

Law and Finance Committee Minutes
February 13, 2014 – 4:00 p.m.

Present: Chairman Veitch; Supervisors Collyer, Daly, Grattidge, Kinowski, Lewza, Wright, Martin, Wood, Lent, Lucia, Sausville, and Raymond; Spencer Hellwig, Administrator; Ryan Moore, Deputy Administrator; Steve Dorsey, County Attorney; Susan Hayes Masa, Coroner; Michael Zurlo, Sheriff; Brian O’Conor, Auditor; Sandi Cross, Office for the Aging; Joanne Bosley, Real Property; Jack Kalinkewicz, Personnel; Keith Manz, Public Works; Chad Cooke, Sewer District; Tina Potter, Social Services; Frank McClement, Veterans; Sam Pitcherelle, Treasurer; Diane Brown, Maplewood Manor; Press.

Chairman Veitch called the meeting to order and welcomed all in attendance.

On a motion made by Mr. Grattidge, seconded by Mr. Collyer the minutes of the January 15, 2014 meeting were approved unanimously.

PERSONNEL

- **Amending the 2014 Compensation Schedule to create three temporary Social Welfare Examiners.**

Mr. Hellwig said the Personnel Committee has approved a resolution to authorize the creation of two Social Welfare Examiners and one Senior Social Welfare Examiner on a temporary basis through the end of 2014. There has been a steady increase over the years relative to the food stamps applications, where attempts have been made to handle the increase with temporary positions. Mr. Hellwig said this will probably be the last year that temporary positions will be used. Due to the fact that the increase has been relatively stable, this will be looked at more closely during the budget cycle, in terms of creating permanent positions to deal with it.

On a motion made by Ms. Daly, seconded by Mr. Kinowski the above resolution was approved unanimously.

EQUALIZATION AND ASSESSMENT

- **Accepting a tender offer in the Town of Malta for \$1,019.73.**
- **Cancelling \$52.94 in taxes on an exempt parcel in the Town of Halfmoon.**
- **Authorizing a correction to the 2014 tax roll from \$34,905.44 to \$26,010.00, a difference of \$8,895.44, for a parcel located in the Town of Ballston.**
- **Authorizing a correction to the 2014 tax roll from \$4,585.60 to \$1,197.54, a difference of \$3,388.06, for a parcel located in the Town of Clifton Park.**

- **Authorizing a correction to the 2014 tax roll from \$5,571.92 to \$2,009.07, a difference of \$3,562.85, for a parcel located in the Town of Halfmoon.**

Mr. Hellwig said the first offer is a tender offer made in the Town of Malta, conveying property back to the prior owner who has paid all back taxes, plus penalties and interest.

The second item cancels \$52.94 in 2014 Halfmoon Ambulance District taxes, which were erroneously charged against a parcel that is owned by the State of New York, which is wholly exempt.

The third, fourth and fifth items are all tax corrections. The town of Ballston erroneously placed a charge against Maplewood Manor for ambulance district taxes, and Maplewood Manor is exempt as a county property; in Clifton Park there was a homeowner that was charged for a re-levy of 2013 and 2014 school taxes that they already paid; in Halfmoon, the Clifton Park Church of Christ was erroneously charged for ambulance, fire, and library district taxes based on 100% of the assessed value. Approximately 7% of the property is leased to a private entity, so that entity is responsible for taxes that are levied against that portion.

On a motion made by Mr. Collyer, seconded by Mr. Lewza the above resolutions were approved unanimously.

LEGISLATIVE AND RESEARCH

- **Adopting the 2014 Saratoga County Legislative Program**

Mr. Hellwig said the Legislative Program has eleven items that were approved by the committee. Copies of the plans have been distributed to all Board Members.

A motion was made by Mr. Grattidge, seconded by Mr. Kinowski to approve the Legislative Program for 2014.

