

COUNTY GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

February 22, 2012

**PRESENT:**

Kevin McDonald, Chairman  
Ronald Knott  
Ellen Thruston  
Ray Staats  
Matt Murrell  
Tommas Garrick

**ABSENT:**

Jesse DeGroodt -notified  
Ed Cross - notified

**ALSO PRESENT:**

Rebecca Vinchiarello, Deputy Clerk  
Rob Fitzsimmons  
Ed Simonsen  
Ken Flood  
Jason Nastke  
Arnold Schneider  
Chairman Grattan  
Suzzette Booy  
Ken Flood  
Virginia Martin  
Ron Caponera

**PUBLIC: 1**

Chairman McDonald called the meeting to order at 5:03 PM.

**County Attorney – R. Fitzsimmons**

**Assigned Counsel** – Review of 2011 expenditures. R. Fitzsimmons predicts that reimbursements from the State will eventually end. Assigned Counsel costs in 2010 were \$ 190,000.00. In 2011 they were \$256,000.00. The County created a Conflict Defender Program to help curb these costs. The Alternate Conflict Defenders can report to this Committee if need be. They currently report to the Public Safety Committee. When asked if the Committee wanted the County Attorney's office to submit a monthly break down of Assigned Council costs they answered that at this point a summary of last year's costs would be sufficient.

**County Code** – The Columbia County Code book has not been updated since 1990. The County Attorney's Office is working on gathering documents to ship to General Code. Once they have received all local laws and resolutions for the time period 1991 – 2012 the company will provide a quote. R. Fitzsimmons requested permission to give General Code the needed material to obtain a quote. Motion to approve by R. Knott, seconded by T. Garrick, motion carried.

**Indigent Legal Services Fund** – The County Attorney's Office is working with the Public Defender and Conflict Defenders to compile the necessary information to file the 2011 Indigent Legal Services Fund Report. The fund has allocated \$151,744.00 for distribution to the County of Columbia in March 2012. A handout was given of what funding the County receives from the State. This will phase out in the next 3-5 years and become an unfunded mandate. \$15,000.00 was recently awarded to them from the State for this service.

**Planning – K. Flood**

**Resolution Request** - Appointment of Alice Platt and John Florio to the County Planning Board for a three year term. Motion to approve by R. Staats, seconded by R. Knott, motion carried. **Refer to Finance.**

**Resolution Request** - Appointment of Kathy Schneider to the Environmental Management Council. Motion to approve by R. Staats, seconded by M. Murell, motion carried. **Refer to Finance.**

**Environmental Management Council** - Report by Ed Simonsen, Chairman,

A list of current members of the EMC was passed around. There are currently two vacancies they could use assistance with as these vacancies prevent members from those communities from having input in the EMC. It was explained that they function under article 47 of NYS Environmental Law. They have a very large number of requirements.

A handout of the annual report for activities of the EMC was passed around. He would like the committee to read through this. He explained that although membership shrinks for various reasons, they have still been able to function and produce quality outcomes.

He would like the towns to consider Conservation Advisory Councils. These are permitted and titled by NYS Environmental Law. Responsibilities are decided by the Town.

He also requests that the towns become involved in Climate Smart Communities as conserving energy is extremely important. In the town of Kinderhook they are requiring provisions for cross access for example.

There committee meets the fourth Monday of each month at 7PM and interested Supervisors are encouraged to attend.

#### Tourism

##### Resolution Request - Approval of Travel/Dining Guide Publisher

In January they worked with D. Ames to issue an RFP. They received two bids. Luminary Publishing's bid was for \$29,000.00 with 65% of add sales going to the county. Media Tow's Bid was for \$36,885.00 with the same percentage of add sales going to the County. No one in the county chose to bid on this. There are currently no business in the County that have the staffing capability to sell the ads as well as print them. The Tourism Department has worked with both companies that bid on this project in the past. They were happy with both and so they went with the lowest bidder. Motion to approve the request by R. Staats, seconded by R. Knott, motion carried. Refer to Budget and Salary Review Committee, if approved, Refer to Finance.

Resolution Request - Authorization for the Chairman to sign 5311 Operating Assistance Agreement with NYS. This agreement goes through the year 2018. It is a Federal Transit operation assistance agreement. The Federal Government provides assistance with unfunded deficit in the county. Our deficit for 2012 is \$83,400.00 of which the Federal share would cover \$41,700.00. There is an escape clause. Transportation routes were discussed. K. Flood suggested looking into the idea of local business contributing to a run as it would help their business sales. Motion to approve the request of the 5311 Operating Assistance Agreement with NYS by R. Knott, seconded by E. Thurston, motion carried. Refer to Finance.

K. Flood added that they received an MOU to be executed with Hudson Valley Greenway for a small GIS training program, in conjunction with the land conservancy. The Chairman can now take any actions to secure the grant.

#### Real Property – S. Booy

Conference Objective Form- NYS Assessor Association for Assessors at the Columbia-Greene Community College. "Communications & Public Relations", will be held on 3/2/2012. One person attending at a cost of \$95.00. Remaining budget for Education: \$1,275. Motion to approve by R. Staats, seconded by M. Murell, motion carried.

