

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: PUBLIC SAFETY

DATE: JUNE 25, 2012

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS WOOD
GIRARD
BENTLEY
THOMAS
CONOVER
FRASIER
STRAINER

OTHERS PRESENT:

BUD YORK, SHERIFF
BRIAN LAFLURE, FIRE COORDINATOR/DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES
KAREN PUTNEY, ADMINISTRATOR, FIRE SAFETY & BUILDING CODE ENFORCEMENT
MARTIN AUFFREDOU, COUNTY ATTORNEY
JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD
KEVIN GERAGHTY, BUDGET OFFICER
SUPERVISORS MASON
TAYLOR
DON LEHMAN, *THE POST STAR*
THOM RANDALL, *ADIRONDACK JOURNAL*
AMANDA ALLEN, DEPUTY CLERK OF THE BOARD

Mrs. Wood called the meeting of the Public Safety Committee to order at 9:30 a.m.

Motion was made by Mrs. Frasier, seconded by Mr. Strainer and carried unanimously to approve the minutes from the prior Committee, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Bud York, Sheriff, who distributed copies of Sheriff & Communications agenda to the Committee members; *a copy of the agenda is also on file with the minutes.*

Commencing his review with Action Agenda Item 1, Sheriff York presented a request to establish a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Washington County for an emergency alternate dispatch center. He explained that although Warren County had a backup dispatch center in place, it required software upgrades estimated at approximately \$200,000, for which there was not funding currently available. Sheriff York continued that until they were able to attain sufficient grant monies to cover the upgrade costs, they sought to use Washington County's facilities as an emergency alternate dispatch center. He added that they had done this in the past, but had never developed a formalized MOU.

Motion was made by Mr. Strainer, seconded by Mr. Thomas and carried unanimously to approve the request to establish an MOU with Washington County, as outlined above, and the necessary resolution was authorized for the July 20th Board meeting. *A copy of the request is on file with the minutes.*

Continuing with the agenda review, Sheriff York addressed the Topics for Discussion section, as follows:

1. Sheriff York apprised of a lightning strike that had caused damage to the communications tower located on the Municipal Center Campus on May 29th and would incur estimated repair costs of \$16,640. He noted that reimbursement would be received for all but \$500 of the repair costs; however, he said, funding was not available within the existing budget to cover the initial repair expense. Brian LaFlure, Fire Coordinator/Director of the Office of Emergency Services, interjected that all of the damages would be funded by the insurance coverage that applied to electronic equipment which carried a \$250 deductible, except for one of the damaged items that would be covered under the Building's insurance policy, which carried a \$10,000 deductible. Additionally, Mr. LaFlure noted new information indicated the estimated repair costs had increased to a figure closer to \$22,000. Sheriff York reiterated that the funds were not

available within the existing budget and he questioned how the expense should be addressed in anticipation of insurance reimbursements. Paul Dusek, County Administrator, advised that although the expense would likely be paid from the contingent fund with insurance reimbursements being returned upon receipt, the matter should be referred to the Finance Committee to make this determination. *Note: Subsequent to the meeting, Mr. LaFlure advised that the Building's insurance coverage would not be accessed as representatives for Cool Insuring Agency, Inc. had indicated that all repairs would be covered under the Electronics coverage, allowing reimbursement for the damage totals, less the \$250 deductible.)*

Motion was made by Mr. Thomas, seconded by Mr. Conover and carried unanimously to refer the above referenced matter to the Finance Committee to determine a source of funding.

2. Relative to staffing levels in the Correctional Facility, Sheriff York reminded the Committee that, as reported in their prior meeting, there had been a retirement from a Sergeant's position which they had subsequently promoted a Correction's Officer (CO) to fill, leading to a savings of \$2,230 in salary costs, and he noted that another CO position had been vacated due to termination. Sheriff York said they were now in the process of filling the two CO positions that had been vacated due to promotion and termination, respectively.

Sheriff York provided an update on the Centurion Bicycling event which had been held over the prior weekend, noting that other than a few minor bicycle related accidents, the event had proceeded very smoothly. He advised that the Sheriff's Office intended to bill the event organizers for the patrol services provided, which he estimated to be in the vicinity of \$7,000. Sheriff York announced that approximately 700 cyclists had attended the event, which was similar in number to the attendance figures reported for the Lake Placid, NY event in its first year. He continued that in its second year, attendance levels for the Lake Placid event had increased to 4,000-5,000 cyclists, and they expected the same participation growth for the Lake George event. Sheriff York concluded that he anticipated increasing the number of patrol officers present by four if this level of increased event participation was realized.

Mr. Strainer questioned whether the billing for patrol services was based on a per rider figure and Sheriff York replied in the negative, advising it was based on overtime estimates and the number of Officers transferred from other patrol routes; he added that he was sure the amount billed would increase commensurate with attendance and increased patrol levels.

