

Law and Finance Committee Minutes
September 17, 2013 – 4:00 p.m.

Present: Chairman Sausville; Supervisors Daly, Rowland, Wood, Veitch, Wormuth, Wright, Raymond, Hargrave, Lucia, Southworth, Collyer, Grattidge, and Lawler; Spencer Hellwig, Administrator; Jason Kemper, Planning; Joanne Bosley, Real Property; Eileen Bennett, Data Processing; Steve Dorsey, County Attorney; George Martin, Treasurer; Brian O’Conor, Auditor; Peter Martin, County Clerk; Marcy McNamara, Jack Kalinkewicz, Personnel; Keith Manz, Public Works; Jay Girvin, County Attorney; Sam Pitcheralle, Treasurer; Ryan Moore, Mgmt. Analyst; Patrick Southworth, Town of Ballston resident; Press.

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

On a motion made by Mr. Veitch, seconded by Mr. Rowland the minutes of the August 14, 2013 meeting were approved unanimously.

EQUALIZATION AND ASSESSMENT

- **Accepting tender offers on a parcel in the Town of Northumberland (\$13,167.56) and in the Town of Halfmoon (\$40,760.74).**

Mr. Hellwig said the above item is to accept a tender offer on two tax foreclosed properties. In both cases the prior owners have paid all the back taxes and penalties, and both parcels will be removed from the September auction.

On a motion made by Mr. Rowland, seconded by Mr. Veitch the above resolution was approved unanimously.

PERSONNEL

- **Appointing Joanne Bosley as Director of Real Property Tax Services effective October 1, 2013 for a six-year term ending September 30, 2019.**
- **Appointing Eileen Bennett as Director of Data Processing at Grade 18, base salary of \$76,139.**
- **Amending the 2013 budget in accordance with the Interest Arbitration Award issued by the Public Arbitration Panel for the Saratoga County Deputy Sheriff’s PBA, Local 2096 covering contract years 2010 and 2011.**

Mr. Hellwig said the first resolution is for the reappointment of Mrs. Bosley for a six year term. Mrs. Bosley will be completing the unexpired term of Ms. Holley at the end of the month. The

Personnel Committee is recommending her re-appointment to a new six year term beginning October 1, 2013, which is the term that is governed under the Real Property Tax Law.

The second item is a recommendation by the Personnel Committee for the appointment of Mrs. Bennett for the position of Director of Data Processing to fill the vacancy that was created several months ago when Mr. Kingsbury retired earlier this year. Mrs. Bennett has been employed with the county for the past eighteen years as a computer programmer, and during periods when the department was short staffed she took on additional responsibilities in terms of network technician responsibilities as well as network specialist services. She was selected from a field of twelve candidates, of which six were interviewed. The recommendation has Mrs. Bennett starting at a base salary of \$76,139, grade 18.

Mr. Hellwig said the final item requires the Board of Supervisors to formally acknowledge receipt of the Compulsory Interest Arbitration Opinion Award that was reached by an arbitration panel, and designated by the Public Employees Relation Board. The process that lead up to this award involved nine separate negotiating sessions with the Union, leading up to an impasse. A mediator was then brought in that was also unsuccessful, and eventually both sides jointly filed for interest arbitration. A hearing was held by the panel and the findings were shared with the County in August. The terms of the panels award require the County to retroactively pay members of the bargaining unit who were employed on or after January 1, 2010 an increase of 1% and 1 ½% for 2011. The calculation for the total cost of the award through the end of 2013 will require a budget amendment to move a total of \$547,563 from the fund balance.

On a motion made by Ms. Daly, seconded by Mr. Wood the above resolutions were approved unanimously.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- **Authorizing the Chairman to enter into agreements to apply for, accept and administer a NYS Snowmobile Grant and Aid Program in an amount not to exceed \$89,000.**
- **Endorsing the Champlain Canal Trail and supporting continued collaborative planning and implementation efforts between communities in completing the trail.**
- **Authorizing the Chairman to enter into an agreement with TIP Strategies, Inc. of Austin, TX for the completion of an Economic Development Strategic Plan at a total cost not to exceed \$95,000.**

Mr. Hellwig said the first resolution is for the annual approval of the county to apply for, accept, and administer a snowmobile grant from the State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. The funding is pass-through and there is no cost to the county. There are five snowmobile clubs in the county that are responsible for developing and maintaining the trail

system. Funds are collected as part of the registration fees that the snowmobile operators in the county pay when they register their equipment.

The second resolution was requested by the Trails Committee expressing the County's support for the completion of the Champlain Canal Trail, which will link the Erie Canal way Trail in Waterford and the Lake Champlain Bicycle Trails in Whitehall. The resolution will be used by backers of the Champlain Canal Trail including local municipalities to assist in obtaining various grants.

The final resolution from Economic Development will authorize a contract with TIP Strategies, Inc., who was chosen out of a field of nine firms that responded to the County's RFP seeking a Consultant to write an Economic Development Strategic Plan. After selecting and interviewing four finalists the review committee unanimously recommended TIP Strategies, Inc. Their work will include an in-depth analysis of the county's economic resources and will obtain extensive input from community stakeholders, including major employers, various targeted industry analysis and implementation and recommendations, which will include a detailed marketing report. The plan is projected to be completed by the end of January 2014.

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

RACING

- **Recognizing the enormous success of the Saratoga 150 Festival celebrating 150 years of racing at the Saratoga Race Course and acknowledging the substantial support provided by the Honorary Chairs, Founding Members and Sponsors.**

Mr. Hellwig said the Racing Committee is supporting a resolution to recognize a substantial investment of time and money that these groups have provided as a part of the Saratoga 150 Festival, which has been both successful and memorable.

