

# Buildings & Grounds Transcript – 5/6/2021

## **SPEAKERS**

Chad Cooke, Darren O'Connor, Tara Gaston, Bill Peck, Matt Veitch, Bill Fruci, Sandy Winney, Several Supervisors, Roger Schiera

### **Matt Veitch**

Good afternoon, everyone. Welcome to the Buildings and Grounds meeting for May. Attendance has been taken. We do have a quorum here today. So, first item of business will be the approval of the April 5 2021 meeting minutes. Can I have a motion for that.

### **Darren O'Connor**

So moved to Supervisor O'Connor.

### **Matt Veitch**

Is there a second?

### **Sandy Winney**

I'll make the motion. Supervisor Winney.

### **Matt Veitch**

Second Supervisor Winney. Any discussion? Hearing none, all in favor say aye.

### **Several Supervisors**

Aye.

### **Matt Veitch**

Any opposed? Alright, carry. Alright, so next on the agenda is a resolution request authorizing amendment to our Public Works budget to add some funds for the construction of the Airport Snow Removal Equipment Building. Before we get into the discussion on this, I just wanted to mention that we're going to actually pull this item from any resolution request. We talked with Commissioner Cooke about this. This is part of our Master Plan for the Airport. And one of the items that we have been talking about getting done. We had a certain amount of money in the budget, and I'll have the Commissioner talk about that in a minute that we had gotten approved for, for a grant to do this building. But at the end of the day, the bids that came in came in quite a bit higher than what we had originally established for this project at the tune of what you see on your agenda \$359,332. So our thoughts are, you know, as I'm talking to the Commissioner Cooke, County Administrator is to hold off on this and actually do it for the Capital Program for 2021. And have this included in that the additional amounts for us to do with Capital. So I'll just turn it over quickly to Commissioner Cooke, just to kind of give it a little bit more on that. But I think I got I think I got it.

**Chad Cooke**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You've summed it up nicely. These are grant funds from an application we did in 2018. In order to apply for that grant, there's a preliminary estimate that's put together. And that's what the grant amount is based on. So it's based on 2018 dollars, essentially and then we factor in COVID with manufacturers, slow downs, you know, the price is high to the tune of \$350,000. So, we have a five year window to use the grant. And so we're only a couple years into that so we can certainly push this off and make this part of the 2022 Capital Projects list.

**Matt Veitch**

Alright, great. Does anybody on the committee have any other questions for Commissioner Cooke? All right, hearing no questions, sir. Go ahead. Supervisor Peck.

**Bill Peck**

Can I ask one question?

**Matt Veitch**

Sure. Go ahead.

**Bill Peck**

Mr. Cooke, if you put it off till next year, can you go out to bid again, thinking that prices for construction projects will be lower next year than they currently are.

**Chad Cooke**

We'll put it back out to bid. I suspect that right now we're seeing commodity prices are quite high. And I think contractors are relatively hungry now with stimulus money coming out. That may not be the case next year. I don't think we'll be able to build this building any cheaper than we're building it now necessarily again as a sort of a guess on what the markets gonna look like next year, but I think there's gonna be a lot more competition. And commodity prices will probably remain relatively high for the foreseeable future. So I'm not sure if the answers your question Supervisor Peck.

**Bill Peck**

I just wonder if your held to that bid of if you can put it back out next year.

**Chad Cooke**

Yes, bids are typically only good for 45 days. So anything beyond that the contractor has the ability to remove their bids so we would certainly put this out to bid for fresh bids next year.

**Bill Peck**

Very good, thank you.

**Matt Veitch**

All right. Thank you Supervisor. Any other questions? All right, hearing none, we'll move on to the next item and it is a recommendation to approve the auction sale for property located at 31 Woodlawn Avenue in the City of Saratoga Springs. As you know, we've had an auction throughout most of the

month with Auctions International who we hired last month to do an online auction for the former Public Health location at 31 Woodlawn Avenue. I will have the Commissioner go ahead and talk about what occurred and our final bidder and basically the proposal for what we want to do next. So go ahead.

**Chad Cooke**

Thank you. We, the Board hired Auctions International to conduct the online auction from April 6th to April 28th. During that time, there were 182 bids received. The highest bid was \$2,800,100. The highest bidder was the Adirondack Trust Company. Think we had something like over 8000 views, I think as part of this auction. Very successful, obviously above the appraised value that the Board had obtained last November. So everything points to this being a success. So the next step would be for the Board to or this Committee to recommend approving/confirming the auction sale of County owned lands at 31 Woodlawn Avenue in the City of Saratoga Springs. The highest bidder in the amount of 2,800,100 dollars.

