

**WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
ORGANIZATION MEETING
TUESDAY, JANUARY 4, 2011**

The Board of Supervisors of the County of Warren convened at the Supervisors' Room in the Warren County Municipal Center, Lake George, New York, at 11:00 a.m.

Board called to order by Joan Sady, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors.

Salute to the flag was led by Supervisor Geraghty.

Roll called, the following members present:

Bolton	-Ronald F. Conover
Chester	-Frederick H. Monroe
City of Glens Falls	
Ward 1	-Daniel J. Girard
Ward 2	-Peter V. McDevitt
Ward 3	-Harold G. Taylor
Ward 4	-William Loeb
Ward 5	-William H. Kenny
Hague	-Daniel D. Belden
Horicon	-Ralph W. Bentley
Johnsburg	-Sterling T. Goodspeed
Lake George	-Franklyn J. McCoy Jr.
Lake Luzerne	-Eugene J. Merlino
Queensbury	-Daniel G. Stec
	-David J. Strainer
	-Fred Champagne
	-William T. VanNess
	-Matthew D. Sokol
Stony Creek	-Frank E. Thomas
Thurman	-Evelyn Wood
Warrensburg	-Kevin B. Geraghty

Clerk announced the first order of business would be the selection of a Temporary Chairman.

Mr. VanNess nominated Matthew Sokol as Temporary Chairman, seconded by Mr. McCoy.

There being no further nominations, Mr. Loeb moved that the nominations be closed, and the Clerk cast one ballot for Mr. Sokol as Temporary Chairman, seconded by Mr. McDevitt and carried unanimously.

Clerk requested Mr. Girard and Mr. Taylor to escort Mr. Sokol to the Chair.

Mr. Sokol began by thanking the outgoing Chairman of the Board, Mr. Monroe, for his dedication to Warren County. In reference to the incoming Chairman, he noted that he had known Mr. Stec since the sixth grade and attributed his confidence and success to the support of his great family. He apprised that Mr. Stec commenced his political career in 1998 when he became a member of the Zoning Board of Appeals, followed by his appointment in 2000 as Town of Queensbury Councilman. In 2004, he said, Mr. Stec was elected Supervisor of the Town of Queensbury, the youngest Supervisor in over one hundred years. Mr. Sokol added that through the 2010 Budget, it was the ninth consecutive year that the Town of Queensbury was without a general fund property tax, which was quite an accomplishment. He stated that in 2005, Mr. Stec was elected Chairman of the Intercounty Legislative Committee of the Adirondacks and in 2008 he was elected Chairman of the Warren County Local Development Corporation. Today, he expounded, Mr. Stec would become Warren County's next Chairman of the Board of Supervisors. Mr. Sokol expressed his confidence that Mr. Stec would do a tremendous job with the support of his family, the Board of Supervisors, the staff and all the department heads and that he would continue to save taxpayer dollars, as well as continuing the excellent services provided by the County and the quality of life all residents had come to enjoy.

Mr. Sokol stated the next order of business would be the selection of a Permanent Chairman.

Mr. Belden stated it was an honor to nominate Mr. Daniel G. Stec as Permanent Chairman, and Mr. Thomas stated he would second the motion.

There being no further nominations, Mr. Champagne moved the nominations be closed, and the Clerk cast one ballot for Daniel G. Stec as Permanent Chairman. Mr. Merlino seconded the motion, and it was carried by unanimous vote.

Mr. Sokol, Temporary Chairman, requested Mr. Merlino and Mr. Geraghty to escort Mr. Stec to the Chair. The board members responded with a standing ovation and a round of applause.

Chairman Stec wished everyone a Happy New Year and noted it was a privilege to be here today. Prior to being sworn in, Chairman Stec recognized Senator Litte and thanked her for taking the time to attend the meeting today. He also introduced members of the Town of Queensbury's "family" that were in attendance, as follows: Bob Hafner and Kathy Radner from Miller, Mannix, Schachner and Hafner Law Firm; Darlene Dougher, Town Clerk; Pam Hunsinger, Legal Assistant; Barbara Tierney, Budget Officer; and his Assistant Leesa Stiller. He thanked his mother and father, Elsie and George Stec, for all of their support over the years and for coming to the meeting today. Chairman Stec acknowledged his wife Hillary, who was present today, and noted that tomorrow they would be celebrating their twentieth wedding anniversary. He wished her a happy anniversary and thanked her for her unwavering

support, as well. He requested his wife to stand next to him and hold the family Bible while he was sworn into Office. The board members responded with a round of applause.

Chairman Stec subscribed to the Constitutional Oath as administered by Pam Vogel, County Clerk of Warren County. The board members acknowledged Chairman Stec with a round of applause.

