

SPECIAL MEETING
September 10, 2019

Chairman Lawrence Dolhof called the meeting to order at 5 p.m.

Roll Call: All Legislators were present.

Chairman Dolhof led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

There were 14 persons present.

REPORT OF THE FINANCE AND RULES COMMITTEE:

The Finance and Rules Committee had met and recommended to waive the rules to allow action on any resolution presented late.

Signed by: Bryan Moser
Ronald Burns
Richard Chartrand
John Lehman
Thomas Osborne

Dated: September 10, 2019

Legislator Osborne made a motion to waive the rules, seconded by Legislator Burns, and carried.

Chairman Dolhof deferred public comment until later in the meeting. The floor was turned over to Legislator King to initiate discussion on the proposed new building project.

Legislator King asked his colleagues for a consensus for a new building whether at Outer Stowe Street or a location in downtown Lowville to enhance economic development utilizing the existing building design; or scrap the design and start over completely. The estimated cost to build the existing design at the Outer Stowe Street location is \$12.5 million, which could be downsized and/or built at another site. Legislator King opined a new building would solve a lot of problems.

Legislator Chartrand also inquired how many of his colleagues support a new building construction; and secondly the amount they are willing to commit to the project.

Legislator Burns would like to scrap the existing design and start over to address current needs. Legislator King inquired what cost limit the Board would commit?

Legislator Moser inferred support for a new building at Outer Stowe Street at the estimated \$12.5 million, as the lowest proposal asking why spend more?

Legislator King, again, urged his colleagues to express their opinions.

Legislator Moser made a motion to build a new building, seconded by Legislator King. Chairman Dolhof is uncomfortable with the existing design referencing changes since the 2012-2013 design was prepared. He would like to form an Ad Hoc Committee encompassing Legislators, Department Heads and community members. Legislator Moser reminded the Ad Hoc option had been previously posed and all Legislators expressed their desire to participate in the process.

Legislator Moser clarified his motion was merely to commit to new construction, while recognizing the location, size and specific formation were specific and additional considerations.

Legislator King cited distributed information and meetings held, understanding there may be design changes, while asserting "Let's go forward". There is no assurance that downsizing the design would equate savings. There are meetings, but no decisions, he complained.

Chairman Dolhof agrees with moving the process forward, while unsure whether to support new construction or renovate existing buildings, wanting more time to obtain information and deliberate.

Legislator Kulzer opposed renovating the 30-year old DSS building, urging his colleagues to indicate whether they favor a new building construction or not?

Legislator LaChausse is not in favor of any project until knowing the cost, mindful of taxpayers. He favors formation of an Ad Hoc Committee.

Legislator Moser invoked, he was elected to make these type decisions, while stating he had not heard any negative comments to-date.

Legislator Moroughan relayed that her district residents were not in favor of a new building, expressing opposition on their behalf.

Legislator Burns relayed that his community residents have spoken staunchly against a new building.

Legislators Lehman, Kulzer and King each relayed their communities being in favor of a new building.

Legislator King explained that windmill revenues could be allocated to pay for new building construction that would have a 70-100 year life. He declared he would not vote to increase taxes for a new building, while cautioning that future unknown and continually increasing building costs may deem construction unfeasible. The radio system was paid in full with windmill revenues, he reported, as was the Court House construction. A new building, he submits, would modernize and streamline County operations that would enhance efficiencies and lessen maintenance costs.

Legislator Lehman favored moving forward to decide a location and design that may be presented and refined by an Ad Hoc Committee.

Legislator King urged open discussion on all locations or altering the existing design, admittedly unsure of the ultimate cost.

Legislator Kulzer referred to a payment schedule formulated in March 2019 for a \$15 million project based on a three percent interest rate for a new building construction at the Outer Stowe Street site.

Legislator Osborne questioned the validity of the existing building design and the reason it wasn't built six years ago; further asking the need to relocate dispatch offices. As a member of the previous Board, Legislator King reported the radio communications project was deemed priority at that time and the cost of both was not feasible.

Legislator Moroughan asserted greater cost for monitoring female inmates if dually trained dispatchers/correction officers were removed from the jail. Legislator Moser said he would rather plan to accommodate dispatchers, concerned if the Commission of Corrections retracted the special waiver that allows the dual title.

Legislator King felt that forming an Ad Hoc Committee was premature; again, urging the Board to set cost parameters.

Legislator Moser urged a vote on his motion on the floor. Chairman Dolhof requested a roll call vote. The motion was defeated by a vote of 5 to 5. Legislators Chartrand, King, Kulzer, Lehman and Moser were in favor, with Legislators Burns, LaChausse, Moroughan, Osborne and Dolhof opposed.

Legislator Kulzer made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Legislator Burns. However, in consideration to provide an opportunity for public comments, Legislators Kulzers and Burns withdrew their motion.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR:

Mr. Michael Strife asked if the County had cash on hand? Whether the County had borrowed money from the Hospital? Whether there was outstanding debt on the Lewis County JCC Educational Center?

Legislator Moser reported \$800,000 annual windmill revenue could be used for prospective annual debt payments. Legislator King also said the State would reimburse 75% apportioned expense for space occupied for Social Services operations. County Attorney McNichol stated there is an outstanding loan owed to the Hospital. Legislator Moser reported the old Court House renovations as the only County building debt.

Mr. Strife continued his questioning," Is the DMV building leased?, or any other departments? Is there room at the Stowe Street site? If so, would the new parking lot and lighting be displaced? He suggests public access to factual data for information and education that may facilitate community support for the project. He gleaned a lot of disagreement amongst

Legislators unable to make a decision due to many unknown factors and most importantly concern for cost.

Legislators King and Moser each reiterated earlier points of discussion for Board deliberation, again, urging a vote to move the process forward, to facilitate factual information that could be presented to the public.

Chairman Dolhof felt a consensus to move forward was thwarted by the motion to adjourn.

Mr. Jimmy Jackson from southern Lewis County opined the windmill revenue would be better spent renovating existing structures than a new building construction. He adamantly stated, "The people don't want it"; concluding "The taxpayers in the County are already hurting bad enough".

Legislator King relayed general sentiment from the Village of Port Leyden and Town of Leyden residents who support a new building. Legislators Moser and King reiterated that land taxes would not be increased to pay for building construction, confidently assuring that windmill revenues would cover annual construction payments. Operational expenses are distinguished and attributable for any tax levy increase.

A vote on the motion to adjourn was then carried at 5:38 p.m. Legislator Chartrand was opposed.