Concluding his agenda review, Sheriff York requested an executive session to discuss the discipline of an employee.

Motion was made by Mrs. Frasier, seconded by Mr. Thomas and carried unanimously to declare an executive session to discuss matters leading to the discipline of a particular person, pursuant to Section 105(f) of the Public Officer's Law.

Executive session was held from 9:35 a.m. to 9:42 a.m.

Upon reconvening, Mrs. Wood announced that no action had been taken during the executive session.

Before leaving the meeting, Sheriff York noted that the agenda included a reporting of Public Assistance Fraud Investigative Activity which attested to the effectiveness of the investigative efforts being made.

Mr. Mason advised he had received a complaint from an Americade attendee indicating that during the event two patrol checkpoints had been set up where every motorcycle passing through was pulled over and ticketed for one reason or another "just to collect more money for Warren County". Mr. Mason stated that although he had wanted

to respond in defense of Warren County, he had been unsure how to address the matter. Sheriff York replied that these checkpoints had been conducted by the New York State Police and that Warren County had no control over them. He said that these types of checks were routinely made by the State Police during large events and although they might request the assistance of County Patrol Officers, Warren County was not involved in the organization.

There being no further Sheriff & Communications business to discuss, privilege of the floor was extended to Mr. LaFlure, who distributed copies of the Office of Emergency Services Agenda to the Committee members; *a copy of the agenda is also on file with the minutes.*

Mr. LaFlure advised his Office had been involved with the Centurion Race event, as well, having set up a command post with a radio configuration that interfaced with the rental units implemented by the event organizers, which had worked out very well.

With respect to the Emergency Services Training Center (ESTC), Mr. LaFlure apprised he was currently involved in ongoing communications with Sean Maguire, of the New York State Department of State (NYSDOS), to schedule a press event incorporating the ribbon cutting ceremony for the facility, which he anticipated would be held within the next two to three weeks. He said the NYSDOS was very pleased with the ESTC and wished to be involved in the ceremonial opening of the ESTC, offering to take the lead in planning and making press releases for the event. Mr. LaFlure advised he would be taking part in a conference call later that day to discuss a proposed date for the ribbon cutting event. He noted that the wiring for lighting and electricity at the ESTC was almost complete, having been installed by himself and other volunteers on the weekends. Gates had been installed on the road leading to the ESTC, as well, Mr. LaFlure announced, to provide some security measures for the facility. He said that they had originally intended to purchase the gates, but had later found that the Airport staff had built a nicer set than those that had been cited for purchase, alleviating the associated cost.

In closing, Mr. LaFlure provided an update on the Communications Vehicle, which had been donated by the Glens Falls Hospital two years ago. He noted they had finally accumulated sufficient grant monies to purchase equipment and fund repairs to the vehicle, as well as to install a generator. Mr. LaFlure added that, as authorized during a prior Committee meeting, his staff had driven the Communications Vehicle to Cincinnati, OH where the generator was being installed. He concluded that they were looking forward to the return of the Communications Vehicle, when it would be ready for use.

As there was no further Office of Emergency Services business to present, privilege of the floor was extended to Karen Putney, Administrator of Fire Prevention & Building Code Enforcement, who distributed copies of her meeting agenda to the Committee members; *a copy of the agenda is on file with the minutes.*

Beginning with Agenda Item 1, Budget Performance Report, Mrs. Putney pointed out the only area of concern was Code A.3620 441, Auto-Supplies & Repair, 57% of which had been expended thus far and more vehicle repairs were pending. She noted that although there was still some funding remaining in the budget code, several of the fleet vehicles used by her Department required repair for transmission leaks, brake problems and new tires. In order to assist with the expense, Mrs. Putney requested a transfer of \$400 from Code A.3620 140, Salaries-Sick Leave Incentive, to the Supplies & Repair budget code. She then expressed her concern that all of the fleet vehicles used by her Department had accumulated mileage figures upwards of 70,000 and were becoming increasingly unreliable. Citing an example, Mrs. Putney advised that during the prior week, one of her Inspectors had left the fleet vehicle they regularly used at the DPW garage for service, borrowing another to continue with inspections. She said the Inspector had been stranded when the vehicle he was driving had broken down while traveling between inspections; she added that because he had no means of communication, he had been unable to call for help and had been lucky to have enough knowledge of automotive repairs to allow him to fix the vehicle to the extent that he was able to

drive back to the DPW garage. Mrs. Putney stated that her Inspectors traveled 100 miles or more per day to provide for inspections, necessitating reliable transportation. Two of the vehicles being used were donations of old vehicles previously used by the Sheriff's Office, she said, and they were constantly making repairs to one to keep it running and the other had not yet been repaired sufficiently to allow use since its donation earlier in the month. Mrs. Putney advised that in speaking with staff from the DPW garage, she had learned that the two former Sheriff's vehicles had been removed from the Sheriff's fleet because they were no longer reliable.

