

STEBEN COUNTY ADHOC MUNICIPAL COORDINATION COMMITTEE

Wednesday, July 20, 2016

10:00 a.m.

Legislative Committee Conference Room

Bath, New York

****MINUTES****

Present: Carol Ferratella, Chair
Jack Wheeler, County Manager
Wendy Flaitz, Director, Real Property Tax Service Agency
Wendy Jordan, Assessment Data Supervisor, Real Property Tax Service Agency
Shawn Corey, Deputy County Attorney
RaeAnne Engler, Real Property Analyst, New York State Office of Real Property
Katherine Deal, Assessor, Towns of Corning, Cameron, Hornellsville and Prattsburgh
Gary Calkins, Assessor, Town of Woodhull
Mitch Alger, Deputy County Manager
Ron Smith, Supervisor, Town of Bath

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Mrs. Ferratella at 10:00 a.m.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION APPROVING THE MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 15, 2015, MEETING MADE BY MS. DEAL. SECONDED BY MS. ENGLER. ALL BEING IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIES.

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. **Data Collector Discussion** – Mrs. Flaitz stated the test for Data Collector was given June 4th and 7 people took the exam. We are waiting on the results of the test; hoping to get them back in August. Our first discussion is on what sales will be used for collection. My thought was to look at the arms-length sales for the past year and start with those. I'm not sure what we want to do about future sales; maybe have the assessors send them to us those on a monthly basis. I know we talked about just arms-length sales but do we want to do all sales?

Ms. Deal stated we were pitching that it would be used with towns in a cyclical project. Mrs. Flaitz stated there are 19 in that program right now. Ms. Engler stated the biggest reason for this position was to update the sales figures.

Mr. Calkins asked would the data collector be responsible for talking to the buyer about the data? Mrs. Flaitz stated that was the intention, but the buyer can always refuse to provide the data.

Mrs. Ferratella stated since you have 19 towns doing the cyclical program, wouldn't you want to start there and verify their information before going to the towns who aren't? Ms. Engler stated the thought is that the ones in the program should have more updated information. Mrs. Flaitz stated our arms-length sales were over 1,000 in count in 2015. I think we can start with all of them at this point. Starting with those 1,000 sales and add in the others as assessors report sales on a monthly basis. That takes something off of the assessors' workload.

Mrs. Flaitz stated they were going to include building permits for the towns doing the cyclical assessments, however there were 1,400 in those 19 towns. Some of those won't be collectible as they include sewer and water systems; so maybe half of those would be collectible. Discussion followed.

Ms. Engler asked outside real property, building permits aren't recorded anywhere? Ms. Deal stated the building permits are recorded with the town clerks. Ms. Engler asked is there a report we can run for building permits? Mr. Wheeler stated there is probably an issue of uniformity among all of the towns. Discussion followed.

Ms. Flaitz stated we can work on what the state wants collected at this point and have the data collector get that data if the assessor isn't. Ms. Engler stated a monthly collection of building permit data would be nice since that is what we are doing with the sales.

Mrs. Ferratella stated there was a lack of communication between the assessors and code enforcement in some areas. Mr. Wheeler stated he's not sure there is anything they can do about that; communication between those two positions is a town issue.

Ms. Engler noted that Dave Rudell created a program for building permits that works well. Mrs. Flaitz stated we can check with the town clerks to see what kind of detailed report they have on building permits and if they don't have one, see if they would be willing to work with a program to compile the information.

Mrs. Ferratella mentioned that maybe they should include that in the presentation to the towns.

B. 1537 Agreements – Mrs. Flaitz stated she has three separate agreements written for the data collection of arms-length sales, so perhaps we can combine the 3 agreements into one with check boxes. They haven't gone to the Law Department yet for approval as she wanted this group to review them first. Discussion followed. The Committee agreed everything they wanted was included in the agreements.

C. PowerPoint Presentation – Mrs. Flaitz stated based upon their previous discussion, she will add a section on building permits. She asked how do we want to present this to municipalities?

Mr. Wheeler stated they should probably arrange for a couple of sessions here in Bath as trying to travel to every municipality in the County is not feasible. They can begin with a couple of group meetings at the Civil Defense Center to give folks an opportunity to attend. Mrs. Ferratella asked how long is this presentation? Mrs. Flaitz stated about 30 to 35 minutes. Mr. Wheeler stated that is good as they can then give them a half hour to an hour for questions. He noted that they need to do an early evening meeting, as that seemed to get us the most success in the past. Mr. Smith stated about 4:30 p.m. is usually good. Mr. Wheeler suggested they advertise that it is a closed meeting; not open to public or press. The timeframe of early September was suggested

D. Outpost Status – Mrs. Flaitz stated two assessors are currently using OutPost. It is set up and working. She spoke with the vendor, SDG, in regards to the data collector using OutPost. Currently it won't work on doing sales data. In order for a municipality to use it for the building permits and data collection, they would have to purchase the license. For the 19 towns currently on the cyclical program, they gave me a quote of \$2,800. She noted that they should hold off for a year before we decide to go with that.

