

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: COUNTY FACILITIES

DATE: JUNE 3, 2010

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS THOMAS
VANNESS
BELDEN
PITKIN
MCCOY

OTHERS PRESENT:

WILLIAM LAMY, SUPERINTENDENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
JEFFERY TENNYSON, DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
FRANK MOREHOUSE, SUPERINTENDENT OF BUILDINGS
FREDERICK MONROE, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
PAUL DUSEK, COUNTY ATTORNEY/COMMISSIONER OF ADMINISTRATIVE & FISCAL SERVICES
JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD
KEVIN GERAGHTY, BUDGET OFFICER
SUPERVISORS LOEB
STEC
STRAINER
TAYLOR
TODD LUNT, DIRECTOR, HUMAN SERVICES
DON LEHMAN, *THE POST STAR*
CHARLENE DiRESTA, SR. LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

SUPERVISORS CHAMPAGNE
GIRARD

Mr. Thomas called the meeting of the County Facilities Committee to order at 10:01 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Belden, seconded by Mr. VanNess and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the previous Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Frank Morehouse, Superintendent of Buildings, who distributed copies of his agenda packet to the Committee members; a copy of the agenda packet is on file with the minutes.

Mr. Thomas mentioned that Sheila Weaver, Commissioner of the Department of Social Services (DSS), had presented a proposal at the recent Social Services Committee meeting to apply for grant funding to assist with the homeless housing situation. He added the discussion had pertained to the possibility of renovating the Old Jail as a homeless shelter. He said the discussion had been ongoing for some time and noted there were some issues with renovating the Old Jail. He continued by saying an estimate of the cost of renovation would be necessary if they were to proceed. Mr. VanNess apprised his understanding was if the lead paint on the steel bars was encapsulated and not disturbed during renovation then there was no need for abatement. He questioned if it was necessary to remove the asbestos if it was not disturbed during renovation. He voiced his opinion that the Old Jail was a good solution for housing the homeless males and sex offenders. He added remaining grant funding obtained by the Sheriff's Department for cameras may be able to be utilized to assist with a monitoring system for the shelter.

William Lamy, Superintendent of the Department of Public Works, stated he was unsure of the

square footage requirements for housing the homeless. He added if the square footage of the former jail cells was not compliant with the requirements it would be necessary to remove the steel bars. He commented a shelter would also require that heating, ventilation, electrical and plumbing code requirements be met. He stated it would be very difficult to make the necessary renovations without disturbing the asbestos. He said if the County wanted to pursue the project it would need to be properly studied. Mr. VanNess interjected several studies had been completed. Mr. Lamy asked if a study had been completed with the intention of housing people or just for use as storage space and Mr. VanNess replied he believed it had been completed for housing. Mr. VanNess stated the original intent of the study had been to use the Old Jail as office space and had later been amended to use as a housing facility. Discussion ensued pertaining to the studies which had been completed.

Mr. Pitkin suggested the Committee consider the cost of abatement as a sub-cost as it was necessary to abate regardless. He added research should be completed to determine the necessary requirements prior to proceeding further. Mr. Lamy noted the number of occupants could change the square footage and other requirements per occupant. Mr. VanNess stated when the Old Jail was in operation as a jail the maximum occupancy was 56. Mr. Pitkin suggested one cell block be used for homeless males and one for sex offenders with a wing in the Countryside Adult Home being used for homeless females. Mr. Stec questioned the total square footage of the Old Jail and Jeffery Tennyson, Deputy Superintendent of Public Works, replied a report from Clark Patterson Lee listed the total square footage as 8,627. Chairman Monroe commented a calculation of the amount currently expended per year to house the homeless in hotels would determine the amount that could be expended per year on renovations. Mr. Belden suggested the steel bars could be sold to recoup some of the renovation costs.

Mr. Pitkin noted the grant funding suggested by Mrs. Weaver was a competitive grant of up to \$7 million. He added if grant funding could be obtained for renovations, the concern would be with determining the ongoing costs, such as staffing and maintenance.

Mr. Strainer inquired as to the possibility of trading the steel bars in exchange for construction work and Mr. Lamy pointed out in his experience the County had never broken even on such a transaction. Mr. Strainer asked if the lead paint needed abatement prior to removal and Mr. Morehouse said he believed it was necessary to abate lead paint from any section which was to be cut into. Mr. Stec suggested the County determine if it would be cheaper to demolish the Old Jail and construct a new building. Mr. Thomas reported they had received an estimate on demolition of the building in the past. Mr. Strainer asked if the grant funding would cover the cost of demolition and reconstruction.

