

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: PUBLIC SAFETY

DATE: SEPTEMBER 27, 2010

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:	OTHERS PRESENT:
SUPERVISORS VANNESS	BUD YORK, SHERIFF
BENTLEY	KAREN PUTNEY, ADMINISTRATOR OF FIRE PREVENTION & BUILDING
SOKOL	CODE ENFORCEMENT
THOMAS	BRIAN LAFLURE, DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES
CONOVER	AMY MANNEY, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES
MCDEVITT	FREDERICK MONROE, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
	PAUL DUSEK, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR/ATTORNEY
COMMITTEE MEMBER ABSENT:	NICOLE LIVINGSTON, DEPUTY CLERK OF THE BOARD
SUPERVISOR GIRARD	KEVIN GERAGHTY, BUDGET OFFICER
	SUPERVISORS TAYLOR
	STRAINER
	STEC
	LOEB
	MCCOY
	LLOYD SWARTZ, GLENS FALLS POLICE DEPARTMENT
	MICHELLE SWARTZ, GLENS FALLS HOSPITAL
	SHANE ROSS, WARREN COUNTY RESIDENT
	DON LEHMAN, <i>THE POST STAR</i>
	THOM RANDALL, <i>ADIRONDACK JOURNAL</i>
	JOANNE COLLINS, LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

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

Motion was made by Mr. Sokol, seconded by Mr. Bentley 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 Nathan (Bud) York, Sheriff, who distributed copies of the agenda to the Committee members, a copy of which is on file with the minutes. Sheriff York proceeded with a request for Investigator Terry Comeau and Patrol Officer Kevin Clark to attend a Cannabis Indoor Grow Course in Annville, Pennsylvania from September 29 - 30, 2010, with any non-reimbursable costs to be paid from asset seizure funds.

Motion was made by Mr. Conover, seconded by Mr. Bentley and carried unanimously to approve the request for out-of-State travel as outlined above, and the necessary resolution was authorized for the October 15, 2010 Board meeting. *A copy of the Authorization to Attend Meeting or Convention form is on file with the minutes.*

Sheriff York presented a request for Patrol Officers Greg Seeley, William Backus, and Shawn Stillman to attend the Dry Suit Diving School in Glens Falls, NY, from October 7 - 9, 2010, at no cost to the County.

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

The next item presented by Sheriff York was a request to amend the 2010 County Budget to increase estimated revenues and appropriations in the amount of \$16,564 to reflect the receipt of State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP) Grant funding. Sheriff York noted that the grant funding was intended for Correctional use.

Motion was made by Mr. Sokol, 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.*

Sheriff York presented a request to amend the 2010 County Budget to increase estimated revenues and appropriations in the amount of \$2,353 to reflect the receipt of an insurance payment for equipment damaged by a lightning strike.

Motion was made by Mr. Bentley, seconded by Mr. Thomas 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.*

Sheriff York presented a request to amend the 2010 County Budget to increase estimated revenues and appropriations in the amount of \$15,180 to reflect the receipt of grant funds for the purchase of bullet proof vests.

Motion was made by Mr. Sokol, seconded by Mr. Thomas 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.*

The final request presented by Sheriff York was for authorization to fill the vacant position of Patrol Officer #36, base salary of \$33,813, due to retirement. He noted that the Department had already reduced staff by six Officers and the salary was included in the budget.

Motion was made by Mr. Sokol, seconded by Mr. Bentley and carried unanimously to approve the request to fill the position of Patrol Officer #36 as outlined above and to refer same to the Personnel Committee. *A copy of the Notice of Intent to Fill Vacant Position form is on file with the minutes.*

Privilege of the floor was extended to Karen Putney, Administrator, Fire Prevention & Building Code Enforcement, who distributed copies of the agenda to the Committee members, a copy of which is on file with the minutes.

Mrs. Putney presented the Monthly Activity Report for August 2010 and reported decreases in both revenues and the number of permits issued from the previous year by 14% and 6%, respectively. As of September 22, 2010, she reported, decreases had risen to 15% and 18%, which was expected due to the current state of the economy.

