

**WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
ORGANIZATION MEETING  
TUESDAY, JANUARY 6, 2009**

The Board of Supervisors of the County of Warren convened at the Supervisors' Room in the Warren County Municipal Center, Lake George, New York, at 11:00 a.m.

Board called to order by Joan Sady, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors.

Invocation was given by Supervisor Michael O'Connor, Chaplain.

Salute to the flag was led by Supervisor Girard.

Roll called, the following members present:

Bolton	-Kathleen M. Simmes
Chester	-Frederick H. Monroe
City of Glens Falls	
Ward 1	-Daniel J. Girard
Ward 2	-Joseph M. Sheehan
Ward 3	-Harold G. Taylor
Ward 4	-Michael J. O'Connor
Ward 5	-William H. Kenny
Hague	-Daniel D. Belden
Horicon	-Ralph W. Bentley
Johnsburg	-Sterling T. Goodspeed
Lake George	-Louis E. Tessier
Lake Luzerne	-Eugene J. Merlino
Queensbury	-Daniel G. Stec
	-David J. Strainer
	-Fred Champagne
	-William T. VanNess
	-Matthew D. Sokol
Stony Creek	-Frank E. Thomas
Thurman	-Lawrence Pitkin
Warrensburg	-Kevin B. Geraghty

Clerk announced the first order of business would be the selection of a Temporary Chairman.

Mr. Kenny nominated Mr. Champagne as Temporary Chairman, seconded by Mr. Goodspeed.

There being no further nominations, Mrs. Simmes moved that the nominations be closed, and the Clerk cast one ballot for Mr. Champagne as Temporary Chairman, seconded by Mr. Sheehan and carried unanimously.

Clerk requested Mr. Taylor and Mr. Sokol to escort Mr. Champagne to the Chair.

Mr. Champagne thanked the members of the board for allowing him the opportunity to serve as Temporary Chairman. On behalf of the board, he welcomed friends, family, relatives and staff to the meeting. He noted that he had researched the word temporary and he found the definition to be expedient, transitional, short-lived, tentative and replaceable. He added he would follow the word temporary as defined.

Mr. Champagne stated the next order of business would be the selection of a Permanent Chairman.

Mr. Belden stated it was an honor to nominate Mr. Frederick H. Monroe as Permanent Chairman, and Mr. Geraghty stated he would second the motion.

There being no further nominations, Mr. Tessier moved the nominations be closed, and the Clerk cast one ballot for Frederick H. Monroe as Permanent Chairman. Mr. Bentley seconded the motion, and it was carried by unanimous vote.

Mr. Champagne commented that Warren County residents were fortunate to have a Chairman the likes of Fred Monroe. He said that Chairman Monroe's leadership ability was surpassed only by his talents to negotiate and bring to consensus all parties involved. He apprised that Chairman Monroe's distinguished history of having served as an outstanding representative for the people residing in the Adirondacks certainly spoke for itself. Through the Chairman's guidance and assistance of staff, including the Budget Officer, Mr. Champagne noted that this board was able to approve the 2009 Budget that reflected the basic needs of the County's residents, even during historic fiscal turbulence. He stated that 2009 would be an even more turbulent year; however, he added, he was confident that no matter which way the fiscal woes may take the County, Chairman Monroe would certainly get the job done. Mr. Champagne remarked that it was an honor and a privilege to relinquish the Chair to Mr. Frederick Monroe.

Mr. Champagne, Temporary Chairman, requested Mr. Stec and Mr. Thomas to escort Mr. Monroe to the Chair.

Chairman Monroe subscribed to the Constitutional Oath as administered by Pam Vogel, County Clerk of Warren County. The board members acknowledged Chairman Monroe with a round of applause.

Chairman Monroe extended thanks to Mr. O'Connor for a very moving invocation.

Chairman Monroe presented the following remarks:

"STATE OF THE COUNTY  
JANUARY 6, 2009

"Thank you for the confidence you have placed in me by re-electing me Chairman for a second term and for your support throughout the past year. I will do everything in my power to carry out the responsibilities of this office and to keep you informed on key issues.

"The events of the past year continued to challenge all of us in local government. We faced unprecedented increases in energy costs; the collapse of the Wall Street economy; shrinking state revenue; cuts in state reimbursements after our 2008 budget was adopted; decreases in mortgage tax revenue and the need to bond for the 2005 washout damage, for which we did not receive federal emergency aid. On top of that, a State Supreme Court Judge in Chautauqua County ordered the State to stop paying taxes on State lands in the Adirondacks. That would have cost Warren County, our towns and our schools, \$6 million a year. We joined the Attorney General and environmental groups, and thanks to all the work of our County Attorney, Paul Dusek, we successfully appealed that order. But the threats to our tax revenue, being a forest preserve county, are not over. The Governor, in his Budget Message, proposes to cap State tax payment of real property tax at 2008 levels. That would cost us about \$75,000 in our counties and towns and another \$100,000 in the schools just for this coming year, and would increase every year. That is something that is being opposed by all the counties in the Adirondacks and Catskills and is something that we have to keep a close eye on and try to convince the Governor that all of the taxpayers in Warren County should not have to make up that difference because this loss of revenue would be on top of all the other cuts that local governments throughout the State will be facing.