**Matt Veitch**

Okay. Thank you. Commissioner. So hearing that I would just ask for a motion for approval of the auction sale for 31 Woodlawn Avenue to the Adirondack Trust Company for \$2,800,100. Is there a motion?

**Darren O'Connor**

I'll make a motion.

**Matt Veitch**

So moved by Supervisor O'Connor. Is there a second?

**Sandy Winney**

I'll second that motion.

**Matt Veitch**

Supervisor Winney. Thank you any discussion?

**Sandy Winney**

What was the bid that we started off at? I know we set the bid price at some level? Do you remember what we put it at?

**Chad Cooke**

We didn't, this is Commissioner Cooke, establish a reserve amount. Bidding actually started I think at \$100. So that's where it started at on April 6, that's where it began. And up until a couple days before the end of the auction I think the highest bid at that point was something like 50,000. So it went from 50,000 to 2.8 million over the course of less than 48 hours.

**Sandy Winney**

Well, I would say that's a successful auction, right?

**Matt Veitch**

Yes, it was. And again, I appreciate everybody in all their work on this and Commissioner Cooke, as well as the help that we received from Auctions International. And in the work they did on it. They promoted it quite a bit. They had its own had its own website, if you were looking around on that you would have found it. So it was really put together very well. And I think it worked to our advantage in that case. And again, if we do have a full vote here I do want to congratulate Adirondack Trust for their high bid and taking the building over. So I'm interested to see what their plans are there. So I have a motion in a second. Any further discussion? All right, Hearing none All in favor say aye.

**Several Supervisors**

Aye.

**Matt Veitch**

Any opposed? No opposition. Thank you. Carried. Alright, so last on our agenda. We have the new WAM lease, and they believe that for our storage of our election machine. So we have Roger Schiera here from the Board of Elections, to give us an update on that and go from there.

**Roger Schiera**

I hasten to add that my co-Commissioner Bill Fruci is here.

**Matt Veitch**

Yes, sorry about that.

**Roger Schiera**

Yes, we put out this lease agreement in 2010 when we purchased the scanners, electronic voting machines that were required to service and WAM has been a really good landlord for us. This lease includes all utilities, so basically that's the only charge that comes out of the warehouse. Maybe there's a couple bucks for Internet service. And they're willing for five year extension. It's a 7000 square foot warehouse less than a mile about a mile from our office. It's as convenient as we can get. And we would like to continue that relationship. We just picked up an additional 10 voting machines from Warren County that many can either be refurbished, some of them are ready to be used, in addition to our own fleet, which is we still have 249 machines that have an original purchase of 250 are still in full service. We haven't given up on number 250.

**Matt Veitch**

Bring it back to life.

**Roger Schiera**

There's no rent increase in the first year, so there's no impact on this.

**Matt Veitch**

Okay, hearing that, I guess I'd ask for a motion to renew the lease for the Election Commissioners. Is there a motion? We'll have a motion from Supervisor Winney, second by Supervisor Tollisen. Any discussion? All right, Hearing none All in favor say aye.

**Several Supervisors**

Aye.

**Matt Veitch**

Any opposed? All right. Hearing none opposed. Motion carries. Thank you. All right. And with that, I will. Yes, Supervisor Gaston.

**Tara Gaston**

What's the date that you have to have the voting sites? The early voting sites for the County?

**Bill Fruci**

The ones for the primarily

**Tara Gaston**

Sorry, do you mind going to the microphone. No, the ones for the general. I assume the primary is based on (inaudible)...and it's much smaller.

**Bill Fruci**

Today working on the old site designations, not only for the primaries, which we have six municipalities that are having primaries. And we discussed the early vote sites for the primary election, which we were having a conversation with Clifton Park Town Clerk, to see if we could utilize their town hall for an early vote center and also designate the Board of Elections as the other site. So we would have two for the primary.

**Tara Gaston**

Alright, what about the general? What's the date that those have to be set?

**Bill Fruci**

I would say that's the tomorrow as well.

**Tara Gaston**

The general election sites have to be set?

**Bill Fruci**

Correct.

**Tara Gaston**

Has there been a determination of where they would be? It's kinda it's I know, there's a lot of discussion last year, and I requested a second Saratoga Springs. Is that happening?

**Bill Fruci**

Well, I'm in favor of putting one in Saratoga Springs.

**Matt Veitch**

I understand why you're why you're saying that.

**Tara Gaston**

Okay, I mean, I assume the answer is no, at this time. Commissioner Schiera, do you have any insight? I know that the decision that you make, so obviously, if they're any concerns about having additional sites, such as cost or whatever, I want to make sure that, you know, for Buildings & Grounds, we need a location to make sure its available.