Mr. VanNess reported that he had spoken with the Building Code Enforcement Office and had determined that 70 square feet was required for the first occupant with 50 square feet for each occupant after the first. He said the old jail cells were approximately 80 square feet and would be of adequate size to become a bedroom. Mr. Lamy noted electrical requirements would need to be determined and encapsulating the steel bars would make electrical installation difficult. Mr. Pitkin suggested the abatement be completed using the grant funding as it was necessary regardless.

Mr. Taylor apprised the Open Door Soup Kitchen was also involved with housing the homeless

and the decision reached by the County would determine their next steps. He said research should be completed to determine if there would be unexpected consequences such as State mandates. He suggested a coalition be formed to investigate all of the options for housing the homeless and sex offenders.

Mr. VanNess suggested the County proceed slowly taking the process one step at a time. He added the first step should be to complete the abatement as the building was unusable until it was completed. He advised if the facility would house homeless persons and sex offenders, it would be necessary to hire an administrator. Mr. Pitkin noted regardless of efforts taken by the Open Door Soup Kitchen, the County would continue to have an issue with housing sex offenders. He advised the shelter would not be in operation 24 hours per day as the occupants should be gone during the day, and would merely be a place to receive a meal and sleep for the night.

Following a discussion on the matter, it was the consensus of the Committee to continue to investigate the possibility of completing the asbestos removal and lead abatement using grant funding, if possible and to complete an internal investigation pertaining to the requirements and costs associated with renovating the Old Jail into a housing facility, including square footage requirements, code compliance and staffing requirements.

Paul Dusek, County Attorney/Commissioner of Administrative & Fiscal Services, advised the County had several options for a possible homeless shelter, including the Old Jail, modular housing, foreclosed properties, the Open Door Soup Kitchen and Countryside Adult Home, which was also under consideration for an adult day care program. He advised the County was attempting to address the homeless situation as well as the sex offender situation. He stated it was necessary to gather information for study and analysis. He added the funds available from the DSS would need to be assessed and those funds would be on a reimbursement basis. Funds expended on renovation, Mr. Dusek pointed out, would be expended in advance of any possible reimbursement. He apprised due to the current financial situation of the County, any work completed at this time would need to be completed in-house as there were currently no funds available. He said the funds currently expended on hotels were DSS funds which were reimbursed by the Federal and State government. He agreed an internal investigation was necessary prior to proceeding.

Mr. Belden questioned if the amount of reimbursement for the hotels was 100% and Mr. Pitkin replied in the negative noting the reimbursement was 50%. Mr. Belden asked if the 50% reimbursement would continue if the County owned the facility and Mr. Pitkin responded that according to Mrs. Weaver, the County would continue to qualify for the reimbursement. Mr. Dusek apprised the situation needed immediate attention and an analysis of the information would be a top priority for him. He estimated the completion of an analysis would take several weeks. Mr. VanNess noted it was a benefit to the County that studies had already been completed on the Old Jail, as the information would be useful in the analysis.

Mr. Taylor advised at one point the County had been negotiating with the Open Door Soup Kitchen to provide housing for the homeless, which would have saved the County \$117,000 per year. He added the Open Door Soup Kitchen had proposed a cost to the County of \$25 per bed per day. He asked if the Old Jail could be used for storage and Mr. VanNess responded a study had reported that the Old Jail could not be used for any purpose until asbestos removal and

lead paint abatement was completed. Mr. Belden asked if the Old Jail was being heated in the winter and Mr. VanNess replied affirmatively and added the heating temperature had been reduced to 55 degrees. Brief discussion ensued.

Mr. Thomas stated the next item for discussion was to the issue of headlight infringement reported by residents of the Courthouse Estates relative to increased traffic due to the Human Services Building (HSB). Mr. Lamy said Mr. Stec had raised this issue at the Public Works Committee meeting and he had informed him that the issue had been referred to the County Facilities Committee. Mr. Stec reported the complaint from the residents had pertained to headlight infringement and dust from construction. Mr. Lamy pointed out that with the exception of November and December the County only conducted business during the daytime. He added he was unsure how the HSB added to headlight infringement. Mr. Stec apprised he did not think headlights were the major portion of the complaint. Mr. VanNess asked if the complaints had decreased now that the HSB was completed. Mr. Stec said he continued to receive complaints from one of the residents, who had suggested a stockade fence be constructed between the Municipal Center property and Courthouse Estates. He added the fencing would only be necessary in the area where the trees were the thinnest. Mr. Thomas estimated the cost of constructing a fence at \$5,000 to \$6,000. Mr. Pitkin suggested that since the complaint mostly centered on issues during the construction phase, it might be best to delay building a fence until a decision was reached on the Old Jail. He added if the County decided to use the Old Jail as a homeless facility, they could construct a more substantial barrier between the Municipal Center and Courthouse Estates. Mr. Stec suggested transplanting trees in the meantime and noted trees had been donated to the County in the past for a similar situation. He stated the complaints did not cease at the end of construction and added the most recent complaint was last month.