Motion was made by Mr. Conover, seconded by Mr. Girard and carried unanimously to approve the request for a transfer of funds, as outlined above, and refer same to the Finance Committee. *A copy of the request is on file with the minutes.*

Continuing to Agenda Item II, Monthly Activity Reports, Mrs. Putney announced that as of Friday, June 22nd, the reported revenues for the Department were 41% higher than they had been for the same time during the previous year. She explained the increase was partially due to the fact that they had not been providing fire safety inspections during that time period in 2011, while \$19,725 had been collected for fire safety inspections in 2012. Mrs. Putney pointed out the projected revenues for her Department in 2012 was \$160,600, and having collected just shy of \$70,000 half way through the year, she said she was optimistic that the anticipated revenue figure would be met as the second half of the year was typically busier than the first for inspection services; however, she added, it was difficult to estimate the activities of the building industry in order to approximate anticipated revenue levels.

Referring to the Activity Reports included in the agenda packet, Mr. Conover commented that the reporting figures identified were impressive, in some cases doubling and tripling the numbers reported for prior years. He commended Mrs. Putney for her efforts and complimented Mr. Dusek on his involvement, as well. Mrs. Putney responded by crediting her Inspection staff for the increase, advising that each approached their responsibilities in a professional manner, working as an advocate to business owners and explaining why it was in their best interest to have safety measures in place for anyone frequenting their businesses. She added that, for the most part, the Inspectors were very well received by local businesses.

Concluding the agenda review, Mrs. Putney addressed Item III, Update on Collection of Fire Safety Fees and Other Court Action Matters. She advised they had now collected all of the fees due them for 2011 inspections, although a court appearance had been necessary to collect from one business. Mrs. Putney advised that court proceedings had been necessary for other issues as well, such as residency in a building without a Certificate of Occupancy, building without proper permitting, fire safety issues and other matters where ticketing had occurred.

Martin Auffredou, County Attorney, commented that court proceedings were typically a last resort measure taken in relation to Building Code violations or fines; however, he said, when they were necessary, he found that Mrs. Putney and her staff provided extensive documentation making the cases very easy for the presiding Judge to review and decide upon. He added that in these cases, they strove to ensure that the Judge would determine the County had made every effort to bring the offender into compliance before seeking interaction from the courts and this result had been accomplished on every case through the hard work and dedication of Mrs. Putney and her staff, which was very impressive. Mr. Auffredou stated that in these instances, the County was not seeking heavy fines or punishment for the offender, but rather to seek compliance with the appropriate Building Codes. He concluded that in all cases, the Fire Prevention & Building Code Enforcement Staff worked extensively with the negligent party to resolve the identified issue to bring structures into compliance in order to avoid judicial actions; however, he said, in some cases it was unavoidable and he hoped this would send a strong message to the community at large, indicating that while this type of action was not preferable, it could be employed, if necessary. Mrs. Putney advised that Mr. Auffredou and his staff provided a considerable amount of assistance in these cases, which she was very appreciative of.

Returning to the issue of fleet vehicles, Mr. Geraghty questioned whether it was sensible to continue to make temporary repairs to the unreliable vehicles or if it would be less costly to replace them. As preparation of the 2013 Budget was beginning, Mrs. Wood stated her opinion that they should begin to plan for making an investment in the fleet to alleviate this issue through the purchase of new vehicles; however, she added, she felt it was likely Mrs. Putney would be returning before the end of the year to seek additional financial assistance to fund additional vehicle repairs. Mr. Dusek commented that he was aware of the deteriorating vehicle conditions Mrs. Putney faced, similar to those faced by the Health Services Department and Sheriff's Office. He advised that due to the current economic climate, no funding had been included in the 2012 Budget for vehicle purchase, but noted that through the multi-year budgeting plan being prepared for 2013 and beyond, the Budget Committee intended to introduce a plan for vehicle replacements, as well as to transfer vehicles between Departments. Mr. Dusek suggested that a comprehensive review of vehicle necessities would need to be undertaken to determine the specifications of the vehicle replacement plan and he suggested that Mrs. Putney's fleet vehicle needs be submitted for consideration, along with those of other Departments.

Following further discussion, it was the consensus of the Committee that Mrs. Putney should work together with Mr. Dusek to develop a plan for presentation to the Budget Committee to include the purchase of fleet vehicles for the Fire Prevention & Building Code Enforcement Department in the multi-year budgeting plans.

There being no further business to discuss, on motion made by Mr. Bentley and carried by Mr. Thomas, Mrs. Wood adjourned the meeting of the Public Safety Committee at 10:07 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Amanda Allen, Deputy Clerk of the Board