Chairman Veitch requested an amendment to the fifth item Opposing the Closure of the Mt. McGregor Correctional Facility, and Calling for Reform to the Prison Closure Process and Economic Development Aid for Affected Communities. He said he currently serves on the Public Safety Committee at NYSAC, and one of the resolutions the committee had was to try to find solutions to housing State parole violators. Currently, there are 14 State Parole Violators housed in the county jail, where the costs are completely paid for by the county. This is a cost to the county and for other counties around the State, he said. An idea that was brought to the meeting at NYSAC was if the state prisons were not closed they could be repurposed to house the State Patrol Violators.

The following amendment was offered:

Opposing the Closure of the Mt. McGregor Correctional Facility, and calling for reform to the prison closure process and economic development aid for affected communities. The planned closure of the medium security facility at Mt. McGregor will result in the loss of 320 local jobs in the Town of Wilton and leave behind a vacant site that will be challenging to redevelop. We support bipartisan legislation (S.5945/A.8180) that would require legislative approval for prison closures following a full review of the economic and public safety impacts of the proposed closures. **We urge the State to consider repurposing the four facilities stated for closure in 2014 to house State Parole Violators; thereby removing an unfunded mandate from the county jail.** We also support Governor Cuomo's inclusion of funding in the 2014-15 Executive Budget for economic development initiatives in the affected communities, and we urge the Regional Economic Development Council to work closely with us to redevelop Mt. McGregor if the correctional facility must close.

On a motion made by Mr. Grattidge, seconded by Mr. Wright the Legislative Program for 2014 was approved unanimously as amended.

VETERANS

- **Supporting federal legislation for the Blue Water Navy Accountability Act to address the plight of Veterans exposed to herbicides while serving in the Republic of Vietnam between 1962 and 1975.**
- **Supporting federal legislation for the Blue Water Vietnam Veterans Act of 2013 to identify each Navy ship that operated on the waters near Vietnam during the war.**

Mr. Hellwig said the above items are both supporting the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2013. In 1991 the Vietnam Veterans Act was passed to provide an assortment of benefits to Vietnam Veterans that were exposed to Agent Orange during the Vietnam War. The accountability act is new legislation that is designed to help identify the ships that were operating in the waters of Vietnam during the war. In 2001, Navy Veterans were excluded from benefits under these acts based on the requirement from the Federal Government that they had to be in the county or boots on the ground, even though they were ultimately affected through the waterways where their ships were located. Both of these resolutions are an attempt to reinstate the benefits that there were formerly provided under the coverage that is given all Vietnam Veterans.

On a motion made by Mr. Wright, seconded by Mr. Kinowski the above resolutions were approved unanimously.

PUBLIC HEALTH

- **Amending the agreement with The Lancaster Group to authorize additional services geared toward improving the application, admission and collection process at a cost**

not to exceed \$65/hour, for up to 8 hours/week, plus mileage reimbursement for any on-site visits.

- **Amending the “Saratoga County Maplewood Manor Collection Policy and Procedure”.**

Mr. Hellwig said the above items are both to improve the admission process at Maplewood Manor and fill some of the empty beds.

The first resolution will be an amendment to the county’s existing contract with The Lancaster Group who is the vendor that Maplewood Manor uses to provide billing services for an additional \$65/hr. not to exceed 8 hours/week. The Lancaster Group will also help perspective residents and their families with their Medicaid applications as well as some other issues related to facilitating their admission.

The second resolution will amend the county’s collection policy to help ease the admission process for prospective residents who have private resources or are covered by Medicare or whose stay in the facility may be short term, including rehab patients. These types of residents generally generate a reliable revenue source for the facility and the Public Health Committee recognizes that it is in our best interest to admit them.

On a motion made by Mr. Collyer, seconded by Mr. Kinowski the above resolutions were approved unanimously.