An Event Feedback Form was submitted for the NYS Association of County Directors of Real Property Tax Service's Winter Workshop that S. Booy attended on January 31st & February 1st in Albany.

The Real Property Department Annual Report was submitted. A motion to accept this report will be needed next month. Highlights:

All assessment rolls are on line.

Roughly \$60,000.00 tax bills are produced in their office.

S. Booy likes to keep up with education and take advantage of local education opportunities for tax collectors.

Equalization rates – Three municipalities conducted reevaluations. Twelve of our nineteen municipalities received 100% equalization rates.

Total revenue in their department was around \$27,000.00.

S. Booy then announced that there is a proposed rules amendment in the State Office of Real Property. They are proposing to change education requirements for assessors. Required continuing education credits would decrease from twenty-four to twelve annually. This is in a public comment period right now. All assessors have been notified.

S. Booy would be willing to conduct a training for new Supervisors on her Department next election cycle.

#### Sealer of Weights and Measurers – A. Schneider

The monthly report was distributed to the Committee.

He has addressed some penalties. Ethanol percentages were discussed. Motion to approve the January 2012, November 2011, and December 2011 monthly reports by M. Murell, seconded by E. Thurston, motion carried.

**Board of Elections – J. Nastke & V. Martin**

**Resolution Request** – Authorization to extend the Education and Training Contract #T002535 and Poll Site Access from April 1 2012-March 31, 2013.

**Resolution Request** – Authorization to enter into Contract # T002651 from April, 1 2012-March 31, 2013 which is a continuation of an existing Poll Site Access Improvement Grant. Motion to approve the requested resolutions by R. Knott, seconded by E. Thurston, motion carried. **Refer to Finance.**

**Resolution Request** - Authorization to enter into contract #T003266, January 1, 2012 – September 30, 2016, which is a federal Voting Access for Individuals with Disabilities (VOTE)- Poling Place Access Improvement grant in the amount of \$2,522.00. Motion to approve by T. Garrick, seconded by R. Staats, motion carried. **Refer to Finance.**

**Resolution Request** – Authorization to adopt the attached schedule of election worker payments for primary and general elections in 2012. Motion to approve by T. Garrick, seconded by M. Murell, motion carried. **Refer to Budget and Salary Review Committee, if approved, Refer to Finance.**

Discussion ensued on upcoming Special Elections and how they will potentially effect the BOE as they were not all budgeted for.

The auditing of the Election Results was briefly discussed. The Commissioners agree that a different audit process should eventually be used, but they need to take time to figure this as it is a complicated process.

**Voting Machine Storage and Work area –**

The County Clerk is taking over the basement at 325 Columbia Street which is where the voting machines are currently stored. The BOE would like the machines moved into the basement at 401 State St. The basement would need to be organized, cleaned and pained, etc. Advantages of this location were discussed, such as having the machines onsite, being able to provide election workers work space near the machines, and not having to pay additional rent.

They have \$70,000.00 of machine funding from the Federal Government. They would like to put a lift in the basement to assist with the moving of the machines in and out of the basement. All of this cost or a majority of it can be covered through HAVA funds. There isn't much other use for these funds at this point. If they don't lose the funds they can lose them. The funds are not in house at this time. They need to pre-clear them first with the State as the State holds the funds. The County is guaranteed this money if the State approves it. When a resolution is submitted it should state that authorization to use these funds is contingent upon approval by the State. J. Nastke will get a budget together for the Committee for his project. Heating and cooling of the basement needs to be discussed. Motion to move forward with investigation into this project by R. Staats, seconded by T. Garrick, motion carried.

**Resolution Request** – Authorizing the purchase of a printer at a cost not to exceed \$40,000.00 and authorizing the Treasurer/Controller to transfer needed funds from the .4 account to the .2 account. This printer will pay for itself in one year. It is a specialty printer used for ballot printing.

Motion to approve by T. Garrick, seconded by E. Thurston, motion carried. **Refer to Budget and Salary Review Committee, if approved, Refer to Finance.**

**Controller – R. Caponera**

Request to move into EXECUTIVE SESSION AT 6:48 by R. Staats, seconded by R. Knott, motion carried.

**REASON:** To Discuss Personnel

Motion to return to REGULAR SESSION at 6:53PM by R. Staats, seconded by R. Knott, motion carried.

**Resolution Request-** Authorizing the transfer of the Accounts Payable Department to the Controller/Auditor's Department. Motion to approve by R. Staats, seconded by M. Murell, motion carried. **Refer to Budget and Salary Review Committee, if approved, Refer to Finance.**

With no further business there was a motion to adjourn at 6:54PM by T. Garrick, seconded by R. Knott, motion carried.

**COUNTY GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE**

---

**Kevin McDonald, Chairman**

---

**Ronald Knott**

---

**Edward Cross**

---

**Jesse DeGroot**

---

**Thomas Garrick**

---

**Ray Staats**

---

**Matt Murell**

---

**Ellen Thurston**