

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

MEETING: STATE MANDATED SHARED SERVICES PANEL PUBLIC HEARING

DATE: SEPTEMBER 12, 2018

PANEL MEMBERS PRESENT:

RYAN MOORE, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Guests Present:

BENNET DRISCOLL, CITY OF GLENS FALLS WARD 5
SUPERVISOR

BRAD MAGOWAN, AT LARGE SUPERVISOR, TOWN OF
QUEENSBURY

ANNE MOORE, SARATOGA COUNTY RESIDENT

JOE KISLOWSKI, CITY OF GLENS FALLS RESIDENT

SARAH MCLENITHAN, DEPUTY CLERK OF THE BOARD

Please note, the following contains a summarization of the September 12, 2018 Public Hearing for the Warren County Shared Services Property Tax Savings Plan; the meeting in its entirety can be viewed on the Warren County website using the following link:
<http://www.warrencountyny.gov/smssp/Archive/2018/smssp/>

Ryan Moore, *County Administrator*, opened the meeting at 7:30 a.m.

Mr. Magowan questioned whether it was necessary for him to attend the other two public hearings scheduled for later today and Mr. Moore replied in the negative. Mr. Magowan asked whether the purpose of the public hearings was to afford the public a chance to learn about the plan and make comments and Mr. Moore replied affirmatively. Mr. Driscoll inquired when Washington County's public hearings were scheduled and Mr. Moore responded that one took place last week and another two were scheduled for today. In response to a question by Mr. Magowan, Mr. Moore explained that as per the State's requirements three public hearings were required prior to the State Mandated Shared Services Panel voting on the Plan, which, he noted, would occur at their meeting tomorrow.

Mr. Moore called the public hearing for the Warren County Shared Services Property Tax Savings Plan open at 7:32 a.m.

Mr. Moore proceeded to provide an overview of the Warren County Shared Services Property Tax Savings Plan, reviewing a detailed Power Point presentation outlining same; *a copy of the Plan is on file with the minutes.*

Mr. Moore informed that none of the current shared services the County had in place were credited in this plan, as the State had structured the law in a way that required the County to develop new initiatives. He added these new initiatives could not commence before January 1, 2019 or the County would not qualify for the State's matching funds.

With regards to the Smart Street Lighting NY Initiative, Mr. Moore apprised that NYPA (*New York Power Authority*) was offering a turn key program State-wide where NYPA acted as the administrator pooling labor bids and equipment purchased in this State for the purpose of having municipalities convert their street lights to LED (*Light Emitting Diode*) lights, and also to purchase those street lights from the utility company rather pay the utility company to maintain and operate them, as well resulting in a savings for maintenance and electricity. He added NYPA was building financing projects that would permit the municipalities to make the payments out of the savings the communities realized each year. He noted this would be the largest return in terms of savings realized from this plan, apprising he was looking forward to implementing this with the assistance of NYPA.

Mr. Moore stated the savings he had projected in the Plan were on the conservative side. He informed

the anticipated savings to "Average Taxpayer" referred to a formula provided by the State which divided the overall property taxes by the number of parcels thereby incorporating both residential and commercial properties. He mentioned the formula was inaccurate due to the fact that some residential and commercial property owners owned multiple parcels. In regards to the anticipated effect on property taxes, Mr. Moore apprised the State required the County to take all of the participants and estimate how much of an increase there would be to property taxes over the next three years for which he estimated most of the towns would be 1.5% based upon the allowable limit under the property tax levy limit assuming that everyone remained under the limit set by the State Tax Cap and then subtract the savings that result from the Shared Services Program to come up with this figure.

Mr. Moore offered privilege of the floor to anyone present wishing to comment on the plan.

Joe Kislowksi, *City of Glens Falls Resident*, questioned where the Probation Department fell under the Fixed Mandated Services in terms of their expenditures and Mr. Moore replied Probation was a State mandated service, but it was up to the discretion of the County in terms of staffing and the resources provided to the Department; he added the County was required to maintain a certain level of service. Mr. Kislowksi voiced his concerns with the Family Court Expansion, which he believed was an unjustified expense, as well as his concerns with the Probation Department. He added another thing he found to be troubling was how the County hired outside counsel to represent them in the lawsuit he had filed against it and he questioned why they would pay outside counsel when they had Attorney's on staff. He concluded his remarks by providing Mr. Moore with written documentation regarding his concerns; *a copy of which is on file with the minutes.*

Mr. Magowan pointed out the chart included in the presentation indicated the County Services that could be reviewed in regards to unfunded State Mandates was generous, as he believed it was actually significantly less than this percentage and Mr. Moore concurred. Mr. Moore stated there was an * after the percentage because it included many Departments which were required such as the Sheriff's Office and Health Services. Mr. Magowan stated the County was extremely limited to where cut backs could be made to decrease the County Budget. Mr. Moore remarked he believed the fallacy behind this whole concept related to the fact that County Governments had been struggling for years to raise the money required to pay for the expenses they had no control over as a result of being limited by the State Tax Cap. He said the County had taken the necessary steps to implement savings prior to this initiative; however, he noted, this plan would implement new programs that would result in additional savings. Mr. Magowan commented he was pleased the municipalities would be sharing equipment rather than expended funds for equipment that may only be used once a year. He added he was impressed with the plan and he commended Mr. Moore for his efforts to prepare it.

Mr. Driscoll pointed out the County used to provide printing services to not-for-profits in the region and he questioned whether this was something that was still offered to these organizations, as well as the towns. Mr. Moore apprised he believed the Printing Department, which he oversaw, still did provide these services, but he would look into this and get back to Mr. Driscoll with a definite answer. With regards to the School District taxes, Mr. Driscoll asked whether the 60% was consistent for all school districts in the County and Mr. Moore replied this figure was dependent upon how the school districts were expending funds. He said the types of equipment they had and their expenditures were all factored into the State School Aid formula, noting whatever was not allocated from the State was made up from the tax levy or the savings. Mr. Moore informed one of the issues he found with school districts within the County pertained to the fact that if they expended less money on certain activities they were provided with less school aid; therefore, he noted, there was not necessarily an incentive for them to participate. He pointed a significant amount of shared services were implemented by school districts through WSWHE BOCES (*Washington-Saratoga-Warren-Hamilton-Essex Board of Cooperative Educational Services*) due to the enhanced reimbursement this provided them through the State School Aid formula. He said he had researching how a shared services program with WSWHE BOCES could be implemented as a way to get the school districts on board with the plan. He added this was a prime example of how

in some cases the State's rules restricted what action could be taken.

Mr. Magowan stated he was concerned with how high the school tax bills were for the properties he owned in the Town of Queensbury and the City of Glens Falls. Mr. Moore stated the school districts he had conversed with all indicated an interest in participating; however, he noted, it was still necessary to determine how this could come to fruition.

There bring no further comments, Mr. Moore closed the Public Hearing for the Warren County Shared Services Property Tax Savings Plan at 8:01 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah McLenithan, Deputy Clerk of the Board