

CONSOLIDATION & EFFICIENCIES AD HOC COMMITTEE
APRIL 30, 2014
NOT APPROVED

Committee Members Present: J. Adams, M. Alger, K. Dirlam, D. Edwards, R. Heineman, J. Herman, C. Jessup, K. LaForge, R. Oakerson Absent: C. Clark

Others Present: S. Decker, D. Healy, R. Hollis

Media Present: No media present

Call to Order The meeting was called to order at 3:33 p.m. by Consolidation & Efficiencies Ad Hoc Committee Chairman Kevin LaForge.

Review of Prior Meetings

Committee Chairman Kevin LaForge asked Jodi Adams to give an overview of the committee's focus, including water/sewer, purchasing, and the land bank. The overall desire of the group is to improve systems and save taxpayer dollars, utilizing our resources as well as possible. Legislator LaForge remarked on a meeting he and Mrs. Adams had with Stella Dewey who purchases office supplies for the County to discuss ways in which the purchase process could be changed for more efficiency and cost savings.

Water, Sewer Overview

Discussion was had about the current water/sewer systems around the County. Concern was expressed over the lack of qualified people to operate the current systems partially due to retirement of some of the operators. Jamie Herman who works for the New York Rural Water Association, and Dave Edwards who recently retired as the operator of the Caneadea water/sewer treatment plant located in Houghton, were both present. Both were asked to serve on the committee because of their expertise in this area. Mr. Edwards explained that Caneadea and Hume both had operators retire at the same time. Belfast's operator is also nearing retirement. Hume is currently purchasing their water from Caneadea, and Belfast is purchasing some of their water from Caneadea. Mr. Herman added that 85 percent of the operators will be eligible to retire in the next five years. He expressed his concern over the lack of operators saying, "There is a minimum of one year of training, plus a course, and a final exam to become certified." Mr. Edwards added that the pass rate when he began was around 97 percent, currently the pass rate is around 47 percent. Mr. Herman stated, "The sharing of employees is crucial because of the lack of certified operators." He gave an example of a town having to hire a contractor to train the town's operator. There was no backup. He feels that we need to get to where everyone is sharing more. Mr. Edwards added that if there is a sewer plant, two operators are required. The committee discussed putting together by town a list of the need for operators to determine how severe the

problem is. Mr. Dirlam questioned if each town must have a different certified operator, or if it would be possible for a couple of operators to oversee multiple towns/systems. Mr. Edwards referred to the current arrangement between Caneadea and Hume. The group continued to discuss the possibility of merging several towns together. Some concern was expressed over the responsibility and liability that places on the operator, and whether they would feel comfortable taking responsibility of a system that has not been kept in good condition or that they are familiar with. They discussed whether funding would be available to link systems together. Politically it may be a challenge to get towns to agree to shared service as some have invested a great deal into their own systems already. Mr. Edwards mentioned that Caneadea is selling water to Hume for less than Hume was able to make it themselves. Unfortunately Hume spent a great deal of money on a system that is now sitting. The idea of having one County run system was discussed. Having so many operators retiring, it may be a good time to look into this possibility. Mr. Herman feels this type of system would allow for more consistent maintenance. Mr. Edwards noted that from town to town, quality of supplies is not consistent under the current arrangement. Mr. Herman mentioned NYWARN (New York Water and Waste Water Response Network) as a great place for towns to start. It's a voluntary program that helps systems to work together. The group again discussed the difficulty of getting towns to work together, citing revenue as an example. Mr. Herman noted that for many towns, water is a cash cow. Town Supervisors may not want to get rid of their systems. Mr. LaForge responded, "If they don't have anyone to run their system, they aren't going to have one." The group then discussed why there is a lack of certified operators. Mr. Edwards feels schools aren't pushing it as a career, and kids aren't really interested in it. Mr. Herman noted that because of the 24-hour responsibility, many people aren't interested. There's also a huge responsibility and if mistakes are made, you can be arrested. Mr. Edwards agreed that the responsibility is huge.

Purchasing

Mr. LaForge updated the group on the meeting he and Mrs. Adams had with Stella Dewey about the current purchasing process. Mr. LaForge feels a more centralized purchasing system would be beneficial. Mrs. Adams mentioned SAMPO which is a state purchasing association the County could join. The cost is \$50 for a membership. They then discussed whether it would be feasible to include towns in some sort of centralized purchasing system.

