

Law and Finance Committee Minutes

April 14, 2010 – 4:00 p.m.

Present: Chairman Wood; Supervisors Daly, Grattidge, Sausville, Thompson, Wormuth, Collyer, Veitch, Rowland, Kinowski, Wright, Jenkins, Lucia, Hargrave, Southworth, M. Johnson and Yepsen; David Wickerham, County Administrator; Sam Pitcherale, Treasurer; Wes Carr, Youth Bureau; Joseph Ritchey, Public Works; John Murray, Auditor; Terry Stortz, Alan Kempf, Public Health; Spencer Hellwig, Mgmt. Analyst; Dominic Gallo, Cool Insuring; Daniel Butler, Animal Shelter; Diane Brown, Maplewood Manor; John “Jasper” Nolan, Republican Comm Chairman; Lauren Roberts, Historian; Press.

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

On a motion made by Mrs. Wormuth, seconded by Mr. Sausville the minutes of the March 10, 2010 meeting were approved unanimously.

EQUALIZATION AND ASSESSMENT

- **Authorizing the conveyance of a tax acquired parcel to the Village of Ballston Spa for a sum of \$622.05.**
- **Accepting a conditional tender offer in the Town of Ballston in the amount of \$13,288.66.**
- **Authorizing a correction of the tax rolls in the Village of Waterford dropping the tax from \$55,014.52 to \$202.46.**
- **Authorizing a refund of taxes in the Town of Clifton Park in the amount of \$5,050.05.**
- **Authorizing the conveyance of 72 parcels sold at the March auction to the successful bidders.**

Mr. Wickerham said the first item has to do with the conveyance of a road parcel in the Village of Ballston Spa.

The second item is a conditional tender offer in the Town of Ballston where a parcel was pulled from the auction in order to facilitate a refinance by the owner. This is conditional, as the County will be turning the deed over to the bank.

The third item is a correction to the tax rolls where in the Village of Waterford a fire destroyed a piece of property. There was a demolition charge of approximately \$55,000.

Typically what is done is the county relieves the demolition charge on to the taxes. In this case, the owner of the parcel had paid the Village of Waterford directly for the demolition; therefore, the county will be removing the penalty and the reliev.

The fourth item is a refund of taxes in the Town of Clifton Park where an error was made and the school reliev was placed on the wrong property. The people that owned the property paid it and then came to the county to say it was the wrong amount. The county will refund the property owner \$5,050.05.

The fifth item is the conveyance of 72 parcels sold at the March auction. These parcels will be conveyed to the successful bidders. The county realized approximately \$119,000 over the taxes that were owed from the auction.

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

LEGISLATIVE AND RESEARCH

- **Opposing Governor Patterson's proposal to sweep \$1 million from the snowmobile trail fund. This dedicated fund was established only from snowmobile registration fees.**
- **Urging the New York State Legislature to support the New York State Farm Viability Institute's Cornell Cooperative Extension Dairy Program.**
- **Urging the New York State Legislature to support the New York State Farm Viability Institute's Cornell Cooperative Extension Equine Program.**
- **Urging the New York State Legislature to support the State's Farmland Protection Program and Environmental Protection Fund.**

Mr. Wickerham said item one is the opposition to the Governor's plan to sweep \$1 million out of the snowmobile trail fund. The fund is used to groom trails and for safety for the snowmobilers. The entire fund comes from additional snowmobile registration fees.

The next three items are all items through Cornell Cooperative Extension, Farm Bureau and the other agricultural agencies. These are their top priorities and funding has been cut in the Governor's budget for the Dairy program, Equine program and the State Farmland Protection Program.

On a motion made by Mr. Grattidge, seconded by Mrs. Wormuth the above resolutions were approved unanimously.

PERSONNEL

- **Authorizing the Chairman to enter into a renewal agreement for Third Party Employer Liability for Workers Compensation at a premium cost of \$23,357.**
- **Authorizing County insurance coverage through May 8, 2011 at a total cost not to exceed \$574,439.**

Mr. Wickerham said the first item deals with the Third Party Employer Liability for Workers Compensation, which is the one that pays in the event the County is sued in a fortuitous manner. The premium will be \$23,357, which is about a \$2,200 reduction over the previous year. The county has not had a claim for least 20 years, he said.

Mr. Wickerham said every May 8th is the date for the County insurance coverage to be renewed. The provider, Cool Insurance has come in with the package of premiums, which is approximately \$200 less than last year. The total cost is \$574,439, which maintains all the coverage that is already in place. The county is in their second year of the agreement.

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

RACING

- **Urging the State of New York to resolve the issues of VLT operations in Aqueduct, to make statutory payments to the racing franchise until such time that the VLT's are operational, and to insure that NYC OTB is able to honor its financial obligations to the franchise.**

Mr. Wickerham said the concern is the long-term viability of Racing and Breeding in New York State, and the viability of the State budget since the State receives approximately \$100 million in revenues that they depend upon from racing.