"In August of 2008 we were facing an estimated tax increase in the 2009 budget of more than 35%.

"Our Budget Officer, Kevin Geraghty and the entire budget team, Rick Murphy, Joan Sady, Joanne McKinstry, and Hal Payne did an amazing job of reducing the increase to 2.9%, the lowest increase in over 10 years. All supervisors and department heads also worked very hard to reduce expenses and maximize revenues. I thank everyone involved for their dedication and hard work.

"2009 will bring many new challenges as the state deals with unprecedented budget shortfalls. I am confident that with hard work and the cooperation of supervisors, department heads and our budget team, we will meet the challenge again in 2009.

"It is very obvious that a solution to our budget problems should include changes in the way the state does business. We raised about \$35 million by real property tax in 2008.

We used more than \$26 million of that amount to pay the cost of unfunded state mandates. The State of New York needs to take a hard look at unfunded mandated programs. The State needs to make the difficult choice of either discontinuing them or funding them from the state income tax. It is not reasonable or fair to the residents of Warren County to have the costs of these programs passed on to them in the form of higher, regressive real property taxes.

"We also had several key personnel changes in 2008. We welcomed two new department heads. Sheila Weaver joined us as our new Commissioner of Social Services, replacing Bob Phelps. She has done a great job of controlling costs and managing the department. Marv Lemery retired after many years of service and Brian LaFlure became our new Director of Emergency Services. He brings with him many years of experience in emergency services. I am confident he will do a great job. Last month Lawrence "Red" Pitkin joined us as the new Supervisor of the Town of Thurman and we welcome him again and look forward to working with him.

"We also streamlined the committee system in 2008. We used to have over forty committees and we reduced that down to twenty committees, and I believe the new structure has saved Supervisors and department heads time in attending meetings, as well as travel costs. The issues we faced in 2008 were complex. Solutions required thoughtful consideration and many, many very long committee meetings.

"Here are some of the highlights: After many years of planning, and many cost reductions, we started construction on the new Human Services Building. It will replace the crumbling current facility and will be completed next year at this time.

"Working with a coalition of three municipalities and three environmental groups, we purchased the Gaslight Village property and began planning the design of the Festival Space. That property will provide much needed space for large and small events, while providing protection for the water quality of the Southern basin of Lake George. We will meet this afternoon with the Chazen Group to begin to develop a comprehensive plan for the Festival Space. A thorough engineering evaluation of the buildings on that space is well underway. It is partially funded by the Town and Village of Lake George.

"Another highlight of 2008 is the purchase of the Point of Care system for the Health Department. We expect that action to expedite billing reimbursement. We also decided on a location for the Fire Training Center; began construction on the platforms at the Thurman and Hadley rail stations; and, after a long and careful process of reviewing competing offers, signed a contract for a new Fixed Base Operator at the Floyd Bennett Airport.

"We began construction last year on a much needed new Soil and Water Conservation building.

"Our union contract negotiation team concluded negotiations and we signed contracts fair to both parties with the PBA and SEA.

"We passed a resolution and called on the Governor and State Legislators to end the practice of passing the cost of State programs onto the County real property tax. We need to continue to press that issue. Our real property taxpayers need and deserve relief from paying for programs mandated by the State.

"Important goals for 2009 include:

Completion of the Human Services Building in December 2009;

Completion of plans for the Festival Space at Gaslight Village;

Implementation of the Point of Care Project;

Completion of construction of the Soil and Water Conservation Building; and

Completion of a contract with Pro-Act to provide discounts on drugs to all residents of Warren County.

"We need to complete the asbestos and lead abatement in the Old Jail and Sheriff's wing area and to develop a plan to utilize those spaces. Related to that work is the need to begin planning for solutions to provide much needed space for our courts. I urge the County Facilities Committee to place both of these projects on their agenda, as priority items, early this year.

"I ask that our Budget Officer and team immediately start planning for the 2010 and 2011 budgets. Looking ahead two years will help us make the best budget decisions for 2010 while minimizing negative impacts on the 2011 budget.

"We may have a great opportunity in 2009 to make major improvements in our infrastructure. We have submitted to Congresswoman Gillibrand two major highway projects (Corinth Road and Beach Road), seven bridge projects (Milton Street Bridge, Tannery Bridge, Grist Mill Bridge, Alder Brook Bridge, Harrington Bridge, Peaceful Valley Bridge, and Heath Road Bridge), demolition of the old Social Services building, the construction of the Fire Training Center and Court expansion and renovation as projects for consideration as part of President-Elect Obama's proposed Economic Stimulus Bill. These projects total \$60 million and Congress is expected to act on them sometime in the very near future. If at least some of those projects are funded, they will provide a major boost to our infrastructure and our economy.

