

REGULAR MEETING
September 3, 2019

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

Roll Call: All Legislators were present.

Chairman Dolhof offered the Invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

There were 11 persons present.

Chairman Dolhof declared the August 6, 2019 meeting minutes approved by general consent.

REPORT OF THE FINANCE AND RULES COMMITTEE:

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

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

Dated: September 3, 2019

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

Chairman Dolhof opened the public hearing for comments on Local Law Introductory No. 3-2019 "Continuing An Additional Mortgage Tax for Mortgages on Real Property Situated in Lewis County". There was no one who wished to speak at this time.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR:

Mr. Charles Truax, Jr., a 15-year member of the Lewis County General Hospital Board of Managers, thanked the current and previous Legislative Boards for his appointment, terming it the most pleasurable of his 42 year career in the health care industry. Chairman Dolhof thanked Mr. Truax for his service.

PRESENTATION OF COMMUNICATIONS AND NOTICES:

Village of Harrisville Project Safe Community President Ann Hall penned a thank you note for the Board's approved County allocation for their initiative to purchase a laptop to help promote education and awareness of addiction issues in their community, and their goal to eventually build a youth community center.

The Board acknowledged receipt of resolutions adopted by the Franklin County Legislature urging the Governor and State Legislature to address the lack of available certified Early Intervention Program providers; and from the Schoharie County Legislature requesting State representatives for relief from mandatory recycling regulations.

REPORTS OF COUNTY OFFICERS AND DEPARTMENTS:

Legislators have received copies of the August Treasurer's report, Highway and Solid Waste Department audit reports; the 2020 Self-Insurance Plan Estimate and Apportionment of Expenses; and minutes of the 8/21/19 Youth Bureau Advisory Board and 5/23/19 Health Services Advisory Committee meetings.

James Richmire had submitted his July Sealer of Weights and Measures activity report that was placed on file with the Clerk of the Board.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES:

Legislator Bryan Moser, Chairman of the Finance and Rules Committee, reported the committee would revisit the tabled compensation plan for exempt employees at their next meeting. Proposed resolutions represent committee recommendations.

Legislator Jerry King, Chairman of the General Services Committee, referenced the space study completed by Bernier, Carr & Associates as well as DSS building upgrades and/or new construction. He invoked discussion on the various options. New construction based on the 2013 architectural plans to accommodate DSS and all currently leased departments is estimated at \$12.5 million vs. a building for DSS of \$6.5 million. Another consideration is whether to purchase a new property or remain at the Outer Stowe Street location.

Legislator Osborne referenced time elapsed since the plans were drawn inquiring whether more or less space may be needed. Legislator King referenced an updated study that indicates the space is adequate. Upgrading the existing DSS building to code compliance is estimated at \$750,000.

In response to Chairman Dolhof relative to a grant application, Legislator King referred to unknown grant funding while construction costs are escalating by approximately \$500,000 a year or currently \$4.5 million above the original bids. Legislator Dolhof asserted due diligence to determine current needs. Legislator King recommends either initiating identified building upgrades pursuant to architectural engineer recommendations or a new construction.

Legislator Chartrand reiterated earlier quests for a long-term master building plan that would encompass upgrades and/or new construction, attendant to a financial payment plan, considering revenue resources and current debt.

Legislator Kulzer referenced the \$48,000 architectural engineer strategic plan and a 5-year capital plan, quoting \$22 million to complete all building recommendations.

Legislator King submits a new building would address all space needs, ie. Office For Aging, DSS, Board of Elections, DMV, while reporting a \$200,000 annual capital allocation for a prospective highway building. DSS would occupy 47.5% of the building equating somewhere between \$600,000-\$700,000 annual State payments.

Legislator Kulzer recited from a prepared payment schedule for new construction an amount of \$611,000 annually for a 20-year bond or \$464,000 for a 30-year bond.

Legislator Moser expressed support for new construction, agreeing it would address DSS needs, as well as eliminate leased costs and concern for potential sale of those buildings. Moreover, he posed an initiative to research potential savings if Hospital and County paper products were purchased and stored in bulk.

Chairman Dolhof compared annual office rent of \$24,000 to a \$500,000 new construction to accommodate respective 2,000 sq. ft. space, being less than \$25,000 plus interest annual payments over 20 years.

Legislator King deems it more cost effective and financially feasible for all departments to be under one roof. Legislator Kulzer agreed, regardless of the chosen site, referencing annual savings of \$89,266 for terminated leases. Chairman Dolhof, again, asserted new construction cost of \$12.5 million with annual \$600,000 payments. Legislators Lehman and Kulzer each compared that with \$6.5 million to upgrade a 30-year old building for DSS, which Legislator King pointed out would additionally require relocation of the Office for Aging Department.

Legislator Moser iterated the previous Board's decision to defer the new building project in lieu of the radio and economic development initiatives, which have been completed. As a departure from six years ago, Legislator Kulzer voiced confidence in Hospital administration, and the facility's current favorable financial status.

Legislator Lehman would not support a new building unless a construction project engineer was hired.