Land Bank

Mr. LaForge gave some background on land banks. Basically it is an opportunity to address the issue of distressed properties in the County. Seed money would be used to rehabilitate property rather than sending it to the tax auction. Proceeds from the sale of the property would then be used to fund additional property rehabilitation projects. It would increase assessment. Possibly Alfred State or BOCES could assist with free labor.

Streamline Local Judicial System

Mr. LaForge asked Mr. Heineman about the possibility of creating judicial districts rather than having town/village courts. He questioned if legislation existed for this. Mr. Heineman responded that he would look into this.

Good of the Order

Mr. Oakerson mentioned that he had a Houghton College student who was eager to work with this group possibly as an intern with the County Planner, or in the County Administrator's Office.

Mr. LaForge announced the next meeting would take place on May 28th at 3:30 p.m.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 4:44 p.m. following a motion by Robert Heineman, seconded by Mitch Alger, and carried.

Respectfully Submitted,
Sarah M. Decker, Journal Clerk/Deputy Clerk of the Board
Allegany County Board of Legislators

CONSOLIDATION & EFFICIENCIES AD HOC COMMITTEE
MAY 28, 2014
NOT APPROVED

Committee Members Present: K. LaForge, J. Adams, K. Dirlam, D. Edwards, R. Heineman, J. Herman, C. Jessup, R. Oakerson (Absent: M. Alger, C. Clark)

Others Present: L. Ballengee, Darwin Fanton, J. Fiato, T. Hull, B. Riehle, C. Santora

Media Present: No media present

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 3:40 p.m. by Consolidation & Efficiencies Ad Hoc Committee Chairman Kevin LaForge

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Mr. Heineman, seconded by Legislator Jessup, and carried to approve the Consolidation & Efficiencies Ad Hoc Committee minutes of April 30, 2014.

State of Allegany County Water and Sewer System Personnel

Dave Edwards and Jamie Herman conducted a survey of Allegany County Water and Wastewater System personnel with the following results: There are 18 community water systems (two of which are not municipal) and nine wastewater systems. There are 38 certified water operators; of those, 28 (73 percent) are eligible to retire in 10 years or less. There are 13 wastewater operators; of those, 11 (85 percent) are eligible to retire in 10 years or less. This creates a potential crisis for the County. Water and wastewater systems are becoming more complex to operate, requiring more skilled labor than has been necessary to this point. Because of the need for an increased skill level, candidates will need more education than in the past. As a result of the "trickle down" effect, salaries would need to be in line with the level of education, probably necessitating an increase in salary and benefit levels. It was suggested that perhaps some of these systems, particularly if the districts are contiguous (although at this time there is no regulation governing this), could be joined to cut back on the number of operators needed. However, it was stated that operators do need to be within one hour of their systems in case of an emergency. Additionally, wastewater system operators need to be onsite at least three hours per day which would, of necessity, limit the number of districts that could be combined. It was also noted that most municipalities with water systems and/or wastewater systems have only one operator per system because they cannot afford to hire more. It was further noted that the ideal would be to have two operators per system. Although the County might be the only entity able to tie these districts together, it was speculated that some districts might be resistant to such a proposal. Mr. Heineman noted that having a map showing the districts and the survey numbers would be helpful; Mr. Dirlam will work on putting one together. Mr. Oakerson also added that if the County took on the task of having several water and wastewater system operators under its jurisdiction, then it would also need to have a supervisor with at least the same credentials as the operators to be able to supervise effectively, and that the supervisor should probably be hired at a higher pay rate than the operators, adding more expense to the project. It was decided that Mr. Edwards and Mr. Herman would add to their research by determining the current costs for salaries and benefits of the operators throughout the County at this time.

Another issue in the original survey was the debt service. Seven water systems have significant (\$1 million and more) debt; three have moderate debt; and eight have minimal debt. Of the wastewater systems, three have significant debt, and six have moderate debt. Research would need to be conducted to determine how the debt load would be handled should a consolidation of efforts be proposed or achieved. Once again, the possibility of joint purchasing and/or a central warehouse met with mixed reviews by the operators surveyed. It was determined that the additional research mentioned above would help with future decision making.