Pertaining to the Budget Performance Report, Mrs. Putney estimated a 2010 year end Budget deficit of \$2,000. Mr. VanNess pointed out that the overtime budget was zero and Mrs. Putney had made a concerted effort to accomplish the work of the Department within the limited budget.

Addressing proposed changes to the fee schedule, Mrs. Putney summarized the details included in the agenda. She stated that the Budget Committee had approved \$18,000 for a part-time position to address fire safety inspections. In an effort to find solutions which were budget neutral, Mrs. Putney apprised that a meeting was held between Patricia Tatich, Director of Planning; Paul Dusek, County Administrator/Attorney; Kathy Barrie, Director of Civil Service; Todd Lunt, Director of Human Resources, and herself, to discuss the strategy of shared staff. Subsequently, she said, it was agreed that the Housing Cost Coordinator from the Planning Department would assist the Fire

Prevention and Building Code Enforcement Office. Mr. Dusek stated that he was confident that any legalities relative to the issue could be resolved. Mrs. Putney added that the strategy of shared personnel would be piloted for one year and re-evaluated thereafter.

In furtherance of her effort to meet departmental goals without budget impact, Mrs. Putney stated that she would present a revised fee schedule for the Committees consideration as per the rationale detailed in the agenda. Mrs. Putney summarized the proposed changes which included additions and increases to the fee schedule, and noted that extensive discussions with Fire Safety Inspectors had taken place prior to the creation of the proposals.

Mr. Dusek apprised of three important aspects of sharing staff or authorizing floating positions, the first of which was increased productivity and he cited the merit inherent in the relationship between the two Departments. The second factor, he said, was consideration of the amount of time required for inspection services and to proximate the feasibility of the former fees. The increases in fees, he explained, were intended to address the increase in the amount of time required for inspections on larger buildings. The final point, he stated, was to determine how the services, or salaries would be paid. The necessary funds, he said, would be derived from the general tax base or contributed by the businesses as per fee schedules. Mr. Stec expressed that measures to insure fire safety were essential and more manpower would be necessary for inspections. He stated that the Town of Queensbury had considered free inspection services for residents. He pointed out that the Town of Queensbury and the City of Glens Falls had not received County services for Fire Inspections as they were carried out by the respective municipalities; therefore, he said, the municipalities which used the inspectors should bear the cost, rather than using the general fund. Chairman Monroe noted that imposing additional fees and increasing existing fees should be avoided in the current fragile economic business environment and he upheld the notion that fire safety was an appropriate item for taxpayer funding.

A discussion ensued regarding the projected shortfall for 2010.

Mrs. Putney noted that the current fee schedule was included with the agenda and she would create proposed fee schedule packets for the Committee. Mr. VanNess asked the Committee to review the fee schedules for discussion at next month's Committee meeting. Mr. McDevitt expressed his agreement that the cost of inspections should be paid by the users and he acknowledged Chairman Monroe's appeal to avoid or contain fee increases. He recognized Mrs. Putney for her dedication in the challenging Departmental and fiscal situation.

Motion was made by Mr. Conover, seconded by Mr. Bentley and carried unanimously to table action to revise the Fire Prevention & Building Code Enforcement Fee Schedule until the next Committee meeting.

Mr. VanNess cited the recent letter to the editor in *The Post Star*, as a result of the fire at a local business in the Village of Lake George. Fortunately, he said, no one was injured in the fire. He stated that further efforts would be necessary to ensure the safety of buildings. Mr. Geraghty said he found the published letter to the editor to be disconcerting and asked if the building owner was contacted. Mrs. Putney confirmed that it was the responsibility of the building owner to follow code requirements, and the Fire Prevention & Building Codes Enforcement Department was responsible for building inspections and the communication of findings and compliancy issues. Often, she cited, the owners were not knowledgable about the Fire Prevention & Building Code rules and regulations. Mr. Dusek concurred that building code compliance was the responsibility of the building owner.