"In closing I would like to acknowledge our department heads and all of our county employees for their loyalty and service to the public. I thank everyone involved for their dedication and hard work in 2008 and solicit the support of all supervisors and our department heads in controlling expenses in 2009.

"Respectfully submitted,

Frederick H. Monroe, Chairman  
Warren County Board of Supervisors"

Chairman Monroe welcomed and introduced family members and guests in attendance, including his wife Carol, his mother and father-in-law Joan and Doug VanWeelden and family friends Barbara Laflure and George Douros. Members of the board responded with a round of applause.

Chairman called for reading of communications.

Clerk read communications, including the following:

William Lamy, Superintendent of the Department of Public Works (DPW), pursuant to Local Law No. 2 of 1971, making the following appointments for the year 2009: Brian N. Humphrey, Acting Superintendent of Public Works and Deputy Superintendent of DPW; Jeffery E. Tennyson, Deputy Superintendent of Public Works/Environmental and Engineering Services; Rose Lamy, DPW Records Officer and Deputy Superintendent of Public Works Administration; Don DeGraw, Airport Manager. Brian Humphrey, Jeffery Tennyson and Rose Lamy are hereby given the authority to sign all documents (voucher, purchase orders, contracts, etc.) for the Department of Public Works in the absence of Mr. Lamy.

Communications ordered placed on file.

Chairman Monroe called for reading of resolutions.

Clerk noted a motion was necessary to bring Resolution Nos. 1 through 20 to the floor. Motion was made by Mr. Tessier, seconded by Mr. Sheehan and carried unanimously, to bring Resolution Nos. 1 through 20 to the floor.

Chairman Monroe requested to introduce a resolution regarding the Broadband Project. He reminded the board members that funds had been appropriated in the 2008 Budget to create a capital project to extend broadband services throughout the County. He apprised an

opportunity had arisen through the Department of State, in a grant program called the '21<sup>st</sup> Century Demonstration Project', which would create a study for shared services and would save the County money.

Motion was made by Mr. Belden, seconded by Mr. Stec and carried unanimously to waive the rules of the board requiring a resolution be in writing. Clerk noted it would be Resolution No. 21 of 2009 for the record.

Mr. Kenny questioned the amount of the local share that the County would be responsible for if awarded the aforementioned grant and he also asked how much money had been appropriated for this project. Chairman Monroe replied \$40,000 had been appropriated for the project and he was unaware of the amount of the local share; however, he said, he was certain that it would be substantially less than what had already been appropriated.

Motion was made by Mr. Kenny, seconded by Mr. Sokol and carried unanimously to authorize the submission of a Department of State shared services grant application for funding of a Broadband Project. Clerk added it would be Resolution No. 22 of 2009 for the record.

Mr. Goodspeed referred to Resolution No. 2 of 2009 which designated the official papers for the County. He reflected on the presentation given at the December 19<sup>th</sup> Board of Supervisors meeting by the *Adirondack Journal* requesting the County to designate that paper as an official newspaper for the County as well. He questioned if it would be possible to designate the *Adirondack Journal* as an official paper for the County today.

Paul Dusek, County Attorney, explained that the law only allowed the designation of official papers as what was defined as a newspaper under the General Construction Law of the State of New York. That particular law, he said, set a number of requirements for newspapers and based on the information received, there were no facts that showed that the *Adirondack Journal* qualified under that law. Mr. Dusek further stated that Thom Randall, reporter for the *Adirondack Journal*, had advised that he would research the history of the use of the newspaper in some of the communities in order to determine if a series of facts could be established that may qualify the newspaper. He noted that if that were the case, the newspaper could be added at any time in the future. He concluded that until those facts were established, he could not find a legal basis at this time to declare the *Adirondack Journal* an official newspaper for the County. Mr. Dusek added that from a County perspective, the usage had to be for a period of thirty years, commencing just before 1940 and ending in 1970, which was a Grandfather Clause.

Mr. Goodspeed commented that he understood the law as explained by Mr. Dusek; however, he said, the law did not make sense and perhaps it was time that the State review

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the law. Mr. Dusek apprised that Mr. Goodspeed may be right because the law was last amended in 1975. Chairman Monroe suggested that the issue be referred to the Legislative & Rules Committee for further discussions.

Chairman Thomas called for a vote on the resolutions.

Resolution Nos. 1 through 22 were approved. Certificate of Appointments, naming Director of the Warren County Youth Bureau; naming members to the Warren County Labor/Management Committee; naming member to the Quality Assurance Committee of the Westmount Health Facility; naming members to the Greater Adirondack Resource Conservation and Development Council; and naming representative to the Lake George Watershed Conference, were submitted.

Chairman Monroe announced the 2009 Standing Committees, and a copy of the committee listings was submitted. A copy was also distributed to each Supervisor and is on file with the minutes.

Chairman Monroe invited everyone to the luncheon that was set up outside the Board Room and again wished everyone a Happy New Year.

There being no further business, on motion by Mr. Goodspeed and seconded by Mr. Bentley, Chairman Monroe adjourned the meeting at 11:35 a.m.