked to perform the aforementioned fire safety inspections and the funds for the vacant position would need to be transferred from the .1s Regular Salaries into the .120 Overtime Salaries code and the Officers would be paid overtime for the work.

Motion was made by Mr. Belden, seconded by Mr. Geraghty and carried unanimously to approve the Transfer of Funds, as presented, and to refer it to the Finance Committee. A copy of the Transfer of Funds is on file with the minutes.

Next, Mrs. Putney requested approval to amend Resolution No. 512 of 2007 which had deleted

the Account Clerk position in the Department. She stated the position needed to be restored to the Budget although it would be unfunded. *(Note: According to the Resolution Request Form the position needed to be shown in the Budget until the employee currently in the position had successfully passed the Civil Service exam for the position of Secretary/Code Enforcement Officer.)*

Motion was made by Mr. Haskell, seconded by Mr. Belden and carried unanimously to approve the aforementioned request, as presented, and to refer it to the Personnel/Human Resources Committee.

Lastly, Mrs. Putney referred the Committee members to a sheet which outlined the Department's Actual 2007 and 2008 salaries. A copy of the sheet was included in the Agenda packet. She apprised the information showed how the personnel changes that had been requested in the Budget would result in a savings of approximately \$12,000 to the County for the next two years.

Mr. Caimano observed although there was a decrease in the .1s, there was an increase of \$14,000 in the .2s Equipment code for the new truck and the .4s would also increase. Mrs. Putney acknowledged that was correct. However, she stated, with the savings on the 2007 salaries and even with the new position in 2008 there was a savings between the two years. Mrs. Putney acknowledged she understood the Budget was not looked at in that way.

The total 2008 Building & Fire Code (A.3620) Budget request was \$299,202, as compared to the 2007 appropriations of \$282,739, an increase of \$16,463.

Motion was made by Mr. Geraghty, seconded by Mr. Belden and carried unanimously to approve the proposed 2008 Building & Fire Code Budget, as presented, and to authorize the Committee Chairman to sign it and forward it to the Budget Officer.

There being no further business to come before the Committee on motion by Mr. Belden and seconded by Mr. Haskell, Mr. VanNess adjourned the meeting at 11:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Katy Goodman, Secretary to the Clerk