Chairman Stec presented the following remarks:

"STATE OF THE COUNTY
JANUARY 4, 2011

"Thank you to my fellow Supervisors for your support and the confidence you have placed in me in electing me to serve as Chairman. I am humbled that you, my peers, have selected me to serve in this capacity. I take this responsibility very seriously and I will do my best to serve you and all of Warren County to the best of my ability.

"I want to first recognize and thank our out-going Chairman, Supervisor Fred Monroe, for his stellar service as Chairman over the past three years. Fortunately for all of us (and me in particular) Fred remains as a valuable resource in his continued service as a Supervisor. In my seven years on this board Fred has been a mentor and a friend to me. Warren County and all of the communities of the Adirondack Park should know how fortunate we have all been to have had Fred working on our behalf. He is a gentleman and an unequalled public servant. I hope to emulate him.

"2010 saw an improvement to the health of the county from 2009. I credit this to Fred as well as Budget Officer Kevin Geraghty and the rest of the Board of Supervisors, County Administrator Paul Dusek, our Department Heads and the employees of Warren County. The world financial crisis hit in late 2008 and exacerbated problems at all levels of government throughout the country. While many of these municipalities have and continue to put off addressing the financial problems, Warren County took both decisive and very transparent action to address them in 2009. This included a significant reduction in the size of the County workforce, a frank re-evaluation of "the way we've always done things" and a (usually) healthy, lengthy and very public debate on the County's sales tax rate – which to this day remains the lowest in the state with a few other counties at 7%.

"But 2010 saw some stabilization return to the County. While short term borrowing has continued for cash flow purposes, the county's small fund balance will actually increase when the 2010 books are closed. Without making excuses, it must be noted that some of the cash flow problems facing Warren County and many of our Towns is due to what can only be called game-playing by the State. Reimbursements contractually and legally owed to the County from the State have been slow in arriving as the State struggles with its own

(and worse) cash flow crisis. The State is facing budgetary issues of truly historic proportions and what was already on shaky ground prior to 2009 was only worsened by the world financial crisis. Actions taken in Washington, DC that were supposed to remedy this were unfortunately for all of us all too often used by state, school and local governments to put off action that needed to be taken – to kick the can down the road as the new DC adage goes.

“In 2010 Warren County did much to avoid continuing this trend here as evidenced by the work accomplished in the 2011 Budget process:

- Appropriations were reduced \$518K from 2010 to 2011
- A net of 7 full time and 4 part time positions were eliminated
- 17 county departments’ 2011 appropriations are lower than in 2010
- For the past two years, no fund balance has been appropriated, as none is available but also without masking the increasing costs of government
- Tax levy increase of 1.09% was the smallest increase in 15 years

“This was accomplished in spite of several major factors:

- Total projected revenues are down almost \$3.25M, including:
 - o Reduced sales and mortgage tax collections
 - o Mandated NYS retirement contribution increased nearly \$1.3M
 - o Employee health insurance costs increased approximately \$650K
 - o Social Services costs have increased over \$2M

“Warren County also completed the construction of the Human Services Building and (with a few remaining issues being addressed) the building has been occupied by numerous County Departments. This allowed for the recently completed demolition of the old Social Services Building and for some reorganization of Municipal Center Space that will accommodate the needs of the Court System.

“Additionally, and perhaps the County’s most discussed and debated issue of 2010, there was the future of the Gaslight Village property that the 3E’s and 3M’s (now two M’s) have a partnership in. This partnership has not been a perfect one or without disagreements; however, the honest debate lead to a resolution on the question of the older buildings and that has cleared the way for the project to again move forward.

“This project will be one of 2011’s main focuses. As such, I’ve asked that our outgoing chairman Fred Monroe chair the Gaslight Committee to use his expertise and diplomacy skills to keep the progress moving on this item that is important to both the economy and health of Lake George.

“Another important county project is the Exit 18 corridor, or Main Street project. After ten years of planning this project is now halfway through its construction. When finished it

will result in a fundamental change to this first entrance to Warren County off the Northway and is of course of particular importance to the Town of Queensbury and the City of Glens Falls.

"Additionally, we will be making an important decision regarding the future of the long debated County Railroad. We are in the midst of evaluating proposals from prospective operators to manage our line in partnership with the Town of Corinth in Saratoga County. Done right, there is an opportunity here to dramatically improve the railroad's situation and also bring new economic development opportunities to the area.

