

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: COUNTY CLERK - MOTOR VEHICLES (INCLUDING HISTORIAN)

DATE: JANUARY 27, 2010

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS KENNY
STRAINER
BELDEN
PITKIN
MCDEVITT

OTHERS PRESENT:

PAMELA VOGEL, COUNTY CLERK
JODY ROSS, DEPUTY COUNTY CLERK
FREDERICK MONROE, CHAIRMAN
JOANN MCKINSTRY, DEPUTY COMMISSIONER,
ADMINISTRATIVE & FISCAL SERVICES
JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD
KEVIN GERAGHTY, BUDGET OFFICER
SUPERVISOR THOMAS
SUPERVISOR TAYLOR
SUPERVISOR MERLINO
SUPERVISOR STEC
JOANNE COLLINS, LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

Mr. Kenny called the meeting of the County Clerk - Motor Vehicles (Including Historian) Committee to order at 9:30 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Belden, seconded by Mr. Strainer and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the October 28, 2009 Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Mr. Kenny welcomed Supervisor McDevitt to the Committee.

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

Addressing Old Business, Mrs. Vogel stated that results had been received from the Civil Service Motor Vehicle License Registration Clerk Examination, from which there were several good candidates and the two new employees were currently in training in Albany. Mrs. Vogel reported that during the period that the Office was understaffed, a part-time staff had been appointed in order to retain the integrity of service at the express counter.

Pertaining to Mortgage Tax expense, Mrs. Vogel reviewed that it was allowable that a portion of the Mortgage Tax collections be directed back to the County Clerk's Office to use for office expenses related to Mortgage Tax processing. After further research, Mrs. Vogel informed that Mortgage Tax expense monies retained by the County Clerk would come from each recipient of Mortgage Tax collections, which were the Towns, the County, and New York State. She explained that the amounts assessed to each Town would be proportionate to the amount of tax received by the Town. Mrs. Vogel invited the Committee to review the mortgage tax expense option and she could provide detailed information in the future if desired.

Mrs. Vogel presented two travel requests, the first was a request for permission for Mrs. Vogel and Jody Ross, Deputy Clerk, to attend the New York State Association of County Clerk's Meeting from January 31 to February 1, 2010, in Albany, New York.

Motion was made by Mr. McDevitt, seconded by Mr. Pitkin and carried unanimously to approve the request for travel as outlined above. *A copy of the Authorization to Attend Meeting or Convention is on file with the minutes.*

Mrs. Vogel requested permission to attend the New York State Regional Archives Meeting in Johnstown, New York on March 11, 2010, with the use of a County vehicle.

Motion was made by Mr. Belden, seconded by Mr. Pitkin and carried unanimously to approve the travel request as presented. *A copy of the Authorization to Attend Meeting or Convention is on file with the minutes.*

The next request presented by Mrs. Vogel was a request to amend the 2010 County Budget to increase estimated revenues and appropriations in the amount of \$32,852 to accept unused funds from the 2009 Budget for Local Government Records Management Improvement Fund (LGRMIF) grant funds awarded for 2009-2010.

Motion was made by Mr. Pitkin, seconded by Mr. McDevitt and carried unanimously to approve the request to amend the 2010 County Budget as outlined above and to refer same to the Finance Committee. *A copy of the request to Amend County Budget is on file with the minutes.*

Addressing Budget Performance, Mrs. Vogel reported that 2007 revenue was 124% which totaled approximately \$2.7 million, compared to 94% of revenue achieved in 2009 at \$3.2 million. She pointed out that in November of 2009 the percentage was 80%, followed by a positive month of December. Responding to an inquiry from Mr. Kenny, Mrs. Vogel apprised that the 2009 year fiscal records had been closed. She contended that due to conservative spending patterns, unfilled vacancies and unpaid medical leaves, the unexpended appropriations for 2009 totaled \$99,653, which would be returned to the General Fund. Overall, she said, 89% of appropriated funds were expended.