PUBLIC SAFETY

- **Authorizing the Chairman to enter into an agreement with the NYS Office of Indigent Legal Services to accept a three year grant in the amount of \$211,602 to enhance indigent legal representation in Saratoga County.**
- **Authorizing the transfer of \$41,303 from the Animal Shelter Trust Fund and amending the 2014 budget in relation thereto.**
- **Authorizing an amendment to the contract with NMS Laboratory to approve the 2014 fee schedule, \$14,000 in additional testing services and increasing the annual contract threshold to \$50,000.**
- **Authorizing an amendment to Resolution #196-13 to include radiological services as one of the approved medical activities provided by Saratoga Hospital in relation to autopsies performed at the request of the Coroner and/or District Attorney.**
- **Authorizing an amendment to the contract with Forensic Medical Services to include payment of \$150 for an autopsy assistant when the Saratoga County Coroner is unable to provide this support.**

- **Authorizing the Chairman to enter into successor agreements to provide additional law enforcement services in 2014 with the Town of Clifton Park (at a total cost of \$519,037) and the Town of Halfmoon (at a total cost of \$201,378)**

Mr. Hellwig said the first resolution is the Indigent Legal Services Grant to provide funding for the county's new Conflict Defender as well as other miscellaneous expenses in the Public Defender's office.

The second item is authorizing a transfer from the Animal Shelter Trust Fund that will cover shelter expenses, which includes surgeries, vet tech services, prescriptions, specialty diets, and a scale the weight the animals in order to monitor their health.

The third item is an amendment to an agreement with NMS Laboratory to approve their 2014 fee schedule. In addition, authorizing a payment up to \$14,303 for laboratory testing that was required because of an increase in cases for 2013. There is a \$20,000 cap in place, but due to the volume of cases, as well as some of the testing that was needed related to the autopsies, there were additional costs. In addition to the changes, the resolution will also authorize an increase in the cap from \$20,000 to \$50,000 due to the unpredictability in the number of cases and type of testing that will be required.

The fourth item is an amendment to resolution 196-13, which is an agreement with Saratoga Hospital for the Coroner's use of the laboratory and the morgue. This resolution did not include authorization for X-rays, and needs to be amended so that those costs can be paid. In rare cases there are times when X-rays are needed as a part of the autopsy process.

The fifth item is another amendment to the agreement with Forensic Medical Services. Dr. Sicirica, who is the individual the county contracts with and is the pathologist that conducts the autopsies, is provided an assistant by the county to help assist in the autopsies. On rare occasions when the assistant is not available, Dr. Sicirica brings an assistant from Forensic Medical Services. The county needs authorization to pay him when that occurs.

The sixth item is for authorization of a renewal of contracts between the Sheriff's office and the Town of Clifton Park and Halfmoon for law enforcement services. These are all one year agreements. In total it is \$519,037 in Clifton Park and \$201,378 in Halfmoon. These figures are unchanged from the 2013 contract totals.

The seventh item is a renewal contract with The Oneida County Sheriff's Department for security services for Saratoga County inmates that are housed at Marcy Psychiatric Center. The \$165/day charge is unchanged from the amount in the expiring agreement.

The eighth item is for authorization to accept a grant from the NYS Office of Homeland Security, which will be used by the Sheriff's Department for the purchase of Crime Scene Mapping Equipment. There is no local match required to draw down the funding.

The final item is acceptance of a Local Enhanced Wireless 911 grant from the NYS Department of the State. This will reimburse the Sheriff's Department for costs associated with the dispatch system, various equipment and software that they use as a part of the dispatch center.

On a motion made by Mr. Grattidge, seconded by Mr. Kinowski the above resolutions were approved unanimously.

SOCIAL PROGRAMS

- **Authorizing the Chairman to enter into provider contracts for the Expanded In-Home Services for the Elderly Program (EISEP) to provide housekeeping and personal care for the elderly.**
- **Authorizing the Chairman to enter into an agreement with Community Human Services to provide \$17250 in funding for the purchase of a senior transportation van.**
- **Increasing the funeral rates for indigent decedents.**

Mr. Hellwig said the first item is for renewal contracts with 10 separate agencies that provide home care services for the elderly in their homes. These services include a variety of items such as chores, laundry, shopping, etc. allowing seniors to remain in their homes.