Purchasing Update

Jodi Adams updated the Committee on her work regarding purchasing, saying that Stella Dewey and she have joined the New York State Association of Municipal Purchasing Officials (SAMPO), a resource for public procurement. Ms. Adams will keep Committee members apprised of purchasing information from SAMPO. She added that Legislator LaForge and she met with Guy James, Dean Scholes, and Yvonne Marks from the Public Works Department and discussed the building and grounds maintenance supplies and purchasing procedures. Due to increase in quantity and cost some supplies may require bidding according to procurement regulations. "Piggy backing" on other County bid lists could be beneficial but would require more information and legal consultation.

Land Bank

Kier Dirlam and Ms. Adams also distributed handouts regarding land banks. The first gave an overview of the Chautauqua County Land Bank. Chautauqua County, in an effort to address the increase in the number of vacant and abandoned properties, established a trust fund and a trust fund task force to deal with that problem. In its 2011 comprehensive plan, Chautauqua County also planned to investigate land banking opportunities. The County then pursued designation as one of New York State's 10 Land Banks. In May 2012, Chautauqua County Land Bank Corporation, along with four other land banks in NYS, was approved by Empire State Development.

Ms. Adams went on to say that currently there are 10 land bank "slots" in New York State; nine of them are filled. The 10th space remains open, with applications being accepted until the remaining spot is filled. Steve Gawlik, Empire State Development Senior Counsel told Ms. Adams that he is aware of two parties currently interested in start-up programs. He also said there is a proposal from the Attorney General's Office to double the number of land banks to 20. The document Ms. Adams distributed included Land Bank Approval Guidelines for the Committee to review in order to determine how to proceed.

Mr. Oakerson again raised a question: if it is feasible to buy these properties at a tax sale and "flip" them, why are there no private entrepreneurs doing that in the County? Legislator LaForge said he didn't have enough information to answer that question, and would look forward to hearing what representatives from Chautauqua County had to say at the June 9 Committee of the Whole meeting to which they have been invited. He added that potential free labor from the local BOCES and/or Alfred State would be helpful should Allegany County apply and be approved for Land Bank status.

Governor Cuomo's Rebate Program

Wellsville Town Supervisor Darwin Fanton had two issues he wanted to bring before the Committee. First, he wondered if this Committee is looking at consolidation from a total county standpoint in relation to the municipalities themselves, because, he said, if he understands the issue correctly, municipalities can also try to do a consolidation effort on their own. For example, he said, the Town and Village of Wellsville can look at other areas besides water and sewer in relation to this program, but they need to know what the County will try to encompass before they figure out what to pursue. He also wanted to know what the criteria are in order to take advantage of past consolidation efforts. He wondered that if the "look back" is one year, then, he said, they could take advantage of consolidations that have already been done, put a dollar value on them, and qualify in the short term. But if the County is working on a long-term program, he wasn't sure if it will be completed in time to get the 2016 benefits. Mr. Fanton wants to be able to determine if, as town supervisor, he needs to pursue the consolidation opportunity on behalf of the Town of Wellsville in order to take advantage of the program, but he doesn't want to duplicate the County's efforts. Legislator LaForge noted that he could not address Mr. Fanton's concerns at this point because right now, we do not know how far we will be allowed to "look back" in order to use consolidation efforts for the rebate. Mr. Fanton added that there is a "ton of stuff" the Village and Town of Wellsville have consolidated that won't be eligible because it was done too long ago, and the clock continues to tick. There was much discussion, but the group could not come to a resolution because the details are not available yet. It was noted that this committee would be a good clearinghouse once it knows the specifics of the rebate plan. Mr. Dirlam suggested some areas that might be achievable, including assessors, code enforcement, judges, water and sewers. He added that if anyone has any thoughts about what can be done, the County is open to possibilities. He was asked if there is a document that outlines what's been done already. He was told that official meeting minutes exist only for the previous month's meeting thus far. However, he will be added to the distribution list for those minutes. Legislator LaForge said that unfortunately we don't know enough about this thing [rebate program], but he can understand your [Mr. Fanton's] need for knowing. Mr. Heineman had some information regarding a New York State study done several years ago which resulted in a recommendation to Governor Cuomo to set up county-wide judicial districts, but the state would not fund centralized court houses. The respective counties would need to fund any changes. But, he said, he never heard any follow up about it. He added that only two counties in the state have district courts—Suffolk and Nassau. He went on to say there must be a referendum by the people who are going to be consolidated, and that consolidation could be done for an entire county or just parts of counties although those parts must be contiguous. According to the document he referenced, the terms of judges would be six years and the judges must be residents of the districts over which they preside. He added that the Legislature could disband the districts anytime they want without a referendum. When asked, Mr. Heineman said that the qualifications of judges were not spelled out in the document, but it was noted that if professional lawyers were chosen as judges over JPs, then compensation costs would also rise.

