

Real Property Tax Committee Minutes  
December 10, 2018 – 2:30 p.m.

Present: Chairman Dan Pemrick; Supervisors Tara Gaston, Scott Ostrander, Jean Raymond, Sandra Winney and Tom Wood; Chad Cooke, County Administrator; Steve Dorsey, County Attorney; Craig Hayner, County Clerk; Joanne Bosley, Audra Hedden, Real Property; Cindy Baker, Treasurer.

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

**On a motion made by Mr. Wood, seconded by Ms. Gaston, the minutes of the November 13, 2018 meeting were approved unanimously.**

**A motion was made by Mr. Ostrander, seconded by Mr. Wood, committee approval to authorize an agreement with Auctions International for the sale of the former County Infirmary in the Town of Providence. Unanimous.**

Mr. Dorsey distributed a handout. The infirmary was sold when Maplewood Manor was acquired. The owner allowed the property to fall into disrepair. Mr. Dorsey said that this is a project that they have been working on since 2015. In 2015 the EPA got involved with the clean-up of the building and property, a chain link was also installed however, this does not deter vandals and trespassing. An agreement with the EPA was approved by the Board last December which will allow the County to foreclose on the property, sell it at auction and split the proceeds with the EPA. Mr. Dorsey said that the EPA has a lien on the property in the amount of \$1.7M. The County will get a release of liability from the EPA upon taking title. The property has been placed on the foreclosure list and the County is now prepared to sell it. Mr. Dorsey said that they would like to put this property sale in the hands on an online auction company to market it nationwide and take online bids. Mr. Dorsey said that Auctions International conduct the real property tax auctions for a number of counties in the state including Warren and Washington Counties. Saratoga County currently uses Auctions International to sell surplus county office equipment. The typical cost proposal would include a 6% buyer's premium so there would be no cost to the County. The agreement can be done via minor contract.

**A motion was made by Mrs. Raymond, seconded by Ms. Gaston, committee approval to retain Mr. Gary Bowich to seek an order from the County Court giving the County Temporary Incidences of Ownership and arrange for Phase 2 Environmental Studies on properties in the Towns of Stillwater and Waterford. Unanimous.**

Mr. Dorsey distributed a list of properties that were scheduled to be foreclosed on earlier last week. There are certain properties that were pulled at the last minute, the county waits until the last minute to see if the owners are going to pay, when they don't and if there are any concerns regarding the environmental condition of the property, a certificate of withdrawal can be filed. This can be reinstated at any time by filing a certificate of reinstatement.

The property in the Town of Stillwater was initially on the foreclosure list in 2003 and was withdrawn due to environmental concerns. The taxes continued to increase to approximately

\$133K. Mr. Dorsey said that it looks like the property has been abandoned. It was being used as a car wash and could have been used as an auto body repair shop. There are unconfirmed reports that it was initially a gas station. If this is so, there may be some contaminants on the property or underground.

There are four properties in the Town of Waterford. These properties outstanding taxes are over \$141K and one of the properties was the site of the Mohawk Tire Dump fire a few years ago.

There is authority in the Real Property Tax law to allow the County to seek an order from the County Court giving the County Temporary Incidences of Ownership, which will allow the County to conduct environmental testing on property even though the County does not own it. It's been recommended that a phase 2 environmental study be done to determine whether there is contamination and if a further study is needed. If the results come back clean, the County can reinstate it, foreclose upon and sell the property(s). If a clean-up is needed, the County would work with the EPA and DEC for them to clean it up if funding is available.

Mr. Dorsey said that he has contacted Mr. Bowich, who the County has used as special Counsel on the Providence Infirmary and the Ricketts Property in the Village of Ballston Spa. Mr. Dorsey said that he would like to retain Mr. Bowich under a minor contract for each of the properties, he would assist the County in getting the order for temporary incidence of ownership as well as arranging a company to do the Phase 2 environmental study. Mr. Dorsey said that the agreement with Mr. Bowich can be done as a minor contract. If Phase 2 studies are needed and the quotes are over \$15K, Mr. Dorsey will come back to the committee for approval.

**On a motion made by Mrs. Raymond, seconded by Mr. Wood, the meeting was adjourned unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Therese Connolly  
Deputy Clerk of the Board