

Madison County to reassess renewable energy project tax policy

By Caitlin Traynor | June 12, 2019

WAMPSVILLE, N.Y. — After some pushback from the public at recent meetings, the Madison County Board of Supervisors opted to stall changes in how renewable energy projects are taxed.

At its meeting Tuesday, the board decided it will draft its own policy regarding state property tax law that governs the taxation and exemptions of renewable energy projects. The county had initially proposed to opt out of the Section 487 of New York State Real Property Tax Law but will now ask the county attorney to draft a policy for how it will handle payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) programs

County Attorney Tina Wayland-Smith said the policy will provide the county with a uniform and consistent model for PILOT programs. The state law provides a 15-year exemption from taxes for renewable energy systems. The county wants to create a policy to handle that law locally to ensure projects are given uniform treatment.

Madison County will join other counties in New York and other states in a possible lawsuit against telecommunication companies. Telecommunication companies are required by law to collect a 911 surcharge from their customers and turn that funding over to counties.

Some of those companies may not have been collecting that surcharge or may have failed to remit the money collected to counties. Madison County agreed to retain Napoli Shkolnik, PLLC to determine the feasibility of suing those

companies. The county won't be charged for legal services unless a lawsuit is successful and money is collected as a result.

As part of the money the county receives as a result of the settlement with the Oneida Indian Nation, the board authorized special district grants to municipalities to cover hydrant, library and fire district taxes assessed on properties owned by the Nation. The city of Oneida will receive \$66,945; the town of Fenner will receive \$6.33; the town of Lenox \$2,743; town of Lincoln \$1,481; town of Smithfield \$168; town of Stockbridge \$4,938; and town of Sullivan \$215.

Similarly, the county will give grants to municipalities to make their tax levies whole, turning over the amount that would be paid in property taxes of each parcel owned by the Nation. The payments are based on the tax rate of each municipality at the time of the settlement with the Nation (2014). The city of Oneida will receive \$106,123; Fenner \$44.46; Lenox \$14,426; Lincoln \$3,416; Smithfield \$1,188; Stockbridge \$26,978; Sullivan \$46,785; and village of Canastota \$29,803.

The board also approved an economic development loan for Hamilton Aero, LLC. Located at the Hamilton Municipal Airport, the company will perform inspections and maintenance of general aviation aircraft. The \$32,000 loan will be used to purchase tools, equipment and inventory.

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