

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: COUNTY CLERK - MOTOR VEHICLES

DATE: OCTOBER 7, 2014

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS MCDEVITT
WOOD
VANSELOW
BEATY
BROCK

OTHERS PRESENT:

PAM VOGEL, COUNTY CLERK
KEVIN B. GERAGHTY, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
PAUL DUSEK, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD
SUPERVISORS CONOVER
FRASIER
GIRARD
KENNY
MERLINO
SEEBER
SIMPSON
TAYLOR
GRETCHEN STEFFAN, COUNTY HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR
MICHAEL SWAN, COUNTY TREASURER
ROBERT V. LYNCH, DEPUTY TREASURER/FISCAL ASSISTANT TO THE
COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
DON LEHMAN, *THE POST STAR*
CHARLENE DiRESTA, SR. LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

Mr. McDevitt called the meeting of the County Clerk - Motor Vehicles Committee to order at 9:32 a.m.

Motion was made by Ms. Wood, seconded by Mr. Vanselow, and carried unanimously to approve the minutes from the previous Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Pam Vogel, County Clerk, who distributed copies of the agenda to the Committee members; *a copy of the agenda is on file with the minutes.*

Commencing the agenda review, Mrs. Vogel presented a request to fill the vacant position of Motor Vehicle License/Registration Clerk #1, Grade 6, base salary of \$28,046, due to resignation. She noted this was a Union position which was not mandated or reimbursable. She commented the position was subject to testing and the eligibility list which were part of the Civil Service procedure for filling of vacant positions. She noted the previous employee had resigned to assume a position with the State.

Mrs. Vogel informed the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) operated under the Vehicle and Traffic Safety Law and Section 205 designated the County Clerk to be the agent to the Commissioner with the authority to operate the DMV and to provide the proper staffing. She pointed out the Motor Vehicle License/Registration Clerk #1 position had been vacant for some time and had been looked at in the past with the intention of reorganizing the Department. She opined the DMV was a very visible part of Warren County and completed over 60,000 transactions per year. She commented the amount of revenue generated for New York State (NYS) by those transactions was about \$3.5 to \$4 million per year and Warren County retained 12.7% of the revenue.

Mrs. Vogel advised that when members of the public received their license renewal notices in the mail, they were encouraged to go online in order to complete these transactions. While more DMV

transactions were being completed online, she continued, there were certain more complicated transactions which required the individuals to go to their County DMV Office.

Mrs. Vogel expressed the organizational structure of the DMV was governed by the NYS DMV. She said the DMV Office was staffed for 9 hours each day and the Office was open from 8:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. She added any individuals who were already in the Office when the doors were locked at 4:30 p.m. were waited on prior to the performance of closing procedures. She noted two employees commenced work at 8:00 a.m. with the remaining employees starting at 9:00 a.m. She mentioned it had become necessary to limit testing hours in the DMV to between 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. and between 1:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. in order to ensure proper coverage. She commented there were two Supervisors in the DMV who worked alongside the six Motor Vehicle License/Registration Clerks to serve individuals. Mrs. Vogel explained the Motor Vehicle License/Registration Clerks were capable of carrying out all of the job functions of the DMV and if they ran into an issue, they brought it to the attention of the Supervisor. She explained the DMV also employed one Senior Account Clerk to reconcile all of the transactions of the Office. She advised the Senior Account Clerk reconciled the transactions and provided a written report daily along with the funds to be deposited. She noted all revenues were deposited into the Clerk Fees Revenue Account (A.1255) and the year-to-date revenues were approximately \$349,000 with an average yearly revenue of \$450,000. She commented the hire dates of the current Motor Vehicle License/Registration Clerks ranged from 2008 to 2013, with the latest vacancy being filled in September of 2013. She mentioned that new employees were trained for at least two months before they were able to assist the public with transactions.

Mr. Vanselow asked if there was an active Civil Service eligibility list for this position and Mrs. Vogel replied affirmatively and added the list had been canvassed over the summer to determine if there would be any interest in the vacant position. Mr. Beaty asked the percentage of the DMV business which was now completed online and the amount of decrease/increase from 2013. Mrs. Vogel explained that for the transactions completed online, the Warren County DMV received a small rebate for a certain amount of them. She said she was unaware of the exact percentage of transactions completed online or the amount of decrease or increase compared to 2013; however, she acknowledged there was an increase in the number of transactions being completed online. She explained the DMV had completed an average of 60,000 in-house transactions for the last three or four years. Mr. Beaty asked the total number of staff members in the DMV and Mrs. Vogel replied there were 8 employees.