Mr. Grattidge said the racing industry is at a critical junction right now, especially the New York Bred Program. If the State does not solve this problem as soon as possible, we are looking at a devastation of this whole industry, where they will move to Pennsylvania, New Jersey or Canada. The VLT is the easy choice in a way to fund the whole NYRA problem, he said.

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

PUBLIC HEALTH

- **Amending the 2009 contract with Shelters of Saratoga to access an additional \$466 in State Aid for client programming.**

- **Authorizing the Chairman to accept an additional \$5,256 in State Aid from the NYS Department of Health for the Rabies Program and amending the 2010 budget in relation thereto.**
- **Amending Resolution 205-09 to reflect the current charge for New York State cash assessment tax at Maplewood Manor from 6% to the actual tax assessment charge.**

Mr. Wickerham said the first item is money that the State has made available for the cost of living rates for direct care personnel in the amount of \$466. This will go directly to Shelters of Saratoga from the County, and will be an amendment to the 2009 contract.

The second item is additional money for the rabies program. The State grant was for \$5,256.

The third item is for new private pay rates that were set last year for Maplewood Manor. It is important to keep the private pay rate above the Medicaid rate because the county is paid based on the actual cost or the Medicaid rate, whichever is lower. In setting it up, it also includes the tax assessment charge that the State has on all revenues that go to Maplewood Manor.

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

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

- **Authorizing a water connection easement to the town of Ballston to allow for access to the Saratoga County Water line.**
- **Accepting the recommendation of CT Male Associates, P.C. to award the contract to the Mason Company for canine cages. Wainschaf Associates, Inc. for feline cages and Mason Company for isolation cages at a total cost of \$332,808.25.**

Mr. Wickeham said the first item is authorizing an easement or access over county properties to enable them to reach the water line.

The second item deals with the Animal Shelter. When the county awarded the contracts for the Animal Shelter they did not have a bid for the cages. The county was looking for isolation cages and canine cages. Two bids were received with the lowest proposal of \$192,518 from Mason Company for the canine and isolation cages. The lowest proposal on the feline cages was from Wainschaf Associates, Inc. for \$88,000.

On a motion made by Mr. Thompson, seconded by Mrs. Wormuth the above resolutions were approved unanimously.

PUBLIC WORKS

- **Authorizing the Chairman to enter into agreements to accept \$11,000 in Federal funding to cover engineering costs of the Geysers Road Bridge sidewalk.**
- **Authorizing the Chairman to enter into agreements to accept the easements obtained by NYSDOT for the reconstruction of CR 91 (Grooms Road and Riverview Road) in 1999.**

Mr. Wickerham said the first item has to do with the reconstruction of the Geysers Road Bridge. Part of the proposal is to add a sidewalk, which the City of Saratoga Springs has agreed to pay for. There will be additional engineering costs in the amount of \$11,000, with a 5% local share paid for by the City of Saratoga Springs in the amount of \$550.

The second item is the acceptance of easements from work that was done on Grooms Road/Riverview Road in 1999 under a federal program. At that time the State obtained property around the area that they needed for the reconstruction process. The county is responsible for maintaining the roadway; therefore, the state has turned the easements over to the county at no cost.

A motion was made by Mr. Sausville, seconded by Mr. Grattidge the above resolutions were approved unanimously.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- **Authorizing the Chairman to enter into a contract with Saratoga Economic Development Corporation for administering the Empire Zone Program at an annual cost of \$60,000.**

Mr. Wickerham said the county hired the Saratoga Economic Development Corporation to administer the Empire Zone program and provide staffing. Since its inception it has been funded with \$60,000.

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

SOCIAL PROGRAMS

- **Authorizing the Youth Bureau's 2010 funding applications and contracts.**

Mr. Wickerham said last year the Youth Bureau plan was adopted for 2010. This resolution funds all the applications and contracts for that. There have been cost cuts by the State, of 12%, bringing the total to be received this year to \$215,000.

On a motion made by Mr. Thompson, seconded by Mr. Sausville the above resolutions were approved unanimously.

LAW AND FINANCE

- **Authorizing the Chairman to enter into an agreement with New York State to accept a \$10,000 Legislative Grant from Senator Roy McDonald for the purchase of a hybrid vehicle.**

Mr. Wickerham said Senator McDonald has made available \$10,000 for the purchase of a hybrid vehicle, which was discussed by the Green Committee last year. One of the thoughts was when money was received the county would try out a hybrid vehicle. The vehicle will be used initially as a mail vehicle.

On a motion made by Mr. Grattidge, seconded by Mr. Sausville the above resolution was approved unanimously.

- **Authorizing the Chairman to apply for and accept the designation of Saratoga County as a Preserve American Community.**

Mr. Wickerham said once the county receives this designation, it will allow local Historians and historical agencies to apply for a variety of grants.

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

On a motion made by Mrs. Wormuth, seconded by Mr. Thompson the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Sansom