Good of the Order

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 25, 2014.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 4:50 p.m. following a motion by Mr. Edwards, seconded by Legislator Jessup, and carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Cynthia Santora, Secretary to the Clerk of the Board
Allegany County Board of Legislators

CONSOLIDATION & EFFICIENCIES AD HOC COMMITTEE
JUNE 25, 2014
NOT APPROVED

Committee Members Present: K. LaForge, M. Alger, D. Edwards, C. Jessup, R. Oakerson
(Absent: J. Adams, C. Clark, K. Dirlam, R. Heineman, J. Herman)

Others Present: Darwin Fanton, T. Hull, B. Riehle, T. Ross, C. Santora

Media Present: B. Quinn, *Wellsville Daily Reporter*

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 3:30 p.m. by Consolidation & Efficiencies Ad Hoc Committee Chairman Kevin LaForge

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Mr. Edwards, seconded by Legislator Jessup, and carried to approve the Consolidation & Efficiencies Ad Hoc Committee minutes of May 28, 2014.

State of Our Water and Sewer System Personnel-Dave Edwards, Jamie Herman

Legislator LaForge began the meeting by reiterating the current shortage of water and sewer operators in the County and that this need will only become greater when the incumbents begin to retire. He said he would like to develop a solid proposal for operations sharing in the County in order to take such a document to the towns and villages for consideration. He said that County Planner Kier Dirlam believes this is something he can do with the help from Mr. Oakerson's course intern who will return in late August. Legislator LaForge also said he would like to convene a subcommittee of Mr. Edwards, Mr. Herman, Mr. Hull, and himself to create a framework to take to the various water and sewer supervisors to determine a direction in which to proceed. Mr. Hull pointed out that this is a good idea which is needed sooner rather than later.

Purchasing Update-Jodi Adams

Ms. Adams was unable to attend the meeting. There was no update given.

Land Bank

County Administrator Mitch Alger presented the PowerPoint presentation which accompanied the discussion at a recent Committee of the Whole meeting where representatives from Chautauqua County gave an overview of their Land Bank Program. Legislator LaForge noted that New York State currently allows for 10 Land Banks, but that there is a potential that 10 more may be approved. He also said that Chautauqua County is the only rural area that has been granted a Land Bank. Many of the issues that faced Chautauqua County, such as population loss, weak economic conditions, and some deteriorating properties are also common in Allegany County. According to the PowerPoint presentation, Chautauqua County believes that the current tax sale process is becoming outdated and that the declining housing stock should be considered an opportunity to invest, manage, and leverage. They believe that vacant properties are essential to the economy through strategic reuse. Land banks aim to convert

vacant properties that have been neglected into productive use, thereby transforming neighborhood liabilities into assets. Abandoned properties dilute the real estate market, invite crime, incur public expense, and discourage neighborhood investment. Land banking reduces blight, stems the tide of serial foreclosures, and right-sizes the market. The benefits to land banking include eliminating barriers to redevelopment, reducing the cost burden to municipalities, managing and repurposing inventory, transferring properties in a way that supports community needs and priorities, encouraging neighborhood reinvestment, generating tax income for local governments, spurring investment, facilitating in-fill development, and preserving open space. To accomplish this, Chautauqua County created a new paradigm for how foreclosed properties are managed there to reverse the trend of further deterioration of housing and commercial stock. In order to do so, the County acquires foreclosed properties with strategic value pre- and post-auction; they enter into negotiated sales with developers/buyer who submits the best plan (highest proposed investment into property, not the highest purchase price; end use; and alignment to community plans and goals). Chautauqua County has also classified properties for purposes of its acquisition policy to help the program sustain itself. Following the presentation, it was noted that Allegany County does not frequently have what Chautauqua County classifies as "A: level properties in its tax sales; i.e., those in average or better condition, but more typically see "B" properties (i.e., those with some deterioration but still a solid structure) or "C" properties (i.e., those in poor condition which would be prohibitively expensive to renovate). However, this might still be a viable program to investigate further.