Brian LaFlure, Fire Coordinator/Director of the Office of Emergency Services (OES), stated that the Lake George and other area Fire Chiefs had agreed that more inspections were needed and it was not a reflection on Mrs. Putney's Department. Additional inspectors, he stated, would be necessary in order to carry out the work. He further expounded that business owners typically had not followed due diligence in terms of code compliance. Mr. LaFlure

pointed out that the Fire Advisory Board, whose memberships were authorized by the Board of Supervisors, was the legal arm of the Fire Departments with which to facilitate communication with the Supervisors and he asserted that increased dialogue was necessary. Mr. LaFlure cited that he had received a draft letter from the Fire Advisory Board President and the Pottersville Fire Chief, which he had reviewed with Mrs. Putney. He noted that he and Mrs. Putney had agreed that the letter required revisions; however, he said, the Lake George Fire Chief had distributed copies of the unrevised draft letter at their Board meeting, where the press had obtained a copy. Unfortunately, Mr. LaFlure stated, the letter was published with no forewarning to the Warren County Board of Supervisors. Mr. VanNess asked Mr. LaFlure to advise the Fire Advisory Board President of the importance of attending Public Safety Committee and Board meetings.

As Mrs. Putney's agenda review was complete, privilege of the floor was extended to Mr. LaFlure who distributed copies of the OES agenda to the Committee members; a copy of which is on file with the minutes.

Commencing the agenda review, Mr. LaFlure informed that the OES and the Sheriff's Department had worked together in an effort to develop a mobile command vehicle for use at large scale events which offered interoperable communication capabilities between all levels of Government and various agencies. He apprised that \$100,000 in 2007 and 2008 grant funds had been set aside and earmarked for the purchase of a vehicle. With the generous donation of a vehicle by the Glens Falls Hospital, he announced, the funds which had been earmarked for a vehicle could now be used for the necessary equipment.

On behalf of the Warren County Public Safety Committee and the Board of Supervisors, Mr. VanNess extended thanks to the Glens Falls Hospital for their gracious donation. He acknowledged Patricia Spencer-Cisek, Executive Director for Oncology at the CR Wood Cancer Center, who was instrumental in obtaining authorization for the project. He also thanked Phil Kahn, Communications Coordinator for the Hospital. He stated that the donation would give Warren County and Glens Falls a Field Communication/Command Unit to be used for natural disasters, fires, floods, and other emergency situations that would increase the ability of the responders to provide optimum public service.

Mr. VanNess requested that Michelle Swartz, Radiologist at the Glens Falls Hospital, and Captain Lloyd Swartz, of the Glens Falls Police Department, come forward to be recognized. He stated that their generous and collaborative efforts provided a foundation from which to establish a mobile command unit for the residents of Warren County. Mr. VanNess also extended thanks to Mr. LaFlure, Amy Manney, Deputy Director of the OES, and Jamie Schrammel, Hazard Materials Coordinator, who had worked diligently on the project over the past two years. The Committee responded with a round of applause for their efforts.

Mr. LaFlure reported the value of the donation to be approximately \$200,000 and he apprised that Department of Public Works staff would perform the internal construction of the unit which was anticipated to be operable in the Spring of 2011. Mr. LaFlure also thanked retired Chief Deputy Shane Ross for his dedication to the project.

Mr. McDevitt inquired about specific situations in which the unit would be enabled. Mr. LaFlure explained that the unit could be brought to the scene of an emergency situation such as hostage cases, large area searches and flooding. The unit, he said, functioned as a 911 center with the ability to connect with all other Counties and agencies, as well as providing a conference area for the deployed command staff and the media. In the case of flooding, he noted, the integrity of the work was enhanced with the ability to access maps and initiate development plans with the use of internet, Wi-Fi and cellular boosters. Sheriff York added that in the case of the double homicide that occurred many years ago, the ability to quickly establish a command post and an organized team was critical to the outcome.

Addressing the Action Agenda Items, Mr. LaFlure presented a request to extend the contract with the Glens Falls Fire Department, for fire investigations within Warren County, for the term commencing January 1, 2010 and terminating December 31, 2010.

Motion was made by Mr. Sokol, seconded by Mr. Conover and carried unanimously to extend the contract with the Glens Falls Fire Department as outlined above and the necessary resolution was authorized for the October 15, 2010 Board meeting. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

Next, Mr. LaFlure presented a request to amend the 2010 County Budget to increase estimated revenues and appropriations in the amount of \$846 to reflect the receipt of Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) grant funds.

