

Law and Finance Committee Minutes
August 10, 2016 – 4:00 p.m.

Present: Chairman Kinowski; Committee members John Collyer, Paul Lent, Jean Raymond, Kevin Tollisen, Matt Veitch; Supervisors Preston Allen, Art Johnson, Bill Peck, Tom Richardson, John Schopf, Tom Wood, and Chairman of the Board Mo Wright; Spencer Hellwig, County Administrator; Chad Cooke, Deputy County Administrator; Steve Dorsey, County Attorney; Sheriff Mike Zurlo; Craig Hayner, County Clerk; Brian O’Conor, County Auditor; Marcy McNamara, Personnel Director; Paige Hellwig, Personnel Intern; Dan Rourke, Sewer District Executive Director; Joanne Bosley, Real Property Tax Director; Tom Speziale, Public Works Deputy Commissioner; Jason Kemper, Planning Director; Caroline Ross, Planning Intern; Andrew Jarosh, County Treasurer; Catherine Duncan, Public Health Services Director.

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

On a motion made by Mr. Collyer, seconded by Mr. Veitch the minutes of the July 13, 2016 meeting were approved unanimously.

Mr. Hellwig presented the following:

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

On a motion was made by Mr. Tollisen, seconded by Mr. Lent the following resolutions were approved unanimously.

- Authorizing the Chair to enter into the necessary agreements to apply for, accept and administer a New York State snowmobile grant in aid program grant, and authorizing the issuance of a negative declaration under SEQRA.
- Rescind Resolution 104-2016 due to the Historic Hudson-Hoosic Rivers Partnership’s decision to purchase timber for the Gateway Visitors Center from the Timber Frame Guild.

Mr. Hellwig said the first item was for the annual snowmobile grant administration. This is funding that is passed through to the Saratoga County Association of Snowmobile Clubs who use the funds for various trail maintenance and other initiatives. The second item was a resolution that authorized a number of activities to take place relative to timbering of a County parcel and the use of that timber for the Gateway Visitors Center. The Historic Hudson Hoosic Rivers Partnership has since decided to purchase the timber from another provider. There were costs associated with the marking and preliminary steps which the County will be reimbursed for based on their decision to pursue another option.

EQUALIZATION & ASSESSMENT

On a motion was made by Mr. Collyer, seconded by Mr. Tollisen the following resolution was approved unanimously.

- Authorizing conveyance of a tax acquired parcel in the Town of Providence (\$7,966.21)

Mr. Hellwig said this is for delinquent property taxes for the years 2013-2016. The property owner is deceased so the estate will be paying the back taxes.

PUBLIC HEALTH

On a motion was made by Mr. Tollisen, seconded by Mr. Veitch the following resolutions were approved unanimously.

- Authorize acceptance of additional State aid from the NYS Office of Alcohol and Substance Abuse in the amount of \$786 for computer equipment and a 2% COLA for direct care and clinical staff.
- Authorize acceptance of additional State aid in the form of COLA for Children with Special Health Care Needs in the amount of \$2,327 for education and outreach material.
- Authorize acceptance of additional State aid in the form of COLA for the Immunization Action Plan in the amount of \$9,048 for the purchase of a TV and wall mount, advertising and educational and promotional materials.
- Authorize an agreement with the Research Foundation for SUNY in the amount of \$18,116 for the production of a Public Health live webcast.

Mr. Hellwig said the first item of \$786 will be split three ways between the Franklin Community Center, Albany Diocesan and Transitional Services for computer equipment and supported housing beds. Mr. Hellwig said the second and third items are for additional funding to be used for educational materials and various equipment purchases. He said the last item is an agreement with the Health Research Foundation of SUNY who will be producing a webcast on infectious diseases primarily Ebola and the Zika virus. This will be used almost exclusively by medical service providers to gain more information.

Mr. Hellwig added that upon review of the resolutions, it has reached a nuisance level with regards to the COLA's that are being received from the State. It's due to the fact the State budget comes out after the County Budget has already been adopted. What was once a handful of resolutions a year has become 30 or 40 a year. Staff will be taking a look at this to make it a more efficient process.

PUBLIC SAFETY

On a motion was made by Mr. Lent, seconded by Ms. Raymond the following resolution was approved unanimously.

- Authorize acceptance of an Aid to Prosecution Grant from the NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services in the amount of \$20,650.