Governor Cuomo's Refund Program

County Administrator Alger discussed the potential impact of the Governor's property tax freeze. He shared a power point that was given to the NYSAC board on June 12.

Good of the Order

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 30, at 3:30 p.m. in the Legislative Chambers.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 4:15 p.m. following a motion by Legislator Jessup, seconded by Mr. Edwards, and carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Cynthia Santora, Secretary to the Clerk of the Board
Allegany County Board of Legislators

CONSOLIDATION & EFFICIENCIES AD HOC COMMITTEE
July 30, 2014

**** NOT APPROVED ****

Committee Members Present: K. LaForge, J. Adams, M. Alger, C. Clark, K. Dirlam, D. Edwards, R. Heineman, C. Jessup, C. Crandall (Absent: J. Herman, R. Oakerson)

Others Present: Darwin Fanton, T. Hull, C. Knapp, B. Riehle, T. Ross, C. Santora

Media Present: No media present

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 3:30 p.m. by Consolidation & Efficiencies Ad Hoc Committee Chairman Kevin LaForge

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Legislator Jessup, seconded by Dr. Heineman, and carried to approve the Consolidation & Efficiencies Ad Hoc Committee minutes of June 25, 2014.

Water, Sewer Initiative

Visit to the Wayne County Water and Sewer Authority (www.wcwsa.org)

Legislator Chuck Jessup and Clerk of the Board Brenda Rigby Riehle gave a brief report on their visit to Wayne County. That report included a brief history of the Wayne County Water and Sewer Authority which noted that the County began exploring the possibility of a centralized water system in the early 1970s. The initial studies conducted by Wayne County yielded no results. In 1985, the studies were reevaluated and a new study recommended the development of a Water Authority to coordinate and manage the consolidation of supply and transmission systems and plan future improvements that would improve water service in the County. The Wayne County Water Authority was created by special state legislation in 1987. A subsequent amendment provided for a "sewer" designation, thereby creating the Wayne County Water and Sewer Authority. The Authority currently operates and maintains water systems which supply water within the Towns of Macedon, Walworth, Palmyra, Marion, Arcadia, Lyons, Butler, Huron, Sodus, and Wolcott. The Authority also supplies water on a wholesale basis to the Villages of Macedon and Lyons and the Cayuga County Water and Sewer Authority. The facilities in the water system are either owned by the Authority or leased from other municipalities or water districts. The Authority operates, receives all water revenues from, maintains and pays the operation and maintenance expenses of any such leased facilities. Municipalities and water districts which own any part of the water system retain full responsibility for paying the capital debt service for such facilities. Ms. Riehle indicated that Executive Director Martin Aman would be happy to present to the Board or any other group who desires this information. She added that he said the most difficult part is keeping track of new regulations and requirements for water and waste water treatment systems. During the discussion, it was noted that the State no longer approves "Authorities," but that water and sewer "Districts" are now the key words. Some of the topics discussed included the pros and cons of a county-wide system such as the one described above. One of the advantages, it was felt, would be some cost savings because each municipality would not need its own operators, and few could continue to operate on their own. Additionally, this plan could perhaps fit into the shared services model presented by the Governor. It was noted that there would be three primary aspects to be considered: operations, repair and maintenance, and capital projects. County Treasurer Terri Ross noted that the County would need a new fund in the County Budget if it were to set up a County Water and

Sewer District. Legislator LaForge noted that Wayne County could be a good model to follow, allowing, of course, for the particulars of Allegany County. He added, however, that Wayne County is not the only model. Legislator LaForge went on to say that his goal over the next couple of months is to create a framework for creating such a district, and bring that framework to the Legislators for funding to do an engineering study and proposal. Eventually the proposal would be brought to the various municipalities to determine the interest and “buy-in.” It was also stated that there may be grant funding available for different phases involved in creating such systems. There was discussion on which engineering firm would be used for the study; Legislator LaForge said there seemed to be no lack of capable engineering firms in this field. Darwin Fanton noted that it was his belief, and he would like confirmation on this, that, for example, if the potential County Water District installed a waterline between Scio and Belmont, the entire populace of the County would bear some burden of that cost, not just the folks who would benefit from the waterline. That having been said, Legislator LaForge noted that it seemed there was group consensus to go ahead with the plan to create the framework and present it to the Board.

