

FINANCE, LEGAL AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

May 10, 2022

ATTENDANCE:

Legislators: Chair Sauerbrey, Roberts, Brown, Ciotoli, Standinger, Mullen, Weston, and Hollenbeck

Staff: County Attorney DeWind, Treasurer McFadden, Legislative Clerk Haskell, Deputy Treasurer Chandler, (Secretary to the County Attorney Freyvogel-minutes)

Guests: none

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES: Chair Sauerbrey asked for a motion to approve last month's minutes. Legislator Standinger made the motion, seconded by Legislator Hollenbeck, and unanimously approved by the Legislators.

FINANCIAL: Legal and Safety's budgets are tracking well however outside counsel expenses, due to litigation, are continuing and might require a transfer of funds to the Legal Fees line of Legal's budget.

OLD BUSINESS: The County has received title from the Court for thirty (30) 2019 In Rem properties. Next month a resolution will be presented to the Legislators to transfer the title from the County to the Treasurer. One property was removed from the 2019 In Rems in relation to the radio project. County Attorney DeWind asked the Legislators to decide if they would like to combine the 2019 and 2020's into one auction or they would prefer to keep them separate.

The FY2020 Critical Infrastructure Grant was submitted. This grant would allow for the purchase of security cameras to enhance and harden the physical protection of the server room and could not have been completed without the assistance of Deputy Director of Emergency Systems Bob Williams and Chief Information Officer Jeremy Loveland. There are some infrastructure weaknesses however the Safety Officer is addressing these concerns to reduce redundancy. Chair Sauerbrey will be scheduling a meeting to address the implementation of recommended safety features to the Ronald E. Dougherty County Office Building.

NEW BUSINESS: Safety has had several investigations that are still ongoing.

The transition to Neogov Learn for County trainings is going well. Only thirty-four (34) employees still need to activate their account and over two hundred (200) employees have completed the new one hour defensive driving course. It is important employees activate their accounts due to a majority of mandated trainings migrating to this platform.

Paralegal Kevin Humes has been a tremendous support to Soil and Water's recent wet lands acquisition with the Upper Susquehanna Coalition. This was a complex deal handled in timely manner by Mr. Humes.

The 2020 In Rems currently consist of sixty-six (66) properties. A few of these homeowners are attempting to acquire funding, to pay back taxes, through grants, the Department of Social Services, and charitable organizations. May 2, 2022 was the redemption point however properties are still able to be sold back to the homeowners at this point. Treasurer McFadden informed the Legislators his office has been inundated with phone calls from homeowners, attorneys, and banks in regards to these properties, they have had issues with checks returned due to insufficient funds, and irate homeowners threatening staff. Bankruptcy filings should lower the amount of available properties to around fifty-five (55). Legislator Weston asked if a homeowner used grant funding to pay back taxes would the title stay in the homeowners name or would it be transferred to the County or State. Treasurer McFadden stated some of the grants require you to live in your home for five (5) years. If you sell your home before the five (5) year mark you will be required to pay back the grant. Legislator Mullen asked if there was going to be a one-time redemption policy put in place for this year. County Attorney DeWind stated it was doubtful this policy would be in place for this year's 2019/2020 property auction.

Assigned Counsel Rate Litigation is still ongoing in the NYC region. Discussions are continuing with the potential to have an impact on counties assigned counsel budgets. Assigned counsel rates will likely double once a decision is made and new rates could be implemented as early as this year. Legislator Weston asked for clarification on the rate increase. County Attorney DeWind stated assigned counsel rates have not been adjusted in a significant amount of time which affects the quality of representation you are entitled to. Competitive rates would allow for a larger selection of qualified attorneys.

PERSONNEL: None

RESOLUTIONS: Authorize Contract with Cornell Cooperative Extension for Kitchen Space: The resolution was briefly discussed. The Department of Public Works is making the necessary repairs with an anticipated lease start date of June 1,

2022. This resolution was moved into full Legislative session without further questions.

PROCLAMATIONS: None

ADJOURNMENT: Chair Sauerbrey adjourned the Legal and Safety Committee Meeting at 11:03 a.m.