

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING

February 14, 2006 – 4:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Chairman Lawler; Supervisors Barrett, Connors, Grattidge, Janik, Gutheil; Yepsen, DeCerce; David Wickerham, Co. Administrator; Bob Murphy, STOP-DWI Coordinator; Sheriff Jim Bowen; Ed Tremblay, Emergency Services; Jim Murphy, D.A.; Mark Rider, Co. Attorney; Geoff Plante, Don Vaughan, NYSTEC; Kathy Barton, Saratoga Co. EMS Council; David Atwell, John Mazur, Fire Advisory Board; Mark Schachner, County Special Counsel; Louis Pasquarell, Jr., Clifton Park Safety Officer; Robert Hall, Town of Saratoga; Tom McCabe, Capital Digitronics; Press

Chairman Lawler called the meeting to order.

Mr. Connors moved to approve the minutes of the January 10th meeting. Mr. Barrett seconded. Unanimous.

Sheriff Bowen distributed copies of his January report on Seatbelt Safety Checkpoints/Commercial Vehicle Checkpoints/DWI Checkpoints throughout the County, and he reviewed those results. He stated the commission of inmates' collect calls (AT&T) for 2004 was \$88,899.95 and \$73,164.53 for 2005.

Sheriff Bowen requested a **resolution to accept a \$40,000 Electronic Ticket and Accident Report Grant from the Governor's Traffic Safety Committee**. He said they would be able to put electronic ticket issuing and accident reporting right into their vehicles which then would go right to the State electronically. **Mr. Connors moved to accept this grant. Mr. Barrett seconded. Unanimous.**

Mr. J. Murphy requested resolutions to accept the following grants:

\$71,200 to support the Crime Victims' Unit of his office. This is an annual grant they have received for the past five to six years.

\$70,000 for Drug Court. We divert people from jail who are addicts or abusers of controlled substances.

\$62,000 for Motor Vehicle/Insurance Fraud. He said this comes from DMV and DCJS to prosecute unauthorized use cases.

\$36,000 for Domestic Violence. He said they are in the ninth year of a three year grant. This should have ended six years ago, but his assistant, Lyn Murphy, does a terrific job, so it continues.

Mr. Barrett moved to accept these four grants. Mr. Grattidge seconded. Unanimous.

Mr. Tremblay distributed copies of his Fire Services Report for January, and he briefly reviewed it as well as an incident report on a strong weather front that moved through Saratoga County on January 21st. The weekend before was an extended holiday weekend. Over that period, a 2" water line in the area of his office cracked, leaking water into the area. Some leaked into a control cabinet getting the Frequency Boards wet. It was discovered that Fire Dispatch Fire B Frequency and the County Police MRD frequency was not operational, and radio repair was called. It was discovered that the frequency boards did not survive. Boards were ordered with expected fix early the following week. With County Communications being powerless as described above, the back up emergency generator started providing operating power to communications. After about a half hour of operation, it began to fail. At that time, all County fire departments were activated to stand by in station. After approximately 20-25 minutes, the generator was started and ran until about 9:00 p.m. when power was restored.

Chairman Lawler complimented the fire departments that stood by in their stations during that incident. He said he was concerned we didn't have the items on hand to back up the board. We didn't have preventative maintenance, he said. He said he would like the Board's thoughts on asking Mr. Tremblay to put together a plan that will answer some questions like, what didn't we have that we should have had equipment wise, a communications plan, a maintenance schedule, and ways to inform people when we have a problem. He requested Mr. Tremblay to think about things that can go wrong, and what we can do. We cannot plan for every disaster, but we want to plan for as many as we can, he added.

Mr. Barrett said on a variety of aspects of the system, we need to know Plan B when Plan A is not in effect.

Chairman Lawler requested Mr. Tremblay to come back with some possible problems and the cost of fixing them. He stated this incident was a learning experience.

Mr. Connors asked if there was someone who checks this building during off hours that could have prevented this damage from happening. Mr. Wickerham said typically, this building is not utilized on the weekend and is locked up from Saturday until Monday morning. Chairman Lawler asked Mr. Tremblay to think about that as part of his reporting. We will take Mr. Tremblay's suggestions and act on them, he said.

Chairman Lawler stated that he asked the representatives from NYSTEC to be here. He said the Committee members were provided with a draft report from them. I asked them to give us a thumbnail sketch of this report, he said.

Mr. Plante stated they received a lot of great participation from the County folks. We interviewed many people around the County and spent time in the Sheriff's Department analyzing dispatch. We did a lot of site visits up to your towers, he said. As a result, we came up with preliminary recommendations, and we are finishing up the report right

now, he added. He said it is taking longer to get exact costs, but you should get this report in the next day or two.

Mr. Vaughan said they broke the project into two phases – land mobile radio and microwave system. He said with the land mobile radio, there have been shortcomings developed over the past five or so years with the system itself, especially with alerting first responders and dead spots on the radio. We took a look at what exists and how the physics works. We found the way the systems are licensed should give you more than adequate coverage on low and high bands. Since they don't, there is some gap, and we tried to find the reason for it. A number of the antennas on your towers are faulty, he said. They are misinstalled. They should be out further away from the tower leg. Also in our discovery process, we found the antennas and towers are not properly grounded to industry standards. None of the sites are grounded properly and none of the site towers are grounded properly to the standards, he stated. He said you could suffer major lightening damage. He said some of the antennas seem to have been hit by lightening and damaged. The cable would be damaged also, he said. During our investigation, we found none of the towers that are guided have been tensioned and retensioned in many years. If the wires are loose, the towers can vibrate. The primary fire base station you are using needs to be replaced. The Sheriff's system needs to be cleaned up. New base station equipment needs to be purchased, he said.

Mr. Vaughan said they looked at the way the County contracts for repair of its radios. It is an on call type of maintenance contract. We suggest the County redraft that specification and require preventative maintenance checks. They would require a technician to give you written reports which would give you a constant record.

Mr. Vaughan stated the microwave system you have now was purchased as a last generation of analog microwave. It has done its duty for the County for the past 25 years magnificently. It is still operating to standard and to spec, he said. However, we are suggesting it be replaced because it is almost irreparable.

Chairman Lawler said we will still have high band problems if we adopt all of these suggestions.

Mr. Barrett said the report we have seen so far has been tremendous, and he does want to see the full cost.

Chairman Lawler said he asked the County Administrator to put some things together. Mr. Wickerham stated the specifications are ready and they have to do with getting quotes for retensioning guy wires, replacing antennas, etc. which cost between \$48,500 to \$61,500, he said. He said NYSTEC has identified three firms, and we can direct the Office of Emergency Services to assemble these quotes for a final determination within 30 – 45 days. Chairman Lawler requested NYSTEC to supply a list of equipment upgrades that would be appropriate. He said he would like to have NYSTEC to come back and deliver their final report.

Mr. Barrett stated we will need action on the sex offender legislation. Mr. Rider said we will introduce the local law at this month's Board Meeting and schedule a public hearing. Next month, the Board will be in a position to adopt it, he stated. **Mr. Barrett moved to approve the sex offender local law as written and to set a date for a public hearing. Mr. Grattidge seconded. Unanimous.**

On a motion by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Mr. Barrett, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine M. Sodemann