Governor Cuomo’s Efficiency Tax Rebate

The County as a Clearing House for the Towns & Villages

Jodi Adams distributed a NYS Property Tax Freeze Credit Fact Sheet which defined the tax freeze credit as a two-year tax relief program that reimburses qualifying NYS homeowners for increases in local property taxes on their primary residences. In order for the credit to be available to the homeowners in a local taxing jurisdiction, the jurisdiction must comply with the NYS Property Tax Cap, and, after the first year, must also develop an efficiency plan. The document went on to list eligibility requirements for homeowners and school districts and local governments. Ms. Adams went on to review some additional, recent information on the property tax freeze which had come from NYSAC (New York State Association of Counties). She said that NYSAC is looking to provide a “tool kit” to assist counties in the process of looking for efficiencies and to facilitate meetings with towns and villages. In addition to the eligibility requirements, the NYSAC information also included information on the required efficiency plans which are due to the State Division of Budget on June 1, 2015. It is anticipated, but not required, that counties will take the lead with developing and implementing efficiency plans. However, municipalities can develop plans independently, but can only participate/submit one efficiency plan. NYSAC went on to say that the latest information suggests that past efficiencies, shared services, and reforms that were implemented in the fiscal year 2012 will be eligible submissions in efficiency plans toward the overall one percent cost savings. The calculation of the savings equals the sum of levies from participating municipalities per plan multiplied by one percent. The one percent savings must reoccur in fiscal years 2017, 2018, and 2019. Eligible activities to reduce costs include cooperative agreements, shared services, mergers, consolidations, and dissolutions. Discussion included much speculation regarding who would participate, who would be responsible for coordination, how far was the “look back,” etc. County Administrator Mitch Alger suggested surveying and compiling all the municipalities and the County to quantify all the things that have been done since the tax cap was implemented because that looks like that will be the “look back.” Then we need to figure out if that’s enough for the plan already or if there are more things we need to come up with for savings and consolidation to go forward. Mr. Alger went on to say that he didn’t think we must have these things completed—just a plan to do so within the parameters of the program by June 2015. It was also suggested that perhaps some of the unwritten cooperative agreements that are in existence currently could be formalized in a written document to become eligible for the rebate. The task, then, would be putting specific dollar figures on the services.

Legislator LaForge noted that because much of the discussion was speculation, it might be wiser for this group to defer any decision making and/or meetings with municipalities until after NYSAC's fall seminar which will deal primarily with the issue of efficiency and will give us a better understanding of the ins and outs. The seminar will take place September 22-24 in Bu

Old Business

Dr. Heineman resurrected the topic of judicial consolidation in the County. Based on some information from the Office of the State Comptroller which he had received from Mr. Fanton, Dr. Heineman said that consolidating village and town courts is not a difficult process. However, he said, if you were to consolidate village and town courts, then one entity loses revenue from fines, etc. Perhaps, he said, there would be a way to make up that loss of revenue to make it work. Further, he said, town courts could be consolidated and the two justices would have jurisdiction over both towns (which had been consolidated). However, he added, the towns must be contiguous. He said that process would involve a resolution by the town boards, a public hearing, and a referendum in order to go forward. He added that this might be a way for smaller towns to save some money. It was also suggested that perhaps the town court consolidation could be done by legislative district. Dr. Heineman suggested that the documents he had be reviewed by County Attorney Tom Miner.

Good of the Order

Next Meeting: August 27, 2014, Room 222 (the Legislative Chambers)

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 4:35 p.m. following a motion by Dr. Heineman, seconded by County Planner Dirlam, and carried

Respectfully submitted,
Cynthia Santora, Secretary to the Clerk of the Board
Allegany County Board of Legislators

**CONSOLIDATION & EFFICIENCIES AD HOC COMMITTEE
AUGUST 27, 2014**

**** NOT APPROVED ****

Committee Members Present: K. LaForge, J. Adams, M. Alger, K. Dirlam, D. Edwards, C. Jessup, R. Oakerson, C. Crandall (Absent: C. Clark, R. Heineman, J. Herman)

Others Present: Dar Fanton, B. Riehle, T. Ross, C. Santora

Media Present: No media present

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 3:30 p.m. by Consolidation & Efficiencies Ad Hoc Committee Chairman Kevin LaForge.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Legislator Jessup, seconded by Mr. Edwards, and carried to approve the Consolidation & Efficiencies Ad Hoc Committee minutes of July 30, 2014.