Mrs. Vogel noted that the County Clerk handled \$14 million worth of business over the course of one year and she reviewed the following:

▶ County Clerk Counter Receipts	\$10,005,425.28
▶ DMV Counter Receipts	\$ 3,272,599.57
▶ Passport Fees - Direct to United States Department of State	\$ 78,593.05
▶ IT - Direct to NYS Income Tax	\$ 695,261.51
▶ IRS Direct Deposit to Clerk	\$ 8,640.00
▶ Interest from Accounts (6)	\$ 2,797.36
TOTAL	\$ 14,063,316.77

In terms of staffing, Mrs. Vogel expounded that she had received the resignation of a Recording Clerk in September 2009, which had not been approved due to the budget crisis, followed by the recent retirement of the Senior (Sr.) Recording Clerk effective February 19, 2010 for which the promotion of a staff member to fill the position would

result in a back-fill. Mrs. Vogel noted that job descriptions were included with the agenda and Senior positions were filled by promotions from within only. Mrs. Vogel presented three requests to fill vacant positions as follows:

- Assistant Records Manager, base salary of \$29,710, Employee No. 10044, due to promotion;
- Recording Clerk, base salary of \$28,532, Employee No. 10875, due to resignation in September 2009; and
- Sr. Recording Clerk, base salary of \$31,957, Employee No. 9755, due to retirement effective February 19, 2010. She noted the promotion of a staff member to fill this position would result in a back-fill position.

Offering a rationale for the staffing of the County Clerk's Office which was further detailed in the agenda, Mrs. Vogel stated that the responsibilities and procedures for the recording and filing of legal and real property documents were set forth in the New York State Constitution and addressed in no less than 50 sections of law. Mrs. Vogel read the following statement taken from Section 525 of County Law:

"Office of County Clerk is created by the Constitution and Laws of New York State and the duty of making and keeping records of conveyances is enjoined in law, not for the benefit of the county or its inhabitants, but for the public at large."

Mrs. Vogel apprised that the County Clerk's Office was a revenue generating operation which handled over 60,000 documents per year, and processed approximately 7,000 case filings per year serving Warren County and New York State residents at large. She informed that some of the duties included indexing names (required by statute), reproducing documents and imaging deeds, mortgages and other documents. New in 2009, Mrs. Vogel explained that additional closed files from the Court were now processed by her Office. It was the responsibility of the Sr. Recording Clerk to oversee and verify all index books and work closely with the County Clerk's Office, Mrs. Vogel stated. She added that conversions were processed for closed case files due to space storage limitations and the total staff number of 20 had been unchanged since 1990.

Mr. Pitkin questioned how the work processes may have changed over time and Mrs. Vogel replied that manual review and recording had been replaced by the current more efficient system, and Sr. Clerks were replaced by Legal Clerks as the manner in which documents were examined had changed. She offered that detailed information in this regard could be made available to the Committee.

Continuing with the current state of operations and processing in the Office, Mrs. Vogel apprised that approximately 2,000 mortgages were processed per year, for which the number of pages had increased. Mr. Kenny pointed out that a strategic workflow was necessary which involved multiple staff members in order to maintain the integrity of document review. Referencing Mr. Taylor's new Work Smart Program, Mrs. Vogel informed of flow charts in her Office which tracked the status of the current work for the day. The charts, she said, also reflected the lag period which was currently 5 to 6 business days.

Mr. Kenny asked Mrs. Vogel how the Department was operating with the reduced staff and Mrs. Vogel explained that longer work days of nine and eleven hours for Mrs. Ross and herself, respectively, over the past four months had been necessary to maintain optimum production. In terms of time savings, Mrs. Vogel noted that an electronic format was used which saved 200 work hours per year.

A discussion ensued regarding the salaries of three positions and the Committee agreed that cost savings in the salary budget was expected as a result of employee turnover. Mrs. Vogel asked the Committee if the requests could be referred to the full Board at which time she would detail the cost savings.

Motion was made by Mr. Pitkin, seconded by Mr. McDevitt and carried unanimously to approve the requests to fill the vacant positions of Assistant Records Manager, Recording Clerk, and Sr. Recording Clerk as outlined above, and to refer same to the Personnel Committee. *Copies of the Notices of Intent to Fill Vacant Positions are on file with the minutes.*

There being no further business to come before the County Clerk - Motor Vehicles Committee, on motion made by Mr. Pitkin and seconded by Mr. McDevitt, Mr. Kenny adjourned the meeting at 10:14 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joanne Collins, Legislative Office Specialist