

LAW AND FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES

JANUARY 12, 2011 – 4:00 P.M.

Present: Chairman Thompson; Supervisors Daly, Grattidge, Peck, Sausville, Veitch, Wormuth, Raymond, Rowland, Lucia, Jenkins, Wright, Southworth, Wood, Collyer, Hargrave, and M. Johnson; Spencer Hellwig, County Administrator; Daniel Butler, Animal Shelter; Jen Van Ort, Board Of Supervisors; Jim Murphy, District Attorney; Wes Carr, Youth Bureau; Joseph Ritchey, Public Works; Hans Lehr, Mental Health; Chris Aldrich, Joanne Bosley, Real Property; Lori Stiles, Public Health; Brian O’Conor, Auditor; George Martin, D’Arcy Plummer, Sam Pitcherelle, Treasurer; Jason Kemper, Planning; Ed Tremblay, Emergency Services; Press.

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

Chairman Thompson announced the appointment of Mr. Grattidge as Vice Chairman of the Law and Finance Committee.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- **Authorizing Chair to enter into renewal agreement with Cornell Cooperative Extension to manage the MS-4 Storm Water Management Program at a cost not to exceed \$50,000.**

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Mr. Hellwig said the county has an agreement with Cornell Cooperative Extension to manage the Storm Water Management Program at a cost of \$50,000. Cornell offers the towns the services that are required under the MS-4 program, to manage the water resources in the towns, with a staff person that works with the towns to help develop the programs on an annual basis.

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

PERSONNEL

- **Amending the 2011 Compensation Schedule to incorporate changes approved by the Personnel Committee resulting from the early retirement incentive and related staffing.**

Mr. Hellwig said these are amendments to the compensation schedule based on recommendations made by the Personnel Committee. Members of the committee that were at the meeting approved these changes. Most of them were related to the retirement incentive. It is a combination of abolishments and reclassifications of jobs, as well as some grade changes. There is an anticipated \$200,000 in savings.

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

PUBLIC HEALTH

- **Amending the 2011 budget to accept \$23,019 in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding to cover training and equipment costs related to Public Health's use of the State's Early Intervention web based network.**
- **Amending the 2011 budget to accept an additional \$14,419 in State Aid for Transitional services Association, Inc. for office furnishings and equipment and increasing their 2010 contract by the same amount.**
- **Amending the 2011 budget to accept an additional \$124,284 in State Aid for the Alcohol and Substance Abuse Prevention Council, Inc. for office furnishings and equipment and increasing their 2010 contract by the same amount.**
- **Amending the 2011 budget to accept an additional \$6,436 in State Aid for the Franklin Community Center, Inc. for office furnishings and equipment and increasing the 2010 contract by the same amount.**

Mr. Hellwig said at the end of last year a resolution was passed to accept approximately \$78,000 in stimulus funding, which the department used to purchase hardware and software. The State has changed the case management software that the department uses for the Early Intervention Program. They have now completed the purchase of the equipment this year, and they need a second resolution to amend the budget to accept additional funding to pay for the training and more equipment to get the program off the ground. It is now a web-based program, and the nurses will be going on line to manage the cases and to enter the data into the State medical records.

Mr. Hellwig said the next three items are all from the Mental Health Department. In December the State indicated that there was additional funding available for agencies to purchase non-personnel related items. It was a combination of minor office equipment, computers and furnishings. The agencies had made those purchases and confirmation has been received from the State that the funding has been approved. The 2010 contracts will need to be amended in order to pay them and, in addition, the 2011 budget will be amended.

