

Real Property Tax Committee Minutes
February 26, 2021 – 4:00 p.m.

Present: Chairman Eric Connolly; Committee Members Ed Kinowski, Dan Pemrick, Mike Smith and Mo Wright. Steve Bulger, Matt Rose, Audra Hedden, County Administrator; Hugh Burke, County Attorney; Jason Kemper, Planning; Pamela Wright, Clerk of the Board; Anna Stanko, Real Property Tax; Andrew Jarosh, Terri Wrisley, Treasurer; Craig Hayner, County Clerk; Gary Bowich.

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

On a motion made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Kinowski, the minutes of the January 11, 2021 meeting were approved unanimously.

A motion was made by Mr. Pemrick, seconded by Mr. Smith, to authorize the correction of tax bills for one property in the Town of Charlton and three properties in the Town of Galway. Unanimous.

Mrs. Stanko said that school taxes were re-levied to the Town and County bills in error. Details of the corrections were distributed with the agenda for this meeting.

A motion was made by Mr. Kinowski, seconded by Mr. Smith, to authorize the cancellation of delinquent, current and prospective taxes for several properties. Unanimous.

Mrs. Stanko said that these represent several parcels that have had mobile homes removed, are private right of ways used for private properties, and a parcel that was conveyed to State of NY for highway right of way. Taxes are unenforceable on these properties. It was decided to table one parcel in the Town of Halfmoon until Attorney Hartnett has had time to review the deed. Mrs. Stanko said that she will forward all the information she has on this parcel to Mr. Hartnett. Mrs. Stanko said that it is her intention to bring these items to the committee on a regular basis to the clean-up these types of parcels. Mr. Smith suggested particularly looking into right of way parcels.

A motion was made by Mr. Lawler, seconded by Mr. Smith, to authorize the Tax Enforcement Officer to permit the cancellation in whole of any interest to which the County shall be lawfully entitled for Tax Parcels #262.-1-4.122 and #262.-1-4.2 the interest charges, contingent upon the sale of the property to a buyer and the submittal of an approved plan to DEC for the cleanup. Unanimous.

Mr. Kinowski said that this parcel is commonly known as the Patenaude parcel. It is an old paint factory located between Stillwater and Mechanicville. It was on the County's foreclosure list in 2015 but the parcel was pulled due to environmental issues, as is standard procedure to prevent the County incurring the liability of the potential clean-up costs. Mr. Jarosh said that Supervisor Kinowski has been working on this for several years now. Mr. Jarosh said that Decremente Distributing is interesting in purchasing the property and spending the money to clean it up. The request is to waive the accrued interest so that the sale transaction can occur, the new owners would

then be responsible for cleaning the property up. The amount is approximately \$54,900. Mr. Bowich, the County's environmental attorney, said that Decresente's intention is to demolish the existing buildings, do remediation and put up a \$3M warehouse. Mr. Bowich advised that the County get some kind of written legal commitment that the clean-up will be followed through. Mr. Kinowski said that Decresente is willing to pay back to the back taxes and then remediate the property at a cost of over \$700,000 and then construct a new warehouse on the site at cost of estimated \$3 million, which would add property value to the tax rolls. Mr. Lawler said that he would suggest to waive the interest charges, contingent upon the sale of the property to the Decresente corporation and the submittal of an approved plan to DEC for the cleanup. Mr. Hartnett suggested that sale not be contingent on sale to a specific buyer to avoid any specific ownership of liability for clean-up costs. Mr. Lawler agreed to amend his motion to replace the word Decresente with the words a buyer.

A motion was made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Kinowski, to authorize the review of the County's Tax Billing and Collection Program Countywide. Unanimous.

Mr. Smith raised an issue in the Town of Galway regarding tax bills and the payment of back taxes, and suggested a notices be placed on tax bills regarding past taxes due. Mr. Jarosh said that upgrading the tax collection program across the County, not just in his office, is desperately needed and suggested referring the issue to the Government Review Committee. Having a unified system between the County, the Towns, Villages and Schools. Mrs. Stanko agreed and said that in Washington County, the Towns have access to the County system to see if all taxes have been paid or not.

Mrs. Stanko said that her office is reviewing the manual of Policies and Procedures for this Committee. Supervisors should expect the document being sent out within the next month for review, discussion and possible action at an upcoming Committee meeting.

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

Respectfully submitted,
Therese Connolly
Deputy Clerk of the Board