The second item is to authorize the county to provide a \$17,250 contribution toward a van purchased by Community Human Services to transport Senior Citizens to local senior programs.

The final item is from DSS requesting an increase in burial expense reimbursement rates for indigent decedents which have not been adjusted since 2007. Under Social Services Law the county is mandated to pay these expenses and the Board adopts the reimbursement rates in consultation with the Commissioner of Social Services. The rate increase will be 15%, going from \$2,050 for a burial, up to \$2,350 and cremation from \$1,000 up to \$1,150.

On a motion made by Mr. Wright, seconded by Mr. Kinowski the above items were approved unanimously.

CHAIRMAN'S ITEMS

- **Appointing Mary Beth Hynes to fill a vacancy on the Ethics Advisory Council.**
- **Re-appointing Paul Loomis to the Saratoga County Planning Board for a term that expires May 31, 2018.**

- **Appointing Carl P. Zeilman to the position of Director of Emergency Services at a base salary of \$67,964.**

Mr. Hellwig said the first item is the appointment of Mary Beth Hynes to the Ethics Advisory Council to fill a vacancy that was created when Mr. Mancini, from the Town of Milton took over the Judges job.

The second item is to appoint Paul Loomis to the Saratoga County Planning Board.

The final item will be the appointment of Carl Zeilman as the Emergency Services Director, which is based on a recommendation from the Search Committee and the Personnel Committee.

Ms. Daly said the Capital Resource Corporation has appointed John Wyatt to the Capital Resource Board. Mr. Wyatt will replace Mr. O’Conor, who is leaving the Board to become the Executive Director. Ms. Daly requested that this appointment be added to the Chairman’s Items.

LAW AND FINANCE

- **Amending the 2014 budget to re-appropriate \$3,752,714 in expenses and revenues to complete the balance of work related to capital projects of the Saratoga County Sewer District.**

Mr. Hellwig said the Sewer Commission is requesting the re-appropriation of \$3,752,714 in 2013 Capital Funds. This is for engineering and construction work, several pumping stations as well as a replacement of the equipment for the sludge thickeners at the treatment facility.

On a motion made by Ms. Daly, seconded by Mr. Grattidge the above resolution was approved unanimously.

- **Authorizing payment by the Sewer District in an amount not to exceed \$175,500 in full and complete satisfaction of all claims for damages associated with the fee and easement interests taken by eminent domain on Tax Parcel #180.-4-8 in the City of Saratoga Springs in relation to the upgrade of the sewer system around Saratoga Lake.**

Mr. Hellwig said this payment is authorized with a resolution to be made to the estate of Mr. Ambrozak or the administrator of the estate. The Board authorized eminent domain proceedings last year on this parcel in order to complete work at the pump station that is located on the property. The district took title to the easement interest in August and State Law requires that the Sewer District have a consultant or appraiser come in and place a value. Conti Associates has completed the appraisal and the total cost that they have identified has been set at \$175,500.

On a motion made by Ms. Daly, seconded by Mr. Kinowski the above resolution was approved unanimously.

Mr. Wright said at the Personnel Committee meeting, Supervisor Daly appointed a subcommittee to handle some Maplewood Manor personnel issues, and she wanted to appoint Mr. Kinowski to the committee; however, he is not a member of the Personnel Committee. Mr. Wright requested that Mr. Kinowski be appointed to the subcommittee.

Ms. Daly suggested that a joint subcommittee be formed between Law and Finance and Personnel in order to appoint Mr. Kinowski. The committee was in agreement to appoint Mr. Kinowski to the Personnel subcommittee.

On a motion made by Mr. Kinowski, seconded by Mr. Wright the meeting was adjourned unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Chris Sansom