Legislator LaChausse would not support a new building without knowing the tax levy impact.

Legislator Moser reported proposed architectural fees of \$744,930 for a new building based on the 2013 schematic design, which reflects credit of \$371,070 for previous schematic and design development phases; or \$1,013,040 for a modified version of the 2013 design at a new site not yet determined, reflecting a \$192,960 credit for previous design phases.

Considering general indications for further information and discussion, Legislator King made a motion to schedule a Special Meeting of the Board to be held September 10, 2019 at 5 p.m. for further discussion on the building project and specific sites, seconded by Legislator Moser and carried. Legislator King requested Treasurer Patricia O'Brien to prepare windmill revenue projections, and if possible, a cost allocation schedule from Venesky & Company, CPA's.

Legislator Richard Chartrand, Hospital Board of Manager's representative announced that Director of Rehabilitation Jennifer Vogt had been selected as the July employee-of-the-month and had been presented a plaque by the Board of Managers.

Lewis County General is one of five upstate New York hospitals designated as a critical access facility by each of the Centers For Medicare and Medicaid Services, which is designed to reduce the financial vulnerability of rural facilities and improve access to essential health care services. The Disproportionate Share Medicaid Reimbursement Program provides essential additional revenue to rural hospitals with a disproportionate share of Medicaid eligible patients.

Legislator Chartrand reported a gain of \$486,000 in July equating a year-to-date surplus of \$676,400. He urged those interested to reserve their seat for the 10/22/19 Breast Cancer Awareness dinner to be held at the Lowville Elks Lodge.

Hospital CEO Gerald Cayer reported endorsement by the Board of Managers to submit a Certificate of Need application to the NYSDOH for the Copenhagen Health Center, as well as the chosen architectural schematic floor plan to remain within the walls of the existing structure. The estimated \$350,000 to modernize the building will be allocated in the Hospital's 2020 capital budget. Recruitment has begun for a nurse practitioner to begin with the reopening of the clinic in the spring of 2020.

Mr. Cayer also reported construction of a helicopter landing zone on hospital property to replace the former Climax Manufacturing parking lot location. The site has been approved by Mercy Flight for evacuations and will be completed by the end of October for an estimated cost of \$12,000. The site will enable emergency personnel to transport patients to the waiting air carrier without assistance from ambulance, police or fire personnel, enhancing efficiency and lesser cost.

Mr. Cayer also reported completion of a "draft" 3-5 year strategic plan as a result of several months that will be reviewed and discussed by various groups, and final approval request from the Board of Managers. The final plan will also be presented to the Board of Legislators.

COUNTY MANAGER REPORT:

Ryan Piche reported continuing development of the 2020 Tentative County Budget, and being recently informed of pension rates set by the NYS Retirement System. The draft document will be prepared for initial Board deliberations in October.

Mr. Piche announced Information Technology Director Adam Zehr had won first place in his NYS weight lifting class competition and would advance to the World Championships in Europe.

COUNTY TREASURER REPORT:

Treasurer Patricia O'Brien recited the balances of the Special Legislative Contingency Fund - \$96,942.00; Contingency Fund-\$181,975.00; Capital Data Processing Fund- \$61,378.43

and Capital Equipment Fund - \$359,218.55, of which \$61,351.30 is the Highway portion; sales tax receipts of \$6,613,595.90 thru 7/31/19; and an Internal Service Fund balance of \$4,829,815.40 as of 6/30/2019.

In reference to the proposed Local Law, Elizabeth Miller, a local business owner, and on behalf of the Jefferson-Lewis Board of Realtors and NYS Association of Realtors, voiced objection to the additional one-quarter percent mortgage tax citing their concern for affordable home ownership. However, after Chairman Dolhof confirmed it was merely an extension of the existing level tax, Ms. Miller was pleased to learn it was not a new tax.

Chairman Dolhof then closed the public hearing.

REPORT OF THE FINANCE AND RULES COMMITTEE:

OTHER BUSINESS:

In response to Legislator King, Mr. Piche would clarify whether Highway Superintendent Warren Shaw was requesting funds to cover additional personnel expense.

Clerk of the Board Teresa Clark read a proclamation declared by Chairman Dolhof to recognize and urge participation at the 2019 "Lewis County Night Out" event to be held on 9/6/19 at the Fairgrounds.

Legislator King made a motion at 6:12 p.m. to enter a client privileged session with County Attorney Joan McNichol to discuss labor negotiations, seconded by Legislator Moser and carried. The session began at 6:18 p.m. after a short recess. At 6:42 p.m. Legislator Lehman made a motion to return to regular session, seconded by Legislator Moser and carried.

Legislator Moser made a motion to authorized Atty. McNichol to retain Attorney Alan Peterman of Barclay Damon, LLP as lead negotiator for Sheriff's Department Road Patrol Unit union negotiations, seconded by Legislator Chartrand and carried.

There being no other business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned on motion by Legislator Moser at 6:43 p.m., seconded by Legislator Lehman and carried.