Motion was made by Mr. Sokol, seconded by Mr. Conover 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.*

Mr. LaFlure requested permission for himself and Mrs. Manney to attend the Disaster Preparedness Commission Workshop in Syracuse, NY, from November 9 - 10, 2010, with all expenses to be covered by grant and State funding.

Motion was made by Mr. Bentley, seconded by Mr. Conover 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.*

Mr. LaFlure presented a request for a contract with Convenient Medical Care, authorizing an agreement for annual medical examinations for the Warren County Hazardous Materials (HAZMAT) team (comprised of Glens Falls Fire Department staff) at a cost of \$160 per member, with a 30-day termination notice.

Motion was made by Mr. Conover, seconded by Mr. Bentley and carried unanimously to approve the request for a contract with Convenient Medical Care as outlined above and the necessary resolution was authorized for the October 15, 2010 Board meeting. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

The last action item presented by Mr. LaFlure was a request for a contract with the South Queensbury Fire Department, for garage rental for the Warren County HAZ MAT trailer, on a month-to-month basis, commencing November 1, 2010 for a total amount not to exceed \$200 per month. Mr. LaFlure explained that the County had not been charged a rental fee for storage of the trailer to date, and recognized the inconvenience that the arrangement had caused to the South Queensbury Fire Department. The rental agreement, he said, provided an amenable solution for both parties.

Motion was made by Mr. McDevitt, seconded by Mr. Conover and carried unanimously to approve the request for a contract with the South Queensbury Fire Department as outlined above and the necessary resolution was authorized for the October 15, 2010 Board meeting. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

With regard to fire investigation fees, Mr. LaFlure stated that he would provide more information at the next Committee meeting. He explained that the pictures required by insurance companies were provided in compact disc (CD) format and the fee charged by Warren County included the report and the CD.

Mrs. Manney informed of notification received from the State that a HAZ MAT contract extension could not be considered until the first reimbursement had been processed. She noted that the grant was particularly complex and

several departments had dedicated their efforts to the application which was currently under review by the State. She apprised that changes had been made to the Hazard Mitigation Plan as per the directive of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the revisions were approved by the State Emergency Management Office (SEMO). The second draft, she said, was currently under review with FEMA. On behalf of the Board of Supervisors, Mr. VanNess thanked Mrs. Manney and the OES and he noted that Messrs. Geraghty and Goodspeed, and Chairman Monroe, had seen the benefits derived from her grant writing efforts.

Pertaining to dams in Glens Falls which were deemed to be high hazards, Mr. McDevitt noted that the City of Glens Falls had incurred a significant expense, in the range of \$12 to \$13 million, to implement a safety program and he asked Mr. LaFlure for his observations relative to the work. Mr. LaFlure apprised that he had toured the dam construction sites with Mrs. Manney and was impressed with both the quality and scope of the work being carried out. He added that although the project was costly, it would sustain and ensure public safety.

Regarding the Emergency Services Training Center, Mr. LaFlure apprised that he had received notification from Congressman Murphy that indicated funding had not been approved and requests to Senators' Gillibrand and Schumer were not successful. Mr. LaFlure and Mr. VanNess expressed their disappointment in the lack of funding for the dedicated twelve-year project. Mr. LaFlure stated that although he would continue to submit the annual grant application, work on the building had ceased at this time.

Mr. LaFlure informed of the plan to erect a car port for the HAZ MAT trailer and Mr. VanNess stated that it was the consensus of the Committee to discuss winter storage including the construction of a car port, with the County Facilities Committee.

Pertaining to Agency Updates, Mr. LaFlure noted the list of activities included with the agenda packet.

As information only, Mr. LaFlure stated that he had been approached by a not-for-profit agency to construct a facility capable of serving as a shelter which would enable grant funding opportunities. Mrs. Manney stated that the agency had commenced an analysis of grant specifications which required the Hazard Mitigation Plan and she noted that the Plan would not be finalized until early 2011. If pursued, she added, the time frame would be limited and 90% of the work would be completed by the agency.

As there was no further business to come before the Public Safety Committee, on motion made by Mr. Conover and seconded by Mr. Bentley, Mr. VanNess adjourned the meeting at 10:41a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joanne Collins, Legislative Office Specialist