Of course, one of the considerations is cost. It's not. There is a pretty substantial cost associated with opening these things. Also, there's the question of the State has mandated is a formula as you know, that there must be at least one early voting site per County. And then it must be one for every full increment.....There must be an additional early voting site for each full increment of 50,000 voters. So we have about 170,000 eligible voters for the election, and then that dictates three sites. We put them in Clifton Park and Ballston Spa, and well, coincidentally, the locations that the DMV uses to serve the entire County and it works very, very well.

**Tara Gaston**

Does it say three or is it at least three?

**Roger Schiera**

It doesn't say at least three it says at least one

**Tara Gaston**

I mean for Saratoga County based on our population, is it at least three are required or three are required?

**Roger Schiera**

I think I understand your question. It's at the discretion of the County to add more, but I mean, why we would go beyond the recommendation of the State and the legislation that was passed requires a lot of thought.

**Tara Gaston**

Oh, absolutely. I agree.

**Roger Schiera**

But the State thinks that it's adequate to have one per 50,000. There's a pretty good argument for that. Unless you have a far flung population center. Our County is not going to be very far, far flung, and we have three from North to South.

**Tara Gaston**

Well, no one in this room would be surprised to know that many people in Saratoga County disagree with the recommendations or decisions made by the state legislature on occasion. I understand.

**Roger Schiera**

I do too. But in fact, the reason we're pointing when it Clifton Park, I would have been opposed to that for this election, it makes no sense. But the legislature enacted a statute that requires at least one early voting site in the public in the subdivision political subdivision that has the most population not eligible voters. So that would dictate that it has to be Clifton Park, and the way the statute was enacted, it might have to be Clifton Park, even if they didn't have a primary election. So that, you know, otherwise, we wouldn't have done it. But in this case, we had to do it there. But how well would that serve the voters in Providence and Corinth, and even in Saratoga Springs, if we only put the one in Clifton Park, which would have been our option. As I said, there could be a reason to have more maybe in a non local area of presidential year, it might be a good idea to consider some more given the experience last year, but I don't think that as a rule, hard, fast rule that we need to have more than we already have. That's my position on it.

**Tara Gaston**

I do want to make it clear, just from your answer, I'm not talking about the primary, I understand the primary has far fewer members, I'm looking specifically at the general election.

**Roger Schiera**

I was speaking about the general election.

**Tara Gaston**

Alright, I will just conclude by saying I would think that a local year, improving access is even more important, because people are more likely to go out as it is in a presidential year whereas in a local year, in any case, my understanding is that.....

**Roger Schiera**

Supervisor, that is blatantly not the case. The turnout in local years is tragically low. If it were more than a third of the turnout from last year it would be remarkable.

**Tara Gaston**

I, my statement was that we should encourage local voting, and that people are more driven to go in general, presidential years. I don't think that that conflicts with the statement that you just made.

**Roger Schiera**

I agree that we need to and I don't understand why people don't vote in local elections. Its where their money is going for the people that are going to decide how to spend. But that's not the point. And as far as access to balance, I think we have plenty we now have universal mail in ballots, and we have nine days of early voting.

**Matt Veitch**

So we're straying from any relevance to Buildings and Grounds at this point. So I appreciate it. I appreciate the commentary; I think it's very good. And I think it's a good debate to have, and it's in something like this, it's very hard to pin it on any particular Committee to have the discussion. So, you

know, because it's about early voting sites, Buildings and Grounds is appropriate for that. So I will, I'll give you that. So you know, again, my personal feeling, again, as a Supervisor from Saratoga Springs, I would support a site in my location. As a point of clarification, I would just say that I don't believe that the Board of Supervisors or any Committee of the Board of Supervisors has the authority to make that decision. I believe it's exclusively with the Board of Elections. So I just want to make that point as we go forward. You know, I can advocate for where ever I want to have polling sites and I advocate for my town, obviously. But at the end of the day, it's going to be up to you two fine gentlemen to make that decision for us.

**Bill Fruci**

So it is our decision, but we would also be (asked to go to the mic)

**Tara Gaston**

While he's walking, I also advocated for one in the north county too.

**Bill Fruci**

Yes, Supervisor Veitch, you are correct. It is the ultimate decision of the two Commissioners at the Board of Elections. However, you know, we would definitely look at your input as well, and take that under consideration.

**Matt Veitch**

Okay. Appreciate that. Any other comments, questions? Any other business to come before the committee today? All right, hearing none, I'll ask for a motion to adjourn.

**Darren O'Connor**

So moved. O'Connor.

**Matt Veitch**

Second? We don't really need that anyway, so I'll just call the meeting turn. Thank you very much. Have a great day, everyone.