

Buildings & Grounds Committee Minutes
September 8, 2020 – 4:00 p.m.

Present: Chairman Matthew Veitch; Committee Members Ed Kinowski, Mike Smith and Benny Zlotnick; Supervisors Phil Barrett, Tara Gaston; Chad Cooke, Matt Rose, County Administrator; Steve Dorsey, County Attorney; Keith Manz, Public Works; Duane Vaughn, Shelters of Saratoga.

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

On a motion made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Zlotnick, the minutes of the July 14, 2020 meeting were approved unanimously.

Mr. Manz said that the Sheriff's Department is scheduled to move into the Public Safety Facility on September 17th. The 911 Center is scheduled to move in on 11/1. They will begin testing all of the 911 components on 10/1 .

Mr. Veitch said that over the past few months there were agreements with the Village of Ballston Spa and the City of Saratoga Springs regarding parking at the County. Mr. Veitch said that they took a look at the County's parking regulations policy, it is in various different places and it appears that the last time any updates were done was some time in the 1980s. Mr. Veitch asked Mr. Manz and Mr. Dorsey to start work on looking at the County parking facilities and figuring out a way to perhaps create a brand new policy for all of the parking facilities, or amend what we already have. Mr. Manz said that they started the project a few days ago, getting an engineering tech tasked with doing an inventory on all of the County Parking areas on a spreadsheet, including how many parking spots, the condition of the lot, and any other information. They will include any areas that are currently leased out. Mr. Manz anticipates that the inventory and spreadsheet will be completed in two weeks and sent out for review. Mr. Veitch said that this can be brought back at next month's meeting.

A motion was made by Mr. Kinowski, seconded by Mr. Smith, to authorize lease agreement with Shelters of Saratoga for temporary use of 31 Woodlawn Avenue as a Homeless Resource Center and Code Blue Facility. Unanimous.

Mr. Veitch said that one thing currently going on in the City of Saratoga Springs is that there is a substantial homeless population residing outdoors near the City's Parking Garage on Woodlawn Avenue, and around the County building. Discussions began with the Shelters of Saratoga and the Salvation Army and other agencies, to see if there is something that can be done to try to alleviate the problem in that area, short of a very stern and strong law enforcement presence, although the City Police are there pretty much hourly. One of the ideas to come up, now that the Woodlawn Avenue building is vacant, is to open the building for the Shelters of Saratoga to provide higher level services to this homeless population, let them know what services are available to them, and provide support that they may be able to change the trajectory of some of the people in this area and possibly get them the help that they need to get them on the path to sobriety, mental health services, social services or even housing. Mr. Veitch said that he, Supervisor Gaston, Commissioner Manz, and Mr. Duane Vaughn from the Shelters of Saratoga, looked at the building

and thought that the 2nd floor of the building would be a good area to allow for these services. Over the past few days, Mr. Dorsey, Mr. Veitch, Mr. Manz and some other people have been putting together an idea for how this building can be temporarily leased to the Shelters of Saratoga. Mr. Veitch distributed a handout outlining a draft of some of the terms of the agreement to the committee. Items include securing the areas of the building that will not be used, items that both SOS and the County need to do. A discussion took place regarding the length of time that SOS would have access to the facility. If an offer of sale comes in for the building in a month's time, what would happen to the SOS Homeless Resource Center at that time. Mr. Vaughn said that this is his first day on the job with Shelters of Saratoga. Mr. Vaughn said that there is currently a connection issue to get these people services. There are a lot of programs coming through because of the Cares Act, where they will have funding to do permanent support housing, but the problem is making the connection with those who need it. Right now, they have outreach to go out and talk with them, but other services need to be visited. Their thought is to bring services such as DSS or Veterans, to them instead. Mr. Vaughn said that they would be happy with any time they could get in the building. Ms. Gaston said that since last year, prior to COVID, the Collaborative Against Homelessness was working with the Shelters of Saratoga precisely to develop a foundation center. This did not happen due to COVID, but these services are readily available. DSS is aware of the plan of potentially coming to a location for homeless. Education and Training has already set up to do this. There are already volunteers ready. Ms. Gaston said that she has already talked to different agencies about providing staffing support, so that it's not just County Staff that would need to go in. Mr. Barrett said that when he read what Mr. Veitch had passed out, the aspect of time really jumped out. Mr. Barrett said that this is a valid concern and to make sure it works for everyone, he would recommend that a minimum amount of time be placed into the contract, and that a contract with a potential buyer can be written to include consideration for the existing lease period. Mr. Smith also expressed concern over the time period, it serves an immediate need, and he does not want to set SOS up for disappointment a few months down the road when they have to leave due to the sale of the building. Mr. Veitch said that the Code Blue season is coming up quickly and a problem they have is that the current Code Blue location is going to be restricted as to how many people can be there each night. Mr. Veitch said that it almost makes sense that the building be used not only as a Resource Center, but as an overflow location for Code Blue, and this would put an end date of April 1st on the lease as that is the end date for the Code Blue program. Mr. Kinowski said that he would like to know what the City's plan is going to be once the building is sold. Ms. Gaston said that the City is very involved in providing law enforcement, providing special officers who deal best with this population to develop a relationship so that they can support all the activities of shelters and agencies that are working with them. In addition, while the population is primarily located in Saratoga Springs, the Code Blue Mandate belongs to the County as a whole. By using this facility as an overflow, we are 1. preventing ourselves from any legal repercussions from trying to house too many people at the current location, and 2. limiting our spending, by avoiding the cost of hotels and transportation all over the county. This will allow people to be in a singular location, be able to access services, and save money on hotels and transportation. Ms. Gaston suggested having the contract drafted prior to this upcoming board meeting so that the contract execution can happen in a timely manner. Mr. Zlotnick said that his major concern is the fact that they have not discussed the sale of the building yet, the real estate transaction may take some time, and suggested setting a timeframe that Shelters could use the building. Mr. Veitch said that the County can set any condition they want on the sale as a contingency. Ms. Gaston said that the statutory guideline is that Code Blue runs from October 1st

to April 1st, assuming that the weather does not go below the statutory requirements, 32 degrees. It's Ms. Gaston's understanding that since the Code Blue program began, it has never gone past April 15th. Mr. Zlotnick said that if a 6 month lease was agreed to, this would get them through Code Blue season, and suggested if someone wants to purchase the building they would have 30 days to vacate, if an offer was put in on April 1st, SOS would have until the end of April to vacate the building. Mr. Veitch said that one of the items suggested by Mr. Dorsey would be to allow the County to show the building to potential buyers during the lease period. Mr. Allen expressed his approval of the extended lease plan however expressed concern over how many people could be housed at the building. Mr. Veitch said that currently they are really only talking about the 2nd floor of the building, the upper floor could be used, but basement would not be acceptable. The entire building area is 17,000 sq. ft. Mr. Veitch said that not many renovations would be needed in order to make it acceptable for the intended use. Shower facilities are available at the Salvation Army building next door. Mr. Zlotnick suggested deciding how much square footage would be used and work back from there to decide how many people could be housed for Code Blue. Ms. Gaston suggested consulting with Cathy Medick to determine that number.

A motion was made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Zlotnick, to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussions on the proposed acquisition, sale or lease of real property, when publicity would substantially affect the value thereof. Unanimous.

A motion was made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Zlotnick, to return to open session. Unanimous. No action was taken in Executive Session.

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

Respectfully submitted,
Therese Connolly
Deputy Clerk of the Board