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

- **Amending the 2011 budget to re-appropriate \$165,289 in expenses and revenues to complete obstruction removal, berm construction and the purchase of avigation easements at the Saratoga County Airport.**

- **Amending Resolution #221-10 to authorize payment for up to 40% of building expenses including taxes, water and sewer fees, lawn care, snow removal, garbage pickup and pest control.**

Mr. Hellwig said the first resolution is the re-appropriation of \$165,289 in expenses and revenues. Last year the county purchased an avigation easment from a property owner, whose property bordered the airport for \$40,000, based on the recommendation of a consultant that was hired to value the easement. The individual has since come back and contested the amount, and the value of the easement is being litigated. A portion of the total will be used to pay for some of the costs of litigating the case. Ultimately, depending upon what the judge's decision is, the Board may have to approve additional money depending on how the case is resolved. The Capital Plan last year had \$50,000 in it to deal with this, and there is a balance of approximately \$7,200, which is what is being re-appropriated to handle some of the court costs. The second part of the total is \$133,000, which is leftover from \$700,000 that was budgeted for the tree removal around the airport. The department now wants to use the balance of the money for some seeding and planting of the area that was cleared. The final part is a berm that is going to be constructed to create a visual and a sound barrier between some of the residential properties that were adjacent to the airport.

The second item is an amendment to the resolution last month, when a lease was approved with a property owner in Geysers Crest to relocate the Day Program of the Mental Health Department. The lease was approved, but the resolution did not include authorization to pay some of the building expenses, which included property taxes, sewer and water fees, lawn maintenance, and rubbish removal. This resolution would authorize the payment of up to 40% of those totals. It is estimated, based on the property value and the other fees, to be under \$10,000/yr.

Mr. Peck asked what property was involved? Mr. Hellwig said it was a property owned by Mr. McNearly on Geysers Road.

Mr. Grattidge asked if a dollar amount would be put in the resolution? Mr. Hellwig said he would change the resolution to include **the amount it is not to exceed \$10,000.**

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

EQUALIZATION AND ASSESSMENT

- **Authorizing the County Auditor to approve tax corrections and refunds less than \$2,500.**

Mr. Hellwig said every year the Auditor is authorized to pay refunds and tax corrections up to \$2,500. There is a report that is produced quarterly and given to the Chairman of the Equalization and Assessment Committee on the activities of the Auditor related to this approval.

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

PUBLIC SAFETY

- **Authorizing the collection of a \$25.00 fee from DWI and DWAI offenders ordered by the Court to attend a DWI Victim Impact Panel as part of their case disposition.**
- **Amending the 2011 Budget to re-appropriate \$40,525 in expenses and revenues for the Homeland Security Companion Animal Grant.**
- **Authorizing the transfer of \$55,000 of funds from the Animal Shelter Trust Fund and amending the budget in relation thereto.**
- **Amending the 2011 Budget to re-appropriate \$597,512 in Homeland Security funding for the Emergency Services Department to purchase various equipment, training services and supplies.**

Mr. Hellwig said the first item is a creation of a fee to cover the cost of the Saratoga County DWI Victim Impact Panel. The criminal cases where the defendants are charged with a DWI or DWAI charge, and ordered by the court to attend these panels, which are sponsored by the county, and run by the Youth Bureau and the District Attorney's office. Over the years the county has footed the bill for a lot of the expenses of holding the panels, and it has come to a point now where they would like to initiate a fee to cover some of the costs including the mailing, printing, and providing a meal, and help with transportation for the individuals that are speaking at these events.

The next two items are from the Animal Shelter. The first one is the balance of a Homeland Security Grant of approximately \$47,000 was approved last year and put in the budget for a Companion Animal Grant. A portion that was spent last year was for the purchase of a trailer and the remaining \$40,000 is going to be used to purchase items to stock the trailer, so in the event there is an incident, some relief can be provided to the property owners and their pets.

The third item of \$55,000 for the Animal Shelter is being moved from the trust fund into the Animal Shelter operating budget to cover an assortment of services, including spaying and neutering, technician fees, doctor fees, and outside equipment for exercise of the animals. The balance of the trust fund currently is \$306,000. The \$55,000 transfer will leave a balance of approximately \$255,000 in the fund.

