

COUNTY OF OSWEGO
COMMUNITY AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
May 27, 2009

PRESENT:

Kevin Gardner, Chair
Jack Beckwith, Vice Chair
Clayton Brewer
Mary Flett
Robert Hayes
Louella LeClair
Phillip Vasho

MEDIA:

Aaron Curtis, Palladium Times

STAFF/GUESTS

Philip Church, County Administrator
Colleen Bacon, Motor Vehicle Bureau Supervisor
Art Gearsbeck, Legislator
David Hastings, Director, Real Property Tax
Richard Hogan, Director of Central Services
Margaret Kastler, Legislator
John Kruk, County Treasurer
Frances Lanigan, Commissioner of Social Services
Barry Leemann, Chairman, Legislature
Fred Maxon, Purchasing Director
Jeanette Woodland, Administrative Secretary

Attendance:

Committee Chair Gardner called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

Old Business:

Committee Chair Gardner asked for a motion to approve the April 29, 2009, minutes. David Hastings, Director, Real Property advised that there was a correction to the minutes. Under Real Property Tax Services, Item B., fourth paragraph. Director Hastings added that Towns cannot roll back assessments but can petition the State Legislature. He noted only one done in Oswego County history. The second sentence should read *He noted only one done in New York State history.*

Motion: To approve minutes as corrected, by Legislator LeClair.

Second: Legislator Flett

Vote: All in favor.

Committee Business:

1. Central Services

A. Technology Purchase – Social Services – Employment and Training

Richard Hogan, Director of Central Services, brought forward a request to purchase computer equipment. Frances Lanigan, Commissioner of Social Services, advised that this request is for laptops and other technology equipment to be used for training in the career center at the Employment and Training Center in Fulton. The cost for the purchases will be covered through the Technology Grant funding under the Federal Workforce Investment Act and are 100 percent Federal funds.

Motion: Legislator Brewer made a motion to approve the request to purchase computer equipment for the Department of Social Services – Employment and Training Division, as presented.

Second: Legislator Vasho

Vote: All in favor

Motion Carried.

2. Real Property

A. Resolution – Buyback of Tax Delinquent Property

David Hastings, Director of Real Property Tax, advised that there are six buybacks this month totaling \$40,358.47. Five are to prior owners and one is to a prior owner designee.

Motion: Legislator Beckwith made a motion to accept purchase by prior owners for back taxes in the entire amount.

Second: Legislator LeClair

Vote: All in favor.

Motion Carried.

B. Property Exemption Request

David Hastings, Director of Real Property Tax, advised that there are two exemption requests.

1. Leg. Chairman Barry Leemann submitted a request for exemption from the 2009 auction for a property in his district. The Robert J. Hart, Jr. estate – Tax Map #155.00-01-14.01 property in the Town of Parish. Total amount due \$14,588.63.

Motion: Legislator Beckwith made a motion to approve the property exemption request, as presented.

Second: Legislator Vasho

Vote: All in favor.

Motion Carried.

2. Legislator Dan Chalifoux submitted a request for exemption from the 2009 auction for a property in his district. The Joseph Smegelsky estate – Tax Map #183.00-03-24. Total amount due \$15,512.30. property in the Town of Oswego. County treasurer John Kruk advised that Mr. Smegelsky is presently on social security disability and his wife is on Workers' Compensation.

Motion: Legislator Vasho made a motion to approve the property exemption request, as presented.

Second: Legislator Beckwith

Vote: All in favor.

Motion Carried.

Director Hastings advised that in September the tax amounts would increase as school taxes will be added.

C. Conveyance to Clear Title

Director Hastings advised Committee members of a property, once owned by Raymond Landphere, in which parts had been deeded off. Mr. Landphere, who is now deceased, lived in a house on a section of the property. Last year the county took title to the property owned by John Johnson for unpaid taxes; this property was formerly owned by Richard and Jane Merritt. The tax map and assessment records correctly show the Johnson property but the abstract still indicates ownership to the erroneously conveyed Landphere parcel. Mr. Landphere's estate is being managed by Eugene Breezee. Mr. Breezee is attempting to clear the title to the Landphere property. He is aware that a tax sale of the Johnson property is likely. Recommendation by Mr. Hastings is that the County provide a quit claim deed to the

Landphere Estate for the portion of property (where home and outbuildings are situated) prior to tax sale. The conveyance to clear title will not be of any cost to the County.

Motion: Legislator Beckwith made a motion that the County provides a quit claim to the Landphere Estate, as presented.

Second: Legislator Vasho

Vote: All in favor.

Motion Carried.

D. New Tax Bill – Discussion

Kevin Gardner, Chair, said that the County is looking at designing a tax bill that is easier to read. David Hastings advised that he has e-mailed different counties asking for samples of bills that they use and will ask other county directors their experience with their tax bills and what they feel has worked for them. He will look at what he receives, sort out, and come back to committee with his findings. County Administrator Church suggested that in addition that the Public Information Officer, Leg. Gardner and he are involved in looking at what comes in.

County Administrator Church mentioned to Committee members that at the Strategic Planning and Government Committee Leg. Walker asked that the County remove the \$10 fee on motor vehicle use tax, but in doing so the County would lose roughly three quarters of a million dollars. Legislator Vasho suggested that this subject be referred to next month's meeting with County Clerk George Williams in attendance.

Adjournment

Motion: Legislator Vasho motioned to adjourn the meeting at 2:50 p.m.

Second: Legislator Brewer

Vote: All in favor.

Motion Carried.