Change in Meeting Day/Time

Because Dr. Heineman now has a class scheduled for the current meeting day (Wednesday), and would like to continue on the Committee, it was determined that beginning in October, the meeting would be held on the last Thursday of each month at 3:30 p.m.

Water and Sewer

Legislator LaForge noted that select members of the Committee will begin formulating a plan to take to the Legislators, and once it has their support, the plan will be brought to the town and village officials for input. As regards Dr. Oakerson's intern, it was stated that all the paperwork had been done, the internship is "official," and the student will receive the appropriate credit.

MEGA (Municipal Electric & Gas Alliance)

Assistant to the County Administrator Jodi Adams informed the Committee that Barbara Blanchard, Customer Relations Manager for MEGA, will attend the Public Works Committee Meeting on September 3, where she will share information on MEGA and the benefits of joining the alliance. MEGA, she continued, is an acronym for Municipal Electric and Gas Alliance, Inc., a non-profit, community-based energy-savings program that serves local governments in New York State (endorsed by NYSAC). It is working with hundreds of municipalities across the state, she said. Todd Loucks, the Gas Contract Representative from HESS Energy Marketing, will attend the meeting, and Dan Murphy, the Electric Contract Representative for Integrys Energy Services of New York, will join in via phone conference. They will explain cost savings options for the County, make recommendations, and distribute sample contracts for future consideration.

Land Bank Update

Legislator LaForge indicated that this issue does not appear on the agenda because at this point, until we have a realistic means of financing it, he believes there is no sense in "ramping it up" at this time.

A New Direction for the Ad Hoc Committee

Legislator LaForge distributed a document outlining his vision for a new direction for this Ad Hoc Committee. In his view, anything the Committee has talked about, from an efficiency and consolidation standpoint, needs so much work to be done, that it's hard to ask that much of a volunteer group. Additionally, it is his belief that committees are policy-setting groups, not micromanagers. It is his hope that the document will lead to discussion, further study, brainstorming ideas, refining, and ultimately, implementation. He guesstimated that funding of approximately \$100,000 would be necessary to get this action started. County Administrator Mitch Alger said the hope would be that the results garnered by this position would be greater than the cost. If the County truly realized significant savings, it would be worth the investment, he added. Additional discussion followed as well. Chairman Crandall indicated that he believed this initiative would fit in nicely with the Governor's Property Tax Freeze Rebate program. Legislator LaForge indicated that several County Officials would be attending the upcoming NYSAC Conference where, he believes, they will learn more about the Governor's Plan. Following additional discussion, the Committee referred the proposal to the Planning & Economic Development Committee on a motion by Dr. Oakerson, seconded by Mr. Edwards, and carried. **Refer to Planning & Economic Development Committee**

Below is Legislator LaForge's preliminary proposal:

Efficiency and Consolidation Facilitator (Contractor)

RFP

Qualifications:

- Master's Degree of Public Administration, Planning, or Perceived Equivalent Degree or Experience
- Proven experience in similar applications

Duties:

- Contractor would perform specific research and make recommendations of efficiency and consolidation including structural change.
- Synergies would be sought intra-county and inter-county, and with towns, villages, and even school districts.
- Consolidation and Efficiencies Ad Hoc Committee would continue to meet and bring forth recommendations for study. Actual referral to contractor would be by Ad Hoc with Planning and Economic Development approval.
- Contractor would report to County Planner;
- Contractor would report to Consolidation & Efficiencies Ad Hoc Committee;
- Contractor would report to Planning & Economic Development

The County would want RFP term of two (2) years, 30 day cancellation (either party)

Success measured by

- Money Saved
 - short-term
 - long-term
- Successful implementation

Good of the Order

Mr. Dirlam apprised the Committee of a dissolution vote that had taken place earlier in the week in Wilson, Niagara County, noting that they voted not to dissolve. Some discussion followed regarding other municipalities that had had similar votes and the outcomes of those respective votes.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 4:20 p.m. following a motion by Mr. Dirlam, seconded by Mr. Alger, and carried

Respectfully submitted,
Cynthia Santora, Secretary to the Clerk of the Board
Allegany County Board of Legislators