Ms. Deal stated she loves OutPost and wishes more assessors would jump on the bandwagon. It makes things so much faster. It makes data collection such a breeze. If you pair that with a voice controlled GPS, you could data collect all day long.

E. Internship Program – Mrs. Flaitz stated she has spoken with CCC and they said there are rules and regulations to follow regarding internships. She mentioned that Attorney Reed said we would be covered, as we would be doing training. We are looking at unpaid internships at first, just to get them to know there is an assessor and it could be a career. She provided a list of what they would want to involve the interns in to learn the job. Discussion followed.

Mr. Wheeler noted they will probably have to run it through the municipalities because the county won't have the hands on work to provide them. We can help with the interface, but the direct relationship should be with the municipalities.

Ms. Engler stated our legal department says the law states that in order for an individual to get credit to get into the assessor certification program, it has to be a paid position. Ms. Deal noted according to the minimum qualifications for an assessor, you can't get into it unless you've been into it. They would somehow have to work into it. There needs to be a modification or additional assistance for the education piece. Ms. Engler stated that if we come up with some ideas we might be able to move things along to get the requirements changed. Discussion followed.

F. **Future of Committee** – Mrs. Flaitz stated she would like to see the committee stay around. They may not need to meet often, but they should get together to see what is going on and if it is working well. With the sole assessor terms coming up in 2019, they might want to see where we are at with those positions; who is retiring and, maybe, look into the county taking on an assessor position.

Mrs. Ferratella stated Chairman Hauryski asked me to go through Randy Deal's report from 2009 to update the reports contained within it. As far as countywide assessing, you would have to have all 34 municipalities to agree. So for now, it is easier to do 1537 agreements and in the short term, advertising the 1537 would be more appropriate.

Mrs. Ferratella mentioned she received an email from County Legislator John Malter about the solar exemption. That's not an item for this committee, is it? Mr. Wheeler stated no, that is really a town decision. Mrs. Flaitz noted the law doesn't allow us to distinguish between commercial and residential solar exemptions; that is the problem.

G. **Next Meeting** – The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 14, 2016, at 10:00 a.m. in the Legislative Committee Room.

MOTION TO ADJOURN MADE BY MR. CALKINS, SECONDED BY MRS. FLAITZ AND DULY CARRIED.

Respectfully submitted by,

Brenda K. Mori
Clerk of the Legislature

STEBEN COUNTY ADHOC MUNICIPAL COORDINATION COMMITTEE

Wednesday, September 14, 2016

10:00 a.m.

*Legislative Committee Room
Steuben County Office Building
Bath, New York*

****MINUTES****

PRESENT: Carol A. Ferratella, Chair
Jack K. Wheeler, County Manager
Mitchell Alger, Deputy County Manager
Wendy Flaitz, Director, Real Property Tax Service Agency
Wendy Jordan, Assessment Data Supervisor, Real Property Tax Service Agency
Jennifer Prossick, Deputy County Attorney
Rae Anne Engler, Real Property Analyst, New York State Office of Real Property
Gary Calkins, Assessor, Town of Woodhull
Laura Smalt, Assessor, Towns of Canisteo, Dansville, Howard and Wheeler
Ron Smith, Supervisor, Town of Bath
Connie Luckner, Assessor, Town of Erwin

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mrs. Ferratella called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and asked Mr. Smith to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: APPROVING THE MINUTES OF THE JULY 20, 2016, MEETING MADE BY MR. SMITH. SECONDED BY MR. CALKINS. ALL BEING IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIES.

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. **Data Collector Update** – Mrs. Flaitz informed the committee that the test for Data Collector was given June 4, 2016. As of today, there are no results, however, we are hoping to see the results soon. She stated she has been hesitant to order equipment until we know the results of the test. Mrs. Ferratella asked do you have a backup plan? Mr. Wheeler replied prior to the testing, we had put out an RFP to look at providing this service on a contract basis and the results were mixed. We could go back to that; however, he believes there will be a number of names on the list. We can interview and if we are not comfortable with the candidates, then we can talk about what our options are at that point. He noted there is a probationary period.

B. **Internship Update** – Mrs. Flaitz stated we sent a list to the Corning Community College of what we were looking for in an internship program. They will post the position at the college hopefully for the spring semester. When they get someone who is interested, they will contact us to do the interview. This will be an unpaid internship position. An individual in this position will not earn any credits toward being an assessor, but they will be given the opportunity of knowing the position is out there. Mr. Wheeler asked would the contract be between the intern and the County, or the municipality? Mrs. Flaitz replied they would contract directly with the municipality. The intern would work approximately 90 hours per semester. Mrs. Ferratella asked would there be an option to make this a paid internship? Mrs. Flaitz replied she would assume that would be a possibility. She will bring that up at the assessor meeting next week. Ms. Smalt commented that perhaps the internship could be shared with multiple municipalities and if it was a paid position that would not be such a hardship for the municipalities. Mr. Wheeler commented if the towns are really having difficulty finding funding and there is significant interest in paid internships, the County may be able to find some funding.