Given the availability to complete transactions online, Mr. Beaty asked Mrs. Vogel where she thought the staffing level would be within the next few years. Mrs. Vogel responded she had assumed there would be an opportunity to reduce staffing levels but factors, such as leave time of the existing staff had made this concept difficult. She noted she had considered presenting a request to fill a part-time or less position but she had realized this would not solve her current issue. She said she hoped that within the next couple of years or when the next position became vacant, that she would no longer have need for the additional position. She stated she required employees at the DMV who were proficient in their positions and capable of completing all of the various transactions of the Office. She explained the Motor Vehicle License/Registration Clerk positions were a Grade 6 and compared to other Grade 6 positions, those positions carried a large amount of responsibilities. Mrs. Vogel pointed out the staff members of the DMV had used approximately 2,500 hours of leave time thus far this year. She advised that if the DMV was not adequately staffed, the members of the public would experience longer wait times for their transactions. Mr. Beaty asked the current average wait time for the DMV and Mrs. Vogel responded it varied with the time of day but on average was about 20 minutes. Mrs. Vogel added the lunch hours were the busiest which had resulted in the staggering of the staff member's lunch hours between 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. She noted members of the

public tended to visit the DMV during their lunch hour which made the hours very busy. She commented wait times also depended on the types of transactions being handled at that point in time.

Motion was made by Ms. Wood, seconded by Mr. Vanselow and carried unanimously to approve the request to fill the vacant position of Motor Vehicle License/Registration Clerk #1 as outlined above and to report same to the Personnel Committee. *A copy of the Notice of Intent to Fill Vacant Position form is on file with the minutes.*

Mr. McDevitt apprised that Mrs. Vogel had considered filling the position on a part-time basis but had determined that this would not be adequate to meet the staffing needs of the DMV. He stated he had confidence in Mrs. Vogel's decision to fill the vacant position which he noted was budgeted.

Paul Dusek, County Administrator, advised the Committee members that he had not yet approved the filling of this vacant position. He stated he had a lot of respect for Mrs. Vogel's management of the DMV and County Clerk's Offices but he was struggling with the need to fill this vacancy. He pointed out he was not indicating his intention to oppose the filling of the vacant position; however, he added his concern was with the fact that the position had been vacant for almost a year and the DMV had functioned without it. He said he was also concerned because the DMV was about to enter into what was historically a slow period of the year. He stated they were discussing filling a full time position in order to cover what could be a temporary need and they were doing so at the slowest time of the year for the DMV. He said he understood the current need but his concern was they were taking the risk that the position would not be required in the future. He advised if there was another vacancy in 2015 then there would be no issue but if there was not, then there might be a need to consider a layoff. He suggested the possibility of postponing the filling of the vacancy for a few more months in order to save some funding but he acknowledged he and Mrs. Vogel had been unable to conclude their conversation and he was unsure how she felt about this possibility.

Ms. Wood asked if Warren County DMV retained a larger percentage of the revenues generated from transactions when they were completed within the DMV Office as opposed to online and Mrs. Vogel replied affirmatively. Ms. Wood asked if it was preferable to encourage members of the public to complete their transaction in the DMV Office. Mrs. Vogel explained the Warren County DMV retained 12.7% of revenues generated within the DMV Office and for online transactions there was a formula which determined the percentage of revenues retained for each transaction. She said the formula was due to be renegotiated within the next couple of years but she noted the percentage would never reach the 12.7% retained for in-house transactions. She advised the online revenues for 2013 had been approximately \$5,000 and she pointed out the monies were remitted to the County Treasurer's Office.

Mr. McDevitt commented he had spent some time that morning in the County Clerk's Office where Mrs. Vogel had reviewed the personnel staffing issues which would arise in the next 30 days due to leave time and such. He said it was a juggling act to ensure the DMV had proper staffing. Mr. Brock asked if the amount of hours worked per week by the new employee would be predetermined and Mrs. Vogel responded the Motor Vehicle License/Registration Clerk #1 position was full time and subject to the full benefits package offered by Warren County. Mr. Brock asked if there was any flexibility and Mrs. Vogel responded that if she had requested to fill the position as a less than part-time position then she would be able to be flexible with the number of hours per week. She noted she had a position within the County Clerk's Office which was less than part-time with flexible hours. She continued by saying that the Motor Vehicle License/Registration Clerk #1 position would need to be fully trained in order to be able to complete all of the possible transactions which occurred in the Office. Mr. Vanselow stated several years prior he had traveled to the DMV in Lake Pleasant in

order to receive faster service; however, he continued, the service within the Warren County DMV had improved in the last several years and he was now more likely to complete his transactions there. He apprised service in the Office was quick and efficient and he attributed this improvement to the leadership of Mrs. Vogel and adequate staffing. He said he would be concerned if the DMV was understaffed given the fact that it took two months to fully train new personnel. Mrs. Vogel responded the training was actually much longer than two months to be fully trained. She stated there had been several employees in the past who did not possess the ability to retain the necessary information and had to be dismissed during the probationary period. Mr. Vanselow said it made sense to hire a new employee during the slower time periods to allow time for proper training. A brief discussion ensued.

As there was no further business to come before the County Clerk - Motor Vehicles Committee, on motion by Ms. Wood and seconded by Mr. Brock, Mr. McDevitt adjourned the meeting at 9:59 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Charlene DiResta, Sr. Legislative Office Specialist