Following a brief discussion, it was the Consensus of the Committee to delay action until the grass grew in the area of concern question to determine if that eliminated the issue with the dust.

Mr. Morehouse updated the Committee on the status of the demolition of the former DSS Building. He reported the asbestos removal had been completed and demolition was scheduled to commence next week. He said the only remaining abatement concern was the removal of the old fuel tank in the basement. He commented the road approaching the Building had a gate which would be locked at night. Mr. Thomas asked when demolition would be completed and Mr. Morehouse responded in approximately three months.

Mr. Dusek advised the Cogeneration at Westmount Health Facility provided electricity for the former DSS Building and the other buildings on the property. He added prior to the relocation of the DSS they had paid the electric bills for the Cogeneration. Westmount Health Facility had accumulated bills from January through April, he continued, which total \$27,187.29. He said the demolition of the former DSS Building would decrease the monthly expense but there would continue to be an expense for the remaining buildings.

Following further discussion, motion was made by Mr. VanNess, seconded by Mr. Belden and carried unanimously to authorize payment to Westmount Health Facility of the bills from National Grid and to refer the issue to the Finance Committee to determine a source of funding.

Mr. Taylor stated the entrance to the former Veterans Services Department had antique grave markers which should be salvaged for use at the HSB. Mr. Morehouse responded a rock garden had been designed in front of the HSB and the grave markers had been relocated there.

Mr. Thomas announced there was a resolution request from the DPW and Mr. Tennyson explained the Public Works Committee had authorized an RFP (Request for Proposal) for professional services to produce dam inspection and maintenance plans and initial safety inspections for dams owned by the County and the Towns. He added he had overlooked the need to request authorization to award the contract to the lowest responsible bidder in order to proceed without waiting for the July Board meeting.

Motion was made by Mr. VanNess, seconded by Mr. Belden and carried unanimously to award the contract for professional services to produce dam inspection and maintenance plans and initial safety inspections for dams owned by the County and the Towns to the lowest responsible bidder. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the June 18, 2010 Board meeting.*

Mr. Tennyson stated the intent was to extend the RFP to the Towns to share in the costs based on the number of dams in each municipality. He asked if it was necessary to have an intermunicipal agreement with each Town in order to proceed. Mr. Dusek responded the need for intermunicipal agreements would depend on the structure of the contract; however, he added, he felt there was sufficient authorization based on the fact that the Committee had allowed the Towns to participate in the RFP. He said the County Attorney's Office and the DPW would work out the details.

Brief discussion ensued.

Referring to the pending item list, Mr. Lamy noted the first pending item pertained to determining if the elevator in the Municipal Center required a safety collar. He said he had researched the issue and had determined that they could fix the safety collar as a partial solution for approximately \$20,000 or they could replace the piston for a permanent solution at an approximate cost of \$40,000. He noted there was approximately \$41,000 remaining in the Capital Project for elevator repair.

Motion was made by Mr. VanNess, seconded by Mr. Belden and carried unanimously to authorize the Superintendent of Buildings to issue an RFP for replacement of the piston on the elevator for the Municipal Center.

Mr. Lamy requested that pending item no. 2 pertaining to a referral from the Criminal Justice Committee be removed from the list. He noted pending item numbers 3 and 6 pertained to the Old Jail which was discussed earlier in the meeting and should be carried over. Pending item no. 4, Mr. Lamy stated, pertained to the former Gaslight Village property and he requested it be removed from the list.

Mr. Lamy asked Mr. Dusek if he could discuss pending item no. 5 pertaining to the County Attorney's Office researching whether the \$10,000 threshold set by the New York State Building Codes Law could be divided into different components. Mr. Dusek said he was unsure what the issue pertained to and Mr. Lamy responded he would refer to the minutes to

determine what the issue pertained to. Mr. VanNess stated the issue had derived from a Public Safety Committee meeting and pertained to State mandates which required the use of certified electrical engineers. Mr. Dusek said he would have a report by the next Committee meeting on the issue.

Mr. Lamy apprised pending item no. 7 pertained to the headlight infringement at Courthouse Estates previously discussed and he requested it be removed from the list. He also requested pending item no. 8 be removed from the list as the Municipal Center sign was in the process of being constructed.

As there was no further business to come before the County Facilities Committee, on motion made by Mr. McCoy and seconded by Mr. Belden, Mr. Thomas adjourned the meeting at 11:06 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Charlene DiResta, Sr. Legislative Office Specialist