On a motion made by Mr. Veitch, seconded by Mrs. Wormuth the above resolution was approved unanimously.

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

- **Authorizing the Chairman to enter into an agreement with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to accept funding for a Wildlife Hazard Assessment Study and authorize an agreement with McFarland-Johnson, Inc. to perform the study for an amount not to exceed \$91,971.**
- **Introducing a Local Law to authorize the County to lease real property to Christ Episcopal Church and setting a Public Hearing for October 9, 2013 at 4:50 p.m.**

Mr. Hellwig said the first resolution is to accept federal funding to conduct a Wildlife Hazard Assessment Study, which is part of an ongoing effort to update the airport master plan. The resolution will also authorize a contract with McFarland Johnson who is currently doing work on the plan update, and will also conduct the assessment.

The second resolution is for authorization to introduce a Local Law to schedule a Public Hearing on a Real Property Lease Agreement between the County and the Christ Episcopal Church. The church will be losing some parking spaces on West High Street, and as a result of that they will need to construct some spaces alongside and behind the church. As a result of the property adjoining county property, they have requested a lease with the county. In order for the county to lease the property it has to go through a Local Law process. The lease will be in the amount of \$100/month or \$1,200/year. Ultimately, the construction and the build out by the church will occur after authorization is received from the village to move forward.

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

LAW AND FINANCE

- **Authorizing the Chairman to enter into an agreement with New York State to accept a Local Government Records Management Improvement Fund Grant in the amount of \$35,800 and authorizing amendments to the 2013 and 2014 Saratoga County Compensation Schedule and the 2013 budget in relation thereto.**

Mr. Hellwig said the County Clerk is requesting authorization to accept a \$35,800 Local Government Records Management Improvement Fund Grant which is used for records management and archiving in that department. The resolution will also authorize an amendment to the compensation schedule to create five part-time clerk positions and amend the budget for 2013 to increase expenses and revenues by \$7,935 to cover the portion of work that is going to be done this year.

On a motion made by Mr. Rowland, seconded by Mr. Wood the above resolution was approved unanimously.

- **Authorizing the issuance of tax anticipation notes in an aggregate principal amount not to exceed \$14,000,000 in anticipation of the collection of real property taxes, if deemed necessary by the County Treasurer.**

Mr. Hellwig said last year the Board gave the Treasurer authority to issue a tax anticipation note, if needed, to be used as a safeguard against a potential cash flow problem or shortage at the end of 2012. That option was not needed or executed; however, at this point, the Finance Director, George Martin, has indicated that for 2013 he is projecting a year end cash balance of approximately \$3 million. As a result of the county's cash flow needs for the first quarter of 2014 a tax anticipation note may be needed. The resolution will allow the issuance of this note

should the need arise, but that won't be known for another couple of months. The county wants to be prepared to act quickly if it is necessary, he said.

Mr. Lawler said it was his understanding that if this is done it would simply be for cash flow because the county is actually projecting an increase to the reserve. This would be for a short term cash flow and would be immediately repaid when taxes are collected with no budget or tax impact. This is a prudent move in case we do need it, he said.

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

- **Adopting a Fund balance Policy to ensure financial security through the maintenance of a financially responsible unassigned fund balance.**

Mr. Hellwig said a recommendation by the internal Auditor, Toski & Company was to have a formally adopted fund balance policy that addressed the requirements of the Governmental Accounting Standards Board Statement No. 54, which pertains to fund balance reporting and governmental fund definitions. The County Treasurer's office has developed this policy with the assistance of the auditing firm as a means of clarifying some of the terminology and classifying the fund balances that are used as a part of the accounting process. The policy also addresses additional aspects of the new standard.

On a motion made by Mr. Rowland, seconded by Mr. Veitch the above resolution was approved unanimously.

- **Authorizing blanket official undertaking for County officers required by law to execute and file official undertakings.**

Mr. Hellwig said under the Public Officers Law the county is required to approve a blanket undertaking that provides insurance coverage for money and property that is handled by county officers, which includes the County Clerk, County Treasurer, District Attorney, and Sheriff. This policy was part of the 2013 renewal of all the County's Property and Casualty Insurance and was approved by the Board. A copy of the resolution and the insurance policy will be filed in the County Clerk's office.

On a motion made by Mr. Veitch, seconded by Mr. Rowland the above resolution was approved unanimously.

- **Authorizing a transfer of \$5,380 from the Data Users fund into the Public Health Nursing Department for the purchase of 10 laptop computers.**

Mr. Hellwig said the above item comes from the Technology Committee who has reviewed a request from Public Health Nursing to purchase new laptop computers for the nursing staff that are working with the Certified Home Health Agency Program. Under the program, the patient

care and medication records are accessed through a web portal, which is done using laptops with wireless internet capability. Due to the current shortage of laptops in the department they are requesting the authorization to purchase laptops. The county has a Data Users fund in cases where departments don't have funding available. Since this is outside the Public Health Nursing Department, the Board's authorization is needed to transfer the funds.

On a motion made by Mr. Veitch, seconded by Mr. Rowland the above resolution was approved unanimously.

Ms. Daly said she is requesting a proclamation proclaiming September as "Childhood Cancer Awareness Month". She said she has been approached by the Capital Region Coalition on Childhood Cancer who has been actively involved in various activities, some in Saratoga County and surrounding counties, with part of their mission and goal to raise public awareness around childhood cancer and the need for research. The State of New York and the Governor have proclaimed September as Childhood Cancer Awareness Month. A request is being made to have Saratoga County reinforce the same with the presentation of a proclamation at the Board of Supervisors meeting on September 17, 2013.

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

Respectfully submitted,
Chris Sansom