C. **SDG – Image Mate Online Update** – Mrs. Flaitz informed the committee that the program is up and running. We are looking to get an update to allow us to pick up delinquent tax amounts. Now the County has the option of accepting tax payments by credit card.

D. **PowerPoint Presentation Meetings** – Mrs. Flaitz stated they will begin presenting the PowerPoint Presentations within the next two weeks. As of yesterday, we only have 7 people signed up. We did follow-up with some phone calls and now have 10 attending. Mr. Wheeler suggested sending an email out to the assessors again to remind them. Mrs. Flaitz stated the training will be held at the Civil Defense Center. The presentations will be held on September 21st and September 28th.

E. **1537 Agreements** – Mrs. Flaitz indicated it is the City of Corning’s intention to have the County take over assessing duties when their City Assessor retires. Every municipality will have to sign a 1537 agreement to have data collection work done in their municipality.

F. **County Assessor** – Mrs. Flaitz commented a County Assessor position is something that will need to be looked at down the road. They are anticipating a number of assessors will plan to retire starting in 2018. Mrs. Ferratella asked if the County took this over, how many positions would we need? Mrs. Flaitz replied right now a sole assessor has 5,000 – 7,000 parcels. The County as a whole has approximately 55,000 parcels and you would need quite a few assessors and support staff to handle that.

Mrs. Ferratella asked have any changes been made to the Countywide Collaborative Assessing Report originally done in 2009? Mrs. Flaitz replied we have updated some of the information and included some spreadsheets. Ms. Jordan stated we updated the list of assessors and their certifications. Additionally, we have updated the salaries and updated the property class mixtures. Discussion followed.

G. **Next Meeting** – Mrs. Ferratella announced that Mrs. Flaitz will be retiring on October 28, 2016. She suggested meeting Wednesday, October 12th at 11:00 a.m.

MOTION: TO ADJOURN MADE BY MS. ENGLER. SECONDED BY MRS. FLAITZ. ALL BEING IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIES.

Respectfully Submitted by

Amanda L. Chapman
Deputy Clerk
Steuben County Legislature

STEBEN COUNTY ADHOC MUNICIPAL COORDINATION COMMITTEE

Wednesday, December 14, 2016

2:00 p.m.

*Legislative Committee Room
Steuben County Office Building
Bath, New York*

****MINUTES****

PRESENT: Carol A. Ferratella, Chair
Jack K. Wheeler, County Manager
Wendy Jordan, Acting Director, Real Property Tax Service Agency
Mike Ryan, Data Collector, Real Property Tax Service Agency
Katherine Gabrielle, Assessor, Towns of Corning, Cameron, Hornellsville and Prattsburgh

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mrs. Ferratella called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mrs. Ferratella stated that since there is no quorum, the approval of the minutes from the previous meeting will be held over until the next meeting when there is a quorum.

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. **Data Collector** – Ms. Jordan introduced the new Data Collector, Mike Ryan. She stated that he will begin taking some classes shortly, but in the meantime is reading numerous materials and getting a feel for the office.

B. **1537 Agreements** – Ms. Jordan reviewed the municipalities that have indicated an interest in entering into 1537 agreements. The only exceptions are the Towns of Campbell, Fremont, Prattsburgh and Wheeler. Mrs. Ferratella suggested that perhaps the Legislators could talk with the Town Boards. She asked if any of those towns were present at the presentations that were given? Ms. Jordan replied the Supervisors from the Towns of Prattsburgh and Wheeler did attend.

C. **Goals** – Mrs. Ferratella asked do we have any goals that we are looking at for using this system and how will we measure the success? Mr. Wheeler replied he thinks goals and measures are similar and go together, as well as being separate. Some of the measures we can come up with include the number of parcels searched, data collected and the number of towns engaged. The goal, from his perspective, is to get more participation from the municipalities. He does not know how much he would press those municipalities that are not interested. However, when they talk with their counterparts, they will see the benefits and realize the County is not taking over. That is something we can work with Ms. Jordan on for 2017.

Mrs. Gabrielle commented that the focus, with a lot of the smaller towns, is they are not signing on because they are concerned of losing authority over assessing. The County wants everyone where they are and does not want to take anything else on. Mr. Wheeler commented we want to find efficiencies for the betterment of everyone. Mrs. Ferratella stated the newsletter is a good way to communicate that and we also need to get feedback from the assessors that are involved.

D. **Internship Program** – Mrs. Ferratella asked for an update. Ms. Jordan replied we have not received anything. She will get the contact information and get back in touch with the college.

E. **5217 Deed Forms** – Mrs. Gabrielle discussed how Cortland County has the capability to scan and import information from the 5217 deed forms, rather than having to manually import the information into the RP system. She suggested this might be something we would want to look into.

IV. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 15, 2016, at 10:00 a.m. in the Legislative Committee Room.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:25 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by

Amanda L. Chapman
Deputy Clerk
Steuben County Legislature