The fourth item is a balance of three homeland security resolutions for a total of \$597,512, which was placed in last years budget for the purchase of radio equipment, training costs, and various equipment that is being purchased for emergency service

personnel. This money, if approved to be re-appropriated, will continue to be spent on those types of purchases.

On a motion made by Mrs. Wormuth, seconded by Mr. Sausville the above resolutions were approved unanimously.

Mr. Sausville asked if there was any information on the total cost of the Victim Impact Panels program and how much money will be generated by the \$25 per case.

Mrs. Wormuth said at the Public Safety Committee they utilized a number of people who had gone through it last year and estimated it. The problem is that we are getting a lot of people from other counties because we are the only one not charging a fee. The amount of money that it would generate versus what they were spending was 1/3 of it. The biggest portion of the expense for next year, a large portion of it, was a one-time expense on a laptop computer to track it. It is really hard to track it because it will be user based on the number of people who come in, she said. Anyone who qualifies for public assistance through the court system, that fee would also be waived because it is part of their sentence.

Mr. Lawler said of the \$587,512 grant, will some of that money find its way down to the local emergency services providers. Mrs. Wormuth said some of the money is being used for the upgrade to the radio system.

Mr. Tremblay said the highest local equipment is going to be for the three fire department scuba diving teams. There is money being appropriated to them for upgrading equipment for coldwater dry suits for some that can't do coldwater diving. Mr. Lawler asked how much of the \$597,512 was for local. Mr. Tremblay said approximately \$70,000. The rest of the money will be for gear for the Hazmat team, meters, etc. Mr. Lawler asked how much in total is going to the local people and how much is going to the radio system? Mr. Tremblay said the radio system is \$150,000 and the local is \$70,000. Mr. Lawler asked how it was decided who got what money? Mr. Tremblay said as far as the equipment that was decided, the Hazmat grants or the Homeland Security Grants are basically regional. On regional grants they look for projects that are regional, he said. The three dive teams are regional teams that respond all over the county and were approved. The radio system equipment is regional equipment for the entire county, and that was approved. The equipment that is being used for the county Hazmat team for the region has been approved for protection meters, and protective clothing.

Mr. Lawler said he would like to see in detail where the money is going and how the decision was arrive at.

Mr. Thompson asked what the difference is between the uniforms that are on the Hazmat truck and the ones that are being purchased? Mr. Tremblay said the Tyvek suits are just paper suits, and the gear that is being bought for the team is protective firefighter turnout gear.

Mrs. Wormuth said when the grants are applied for through Public Safety, they are applied for in generality of what will happen. The radio money is something that just came up three weeks ago so that money, although it was utilized to be used for communications within the community, wasn't specific for what it is going to be used for.

Mr. Lawler said he would like to see that we are consulting with local emergency service providers and that all of those people are having an opportunity to access this money. As we are talking about almost \$600,000 worth of funding, he would like to know specifically who is getting what, what they are going to do with the money, and how that decision was arrived at. He asked Mr. Tremblay to have that information before the next meeting.

Mr. Lawler said he wants to make sure that there is a process in place and that everyone understands what it is and how the decisions were made, and exactly where the money is going.

Ms. Daly asked when a court orders a DWI or DWAI offender to attend the Victim Impact Panel, is it usually for one time? Mr. Murphy said, yes, the Victim Impact session is one night and approximately three hours long. They are done monthly with approximately 80 to 100 people at each session. The panel meets six times in the City of Saratoga Springs and six times in Clifton Park, alternately every other month.

On a motion made by Mrs. Wormuth, seconded by Mr. Sausville the above resolutions were approved unanimously.

PUBLIC WORKS

- **Re-appropriating \$3,623,654 in expenses and revenues under Public Works for engineering and construction costs related to six bridge projects and one County road project.**

Mr. Hellwig said this is re-appropriating funds for six bridge projects and one road project from the Capital Plan last year.

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

On a motion made by Mrs. Wormuth, seconded by Mr. Sausville the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Chris Sansom