"In my opinion, the top priority for 2011 must be to continue to keep the pressure on in fighting our budget issues. In 2009 we started making fundamental changes to the way we do business. In 2010 we continued this new practice and brought in a very respectable budget. Now is the time to solidify the new way of looking at the budget process. Unfortunately, much of the budget is not within our complete local control. Of course we all hope the world economy improves, and we all hope our newly elected Congress, our new Governor and State Legislature will bring a new perspective to their governance with the will of we the people still ringing loudly in their ears. And while we wish them well, we must acknowledge that past history is a good indicator of future performance, that much of the handwriting was seen on the wall long ago and that, whether due to competencies or complexities, change for the better in the hands of others is never guaranteed.

"Therefore, I caution the board not to expect salvation from either Washington or Albany. Hope for the best but be prepared for the worst. We all have a long list offered to those in State and Federal government of needed reforms that would aid local municipalities in controlling property taxes. There is need for reform on the Wick's Law, Prevailing Wage, State Procurement Policies, Unfunded Mandates and crushing environmental regulation and restriction. These have had a devastating effect on the upstate counties for years and despite repeated pleas to abandon failed policies they continue. We absolutely must continue this fight, but we shouldn't expect change to come quickly or easily. We must do all we can here with the conditions as they exist, not as we would wish them.

"This will take strength and resolve and a few other things currently lacking at the higher levels of government. It will require continued bipartisan teamwork in this boardroom. I'm proud to say that in my seven years of service as a Supervisor I have not seen party affiliation get in the way of our work. I will seek to continue this as well. To that end, each Supervisor will chair at least one committee. I'm appointing Stony Creek Supervisor Frank Thomas Finance Committee Chairman. I'll ask him and his Committee to work to continue to closely monitor county spending to ensure that the fund balance continues to recover. Likewise, I'll ask Budget Officer Geraghty and his committee to again start the budget process early in the year. The challenge will be to achieve a budget with no increase in the levy for 2012.

"We have the good fortune of a strong County Administrator and outstanding department heads in place that have proven they know where to squeeze to make the most of the taxpayer's dollar. There is always more work to be done and these fine employees of the county continue to look for and find ways to squeeze harder. We Supervisors need only give them the tools and support to do so.

"Respectfully submitted,

Daniel G. Stec, Chairman
Warren County Board of Supervisors"

The board members responded with applause.

Chairman Stec extended privilege of the floor to Senator Little. Senator Little congratulated Chairman Stec and thanked Mr. Monroe for his years as Chairman, as well. She apprised she was aware of the issues that the County faced, specifically the shifting of costs and mandates from the State to the County. She added that the new Governor was also aware of the challenges and was willing to work in a bipartisan fashion. Senator Little noted that she looked forward to working with all the Supervisors in the new year and reinforced the importance of keeping in close communication. The board members responded with applause.

Chairman Stec called for reading of communications.

Clerk read communications, including the following:

Jeffery Tennyson, Superintendent of the Department of Public Works (DPW), pursuant to Local Law No. 2 of 1971, making the following appointments for the year 2011: Kevin J. Hajos, P.E., Acting Superintendent of Public Works and Deputy Superintendent of DPW; Tod M. Beadnell, P.E., Deputy Superintendent of Public Works Operations; Joan Wolfe, DPW Records Officer and Deputy Superintendent of DPW for Administration; and Donald DeGraw, Airport Manager. Kevin Hajos, Tod Beadnell and Joan Wolfe are hereby given the authority to sign all documents (vouchers, purchase orders, contracts, etc.) for the Department of Public Works in the absence of Mr. Tennyson.

Communications ordered placed on file.

Chairman Stec called for reading of resolutions.

Clerk noted a motion was necessary to bring Resolution Nos. 1 through 23 to the floor. Motion was made by Mr. VanNess, seconded by Mr. Bentley and carried unanimously, to bring Resolution Nos. 1 through 23 to the floor.

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Mr. Monroe requested a roll call vote on Resolution No. 10, Appointing Representatives to Adirondack Park Local Government Review Board.

Chairman Stec called for a vote on the resolutions.

Resolution Nos. 1 through 23 were approved. Certificate of Appointments, naming Director of the Warren County Youth Bureau; naming members to the Warren County Labor/Management Committee; naming member to the Quality Assurance Committee of the Westmount Health Facility; naming members to the Greater Adirondack Resource Conservation and Development Council; naming representative to the Lake George Watershed Conference; naming members to the Gaslight Village Ad Hoc Committee; and naming members to the Warren County Youth Board, were submitted.

Chairman Stec announced the 2011 Standing and Special Committees, and a copy of the Committee listings was submitted. A copy was also distributed to each Supervisor. He reminded everyone in attendance of the luncheon immediately following the meeting and encouraged all to stay.

There being no further business, on motion by Mr. McCoy and seconded by Mr. Belden, Chairman Stec adjourned the meeting at 11:28 a.m.