

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: REAL PROPERTY TAX SERVICES

DATE: MAY 22, 2006

Committee Members Present:	Michael Swan, Director, Real Property Tax Services
Supervisors Belden	William Thomas, Chairman
Monroe	Joan Parsons, Commissioner of Administrative and Fiscal Services
Champagne	Joan Sady, Clerk
Haskell	Paul Dusek, County Attorney
Bentley	Supervisor Gabriels
F. Thomas	Supervisor Merlino
Geraghty	Supervisor Kenny
	Russ Scherrer of Auctions International
	Carlene A. Ramsey, Sr. Legislative Office Specialist

Mr. Belden called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

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

Michael Swan, Director of Real Property Tax Services, distributed an Agenda packet to each of the Committee members and a copy is on file with the minutes.

Mr. Swan noted the Treasurer's Office had not requested any corrections to the tax rolls for this month. As for Agenda Item 2, Oppitz property in the Town of Thurman, he explained that Attorney John Richards had requested the opportunity to speak to the Committee this morning. However, he apprized that Mr. Richards had notified the Real Property Tax Service Office on Friday, May 19, 2006, that he was not prepared to address the Committee. Mr. Swan further noted Mr. Richards had asked the Committee to carry over his address until the next monthly Committee meeting.

Following a brief discussion, it was the consensus of the Committee that Mr. Richards' request (to carry the matter forward) would be denied. (Please see the minutes of April 24, 2006, pages 7 & 8, for additional information.)

Mr. Gabriels entered the meeting at 9:37 a.m.

Mr. Swan resumed Agenda review at Item 3, Auctions International, and he turned the floor over to Russ Scherrer.

Mr. Scherrer greeted the Committee as he provided a brief history of his firm. He noted when representing a municipality for the sale of real property, his firm's typical service would include photographs of subject properties, conduct the investigations,

verify tax map parcel numbers and post everything on the internet. In addition, he said they arrange for extensive advertising prior to the public auctions. He pointed out that his firm also provided on-line, live bidding, while the public auction was taking place.

Mr. Scherrer distributed a packet of information to each of the Committee members (copies are on file with the minutes). The packet included a sample booklet of Washington County's 2006 tax foreclosed real estate auction; sample contract; a news release from Rockland County; and an Introduction to Online Silent Auctions.

Mr. Scherrer pointed out the property booklet was provided free of charge and could also be printed out from the web site. He pointed out that the Auctions International website was displayed via projector, and he briefly ran through some of the website features. In addition, he said his firm operated on a buyers premium of 10%, which would be discounted to 6% for County auctions.

Mr. Merlino entered the meeting at 9:48 a.m.

Mr. Scherrer stated he felt his main function in preparing for the auction was actually to wake up the property owner enough to get them to come in and redeem their property. He estimated that 50-60% of the properties listed in the Washington County booklet would be paid up before the sale. For each redeemed property, he said, his firm received a \$50 fee to help cover some of the prep work.

Mr. Scherrer apprized the Committee that his firm had been running the County's surplus vehicle and equipment auction for the past several years. Most recently, he noted the auction had been combined with Washington County and Hamilton County, all at one sale. He also acknowledged his firm has had good success with posting items for sale on the internet.

General discussion ensued.

In response to questions from various supervisors, Mr. Scherrer explained Washington County awarded his firm the contract, as the lowest responsible bidder to an RFP (request for proposal). He confirmed the internet website would contain the information for each parcel listed in the printed booklet. In addition, he noted results of the auction would be available almost immediately after the auction was completed.

Mr. Barody assisted in operating the computer, as Mr. Scherrer walked the Committee through a brief tour of the [www. AuctionsInternational.com](http://www.AuctionsInternational.com) website.

In summary, Mr. Scherrer reported his firm represents 19 counties within New York State. After several years of land auctions for both Niagara and Cayuga Counties, they

have recently opted for the surplus actions, as well. He referred to the press release from Rockland County which indicated the online auctions were so cost effective, they would not go back to onsite auctions.

Following a brief discussion regarding surplus equipment, Mr. Scherrer explained he had not yet given a presentation to any other Committee at Warren County.

Mrs. Parsons pointed out the handout entitled "Online Silent Auctions" listed Business References for live onsite auctions and she noted Warren County was included as a reference. She expressed her concern that the listing gave the wrong impression that Warren County was a reference for "online auctions." Mr. Scherrer said he understood her point and he would have the listing corrected.

Mr. Monroe said he felt the online auction information should be referred to the appropriate committee for consideration.

Mr. Scherrer extended his appreciation to the Committee and left the meeting at 10:05 a.m.

Mr. Swan reminded the Committee of Resolution No. 325 of 2006 which authorized a sealed bid on Town of Queensbury Tax Map Parcel 303.20-1-12 (former Corlew property). He pointed out the results of the sealed bid would be available within the next few days and a resolution would be needed for the June 16th Board meeting. *[Subsequent to the meeting it was determined the bid results would be referred to the Finance Committee for consideration.]*

Mr. Monroe commented that he had missed last month's RPTS Committee meeting and he understood the list of potential Brown Fields properties had been discussed. He said he felt the County should follow-up with the State agencies and urge the State to take the lead with the clean up process.

Mr. Kenny left the meeting at 10:06 a.m.

Mr. Monroe said he understood the State's new grant program would be a burden for the County to administrate effectively. However, he said the municipalities still needed to get these tax delinquent properties back on the tax rolls.

Motion was made by Mr. Monroe and seconded by Mr. Champagne to authorize Mr. Swan to contact the appropriate State Agencies regarding the clean up of the Brown Fields.

Following a lengthy discussion, Mr. Belden called the question and the motion carried by majority vote; Messrs. Haskell and Geraghty were opposed, and Mr. Bentley abstained from voting.

Mr. Swan indicated that he would prefer to work in conjunction with the County Attorney's Office with regards to contacting the State, effectively.

Mr. Haskell said he felt it was important to have all of Warren County's contaminated parcels cleaned up - rather than just the parcels with delinquent tax situations.

Mr. Belden requested an executive session in order to discuss matters related to a particular persons employment history; and motion was made by Mr. Haskell, seconded by Mr. F. Thomas, and carried unanimously, that executive session be declared pursuant to Section 105 (f) of the Public Officers Law.

Executive session was declared from 10:11 a.m. to 10:25 a.m.

Committee reconvened.

Motion was made by Mr. Bentley, seconded by Mr. Geraghty and carried by majority vote, with Mr. Haskell opposed, to authorize the request to increase salary of a non-union position be forwarded to the Personnel Committee. A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, on motion by Mr. Haskell and seconded by Mr. Bentley, Mr. Belden adjourned the meeting at 10:26 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Carlene A. Ramsey, Sr. Legislative Office Specialist