Mr. Hellwig said this is funding received from the State of New York to offset the cost that the District Attorney's Office incurs as a result of the prosecution of violent felony cases.

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS

On a motion was made by Ms. Raymond, seconded by Mr. Tollisen the following resolutions were approved unanimously.

- Amending the 2016 Budget under Public Works to increase expenses and revenues by \$540,594 relevant to insurance proceeds for losses sustained and expenses increased associated with the “Mack Shack” Building fire.
- Authorize Contract with Munter Enterprises Inc., (\$700,264), Collett Mechanical (\$184,763), Family Danz Mechanical (\$194,828), and ARCON Construction and Management Services (\$177,550) for a total of \$1,257,405 relative to the construction of the Mack Shack.

Mr. Hellwig said the Department of Public Works did receive bid proposals from contractors relative to the construction of a new Mack Shack which burned last March. The bids came in significantly higher than the proceeds the County received from the insurance company. As a result, the County went back to NYMIR and they agreed to provide the additional funding. Originally the Board accepted \$671,000. The first resolution will allow for the additional funds to be placed in the budget. The second resolution will award the contracts to the successful bidders.

LEGISLATIVE & RESEARCH

On a motion was made by Mr. Veitch, seconded by Ms. Raymond the following resolutions were approved unanimously.

- Urging Governor Cuomo to sign into law the Public Defense Mandate Relief Act.
- Opposing the closure of the Nelson Avenue Extension Bridge.

Mr. Hellwig said the Public Defense Mandate Relief Act will require NYS to reimburse the Counties for the costs they incur related to indigent defense. The second resolution is expressing the Board’s opposition to the closure of the Nelson Avenue Extension Bridge over the Northway. This bridge connects the City of Saratoga Springs with the Town of Malta. Both communities have expressed their opposition to closing this down. It does have a significant impact on the residents that need to cross this bridge. He said Supervisor DeLucia provided a copy of the resolution that the Town of Malta passed. Mr. Veitch said the item was on the agenda for the next City Council meeting and said this is a County road with some County impact. Mr. Kinowski said the same issues were stated at his Town meeting and they would be considering a resolution as well.

Mr. Kinowski said he wanted to make a statement regarding the Property Tax Cap. He said every year about this time we all start thinking about a program that got shoved down our throats from the Governor down to the Towns that you need to meet a certain level of cap for your property taxes. In his Town for the last couple of years, they passed a local law to exceed the 2% cap. Everyone is under the assumption generally that it’s 2% and it’s not 2%. There is a formula that goes with this. The Town of Stillwater was affected by the GlobalFoundries PILOT which drove their taxes backwards. He added that climbing out of that was very tough. Now, as head of Law and Finance he said he would be helping out with the budget process for 2017. He took a look at the property tax issue and thought last year he might bring the subject up. He is asking the Supervisors in attendance to take a look at what it takes to exceed the property tax cap and why the County may have to do this. He doesn’t want Saratoga County to suffer the consequences of being good stewards of the public. He said we are a model for others to follow with the lowest taxes or if not one of the lowest in the State. He said it’s not possible to continue to do more with less. He said by passing the local law to exceed the tax cap, it gets the County past that persona. It is a law that has to be passed so the County can do a succinct budget process without a hammer over our head. Mr. Kinowski said what should be done is to follow a good budget model and a good budget process that has always been done in Saratoga County. He would like to have this out of the way while working on the coming year’s budget. He

said it's just a hurdle to get off the table. The tax cap is full of holes and has been since the day it was initiated. Mr. Kinowski said the information is on the website and encouraged all the Supervisors to read/review the cap. Ms. Raymond said she strongly agrees with him and added in the very small towns the Supervisors are also the Budget Officers. As she looks at next year's budget, the cap is actually less than three quarters of one percent and is not two percent at all. She added that County's like Saratoga that have been fiscally wise with not a lot of fat in their budget to begin with and are growing, we are being handcuffed into providing services for a growing population. The concept of having a cap makes sense but the cap should be on the tax rate not on the levy because the rate is what people pay. Ms. Raymond said in her opinion every town and every county should override the tax cap at their organizational meeting. She believes the intentions were good with the tax cap but the implementation was terrible.

On a motion made by Mr. Lent, seconded by Ms. Raymond the meeting was adjourned unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Pamela Wright, Clerk