

GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 7, 2021

GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: O'Brien, Rozell, Haff, Hicks, Fedler, Ferguson, Fisher

GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT: None.

SUPERVISORS: Hall, Henke, Shaw, Ward, Campbell, Skellie, Clary, Griffith

Debra Prehoda, Clerk of the Board

Roger Wickes, County Attorney

Al Nolette, County Treasurer

Melissa Fitch, County Administrator

AGENDA AS PRESENTED IN COMMITTEE NOTICE:

- 1) Call to Order
- 2) LGRMIF Grant – County Clerk
- 3) Multi-Jurisdictional Reval Project Funding
- 4) Other Business
- 5) Adjournment

Chairman O'Brien called the meeting to order at 9:48 A.M. in the Supervisors Chambers in person and via teleconference.

MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL REVAL PROJECT FUNDING – Laura Chadwick, Real Property Director, addressed the following items:

Expressed condolences to the Town of White Creek for the loss of their long time Assessor Ronna Meerwarth.

Multi-town reval – This project was started in 2019. Received a grant to cover a portion of the services for the reval, \$590,031. The cost of the reval through GAR was \$685,000 and when that was present the County had put in for some shared services money through the NYS Department of State. It was anticipated that the shared services funding would cover the balance that would have been the towns cost; the difference between the cost of the reval and the grant which was close to \$89,000. Recently been advised that the shared services funding was only going to cover \$27,500 of the outstanding cost for the towns; one year of the project. Originally when the plan went out to the towns they were advised that there could be some fees but the County was pretty sure the shared services funding would cover the project as a whole. The outstanding balance that the shared services funding did not cover is about \$67,469. The Director asked if the County has any pleasure in covering that cost for the six towns that are going through the reval project; Salem, Jackson, Easton, Dresden, Fort Edward, and White Creek.

At a Government Operations committee meeting in October 2019 discussed a possible \$9.00 per parcel fee that would be charged back if the shared services did not cover this. We did receive some shared services funding about a third of that amount, a little less than \$3.00, and the towns would have been charged back about \$6.40 per parcel.

Chairman Hall stated this impacts six towns and the program changed mid-stream and there is enough money in the contingency account to support paying this cost. This was unexpected and no fault of the towns or county. These towns were far below the 100% equalization rate and this project was to bring these towns up to 100%. Towns being at 100% equalization rate is beneficial for the towns and the county.

A motion to move request to cover the cost of the reval, \$67,469, due to not receiving the shared services funding to the Finance Committee for consideration was moved by Mr. Ferguson and seconded by Mrs. Fedler. Discussion. Mr. O'Brien stated he is voting no because the town of Hampton did their own reevaluation and paid for it by themselves with no help from the shared services funding or the County.

Mr. Campbell stated in the theme of working together, he is not opposed to covering this cost. This would have a huge impact on the towns tax caps. The county pays the GAR contract and if we do nothing the county still has to pay the bill and Mr. Hicks stated the only action is whether the county should go back to the six towns to ask for reimbursement. A prior resolution regarding this project did state in the budget impact statement which is not part of the official resolution that no budget impact to the county, project costs not covered by the grant will be paid by participating towns. No action is required to pay this bill. Mr. O'Brien stated he though we needed a resolution to not bill the towns. The county does have MOUs with the towns for this project. Supervisors Clary, Shaw and Fisher all stated when this project was brought before their town boards it was presented that it was at no cost to the towns except for \$500 per year for two years which has been paid. Mr. Haff stated if we could estimate what the overage is, what was the estimated amount the towns would pay and the county consider paying part of the overage, the amount over and above what was anticipated the towns would pay, but is against the County picking up the whole tab. Mrs. Fedler stated the shared services program presented as a whole had a lot of misconceptions and misunderstandings and at the time the three-year part was questioned. She does support giving the money back to the towns. The MOUs with the towns include wording regarding a contribution toward the Real Property Tax Director's salary, \$500 per year for two years but no provision for any other payment. Mr. Skellie also stated it was presented that there would be enough shared services funding to cover any cost and if the county does not help with this payment his town would probably go over their tax cap. Mr. Ferguson withdrew his motion. The Treasurer stated there will be a budget amendment at Finance to cover this cost.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT RECORDS MANAGEMENT IMPROVEMENT FUND GRANT – Stephanie Lemery, County Clerk, addressed the following item:

- Recognize Grant – A motion to recognize receipt of Local Government Records Management Improvement Fund grant in the amount of \$63,576 and forward to the Finance Committee for a budget amendment was moved by Mr. Ferguson, seconded by Mrs. Fedler, and adopted.

The meeting adjourned at 10:29 A.M.

Debra Prehoda, Clerk
Washington County Board of Supervisors