

## COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE LEGISLATURE MEETING

Thursday February 21, 2019

4:30 PM

Members Present: D. J. Reynolds (Chairman), S. Flagg, S. Baker, K. Wildoner, D. D. Reynolds, G. Baldwin, M. Pasquale, J. Shaw, M. Hilderbrant, C. O'Brien, S. Ryan, R. Balles, B. Weslar, M. Kaminsky, M. Whalen.

Others Present: J. Garnar, K. McManus, H. McCrory, Executive; J. Knebel, OMB; B. Vojtisek, Veterans Services; B. Margolas, Southern Tier Veterans Support Group; M. Spicer, Clear Path for Veterans; A. Martin, J. Bertoni, M. Tanzini, Legislature.

The Committee of the Whole was called to order at 4:35 PM. Chairman D. J. Reynolds began by welcoming Legislators and guests. He then introduced County Executive Jason Garnar.

J. Garner thanked the Chairman and the Legislature for holding the Committee of the Whole Meeting. County Executive Garnar introduced Deputy County Executive Kevin McManus to begin the presentation.

Deputy County Executive McManus discussed the need for a facility to serve Broome County's 13,000 Veterans that would offer services under one roof. Deputy County Executive McManus stated that Veterans Services Director Brian Vojtisek felt the current Veterans Services environment located at the Broome County Office Building is "not welcoming" and "unfriendly." Deputy County Executive McManus stated that coming to a downtown setting is often unsuitable for Veterans due to parking and traffic issues along with being required to go through security at the County Office Building.

Deputy County Executive McManus discussed a recent visit to a Clear Path for Veterans facility located in Chittenango, NY. He stated that this facility is very similar to Vestal Hills, which the administration feels is a better location than the county-owned facility in Conklin. He stated that constructing a building and a parking lot on the 13-acre property would leave little room for expansion if the program were to grow.

Deputy County Executive McManus introduced Public Works Commissioner Leslie Boulton, who discussed what renovations would have to be made to the Vestal Hills site in order for it to be functional. Phase 1 of the project would include "shell improvements," which include adding insulation and winterization measures, new windows, a new roof along with code compliancy projects. Other work includes making the building compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act, installing new elevators, upgrading the

bathrooms and other site upgrades. Phase 1 also includes a full renovation of the first floor to construct office spaces, common gathering spaces and rehabilitating the kitchen area so it can be utilized.

Commissioner Boulton introduced Haley McCrory who discussed who would be working out of the new facility.

Ms. McCrory concluded the presentation by introducing Veterans Services Director Brian Vojtisek. He strongly endorsed the project and urged the Legislature to approve it in order to serve the Veterans of Broome County. He described the project as “historic and revolutionary” and said the project will “serve as a model for not only the State, but the Country.”

Ms. McCrory introduced Southern Tier Veterans Support Group President Ben Margolas, who discussed the organization and its mission. The organization currently does not have an office space and could be housed at the proposed Veterans Facility.

Ms. McCrory introduced Clear Path for Veterans CEO Melissa Spicer who discussed the operations of the facility located in Chittenango.

After the conclusion of the Clear Path presentation, Chairman Reynolds opened the floor to questions from Legislators.

Responding to a question from Mr. Baldwin, Deputy County Executive McManus stated that initial conversations indicated that Clear Path would be responsible for the building maintenance, but it was discovered that Broome County would be responsible for at least one full time custodian at \$35,000 plus benefits to maintain the facility. He also stated that the administration is considering using the Veterans Fund reserve to use for one-time equipment purchases, or roof repairs. He further stated the reserve current holds approximately \$1,000,000. Deputy County Executive McManus also said Clear Path has committed to paying \$2,500 a month for rent.

Responding to a question from Mr. Baldwin, Deputy County Executive McManus explained the fundraising model used by Clear Path to leverage personal and corporate donations to fund the facility. Ms. Spicer stated that New York State grant funding could contribute to the overall operational costs. Ms. Spicer said that the entire program doesn't have to be rolled out at once, but rather in stages according to the needs of the County and cost of the programs.

Responding to a question from Ms. O'Brien, Ms. Spicer said it would take an estimated \$350,000 to operate the facility on a yearly basis for at least three years, depending on what programs were implemented for Broome County.

Responding to a question from Mr. Baker, Ms. Spicer stated volunteers could assist with gardening and basic landscaping work and stated that the entire 80-acre site would not have to be mowed by volunteers. County Executive Garnar stated that the administration would look into state and federal funding options to help fund the facility. Deputy County

Executive McManus stated that around \$35,000 in equipment for maintenance would have to be purchased including a snow plow tractor, a brush, a riding mower, hand mowers, hand blowers and other items. Ms. Spicer stated that Home Depot donated many items to the Chittenango facility including snowblowers and shovels.

In response to a question from Mr. Pasquale, Ms. Spicer stated that she receives \$125,000 for building maintenance from Onondaga County with Madison County contributing \$35,000 for transportation. She stated Onondaga County is the recipient of the Joseph Dwyer Grant.

In response to a question from Chairman Reynolds, Ms. Spicer stated that it took about three years to grow the volunteer base up to 1,200 participants.

In response to a question from Mr. Pasquale, County Executive Garnar stated that the overall project cost is \$3,100,000, with 2,150,000 in grant funding to be contributed. County Executive Garnar stated that the remaining \$950,000 would be bonded over a period of time.

In response to a question from Mr. Pasquale, Deputy County Executive McManus stated that the Vestal Hills property is currently owned by Anthony DeNaples from Scranton, Pennsylvania.

In response to a question from Mr. Pasquale, Deputy County Executive McManus stated the mineral rights of the property will remain with the current property owner. He stated that the Law Department has found that the property owner would not be able to install a drilling pad on the County's portion of the property. Broome County Attorney Robert Behnke would restrict any use of the surface land. If someone is allowed to extract natural gas via hydraulic fracturing, the retainer of the mineral rights would be able to drill six to eight miles underneath the surface and drill a line out to another well pad that is located off the property. Mr. Behnke stated that provision would be included in the property deed and the property owner indicated it would not be an issue.

In response to a question from Mr. Pasquale, Deputy County Executive McManus stated that the administration is trying to get the project approved in a short time frame in order to close on the property as soon as possible because other entities were interested in the Vestal Hills property. A deadline of April 10<sup>th</sup> was discussed with the County Attorney and it was stated that in order to close by that time, the project would have to be approved by the Legislature today. If the project was pushed off to next month, Deputy County Executive McManus stated that the deal could "go sideways." County Executive Garnar stated that the potential of the property played a role in the decision to try and close on the property quickly because sites like these are rarely presented to the County for use.

In response to a question from Ms. Kaminsky, County Executive Garnar stated that "a number of people and organizations would love to donate to this project." He says there are many interested people who want to financially contribute to the project.

In response to a question from Mr. Flagg, County Executive Garnar stated that the likelihood of obtaining the state grants needed to run the facility is “very real.” He stated those who have expressed interest in donating funds to the project have a proven track record of supporting Veterans projects.

In response to a question from Mr. Whalen, Ms. Spicer stated that Chittenango facility has security cameras in every room. She says there are panic buttons and the staff is trained quarterly on dealing with things like active shooters. She stated that one staff member who is a retired member of law enforcement carries a firearm and has it on him at all times.

In response to a question from Mr. Balles, Deputy County Executive McManus stated that he would provide all of the financial quotes that were discussed during the meeting with the Legislature.

In response to a question from Mr. Balles, Deputy County Executive McManus stated that Clear Path would utilize a recently-purchased van to pick up Veterans from intermodal areas in the County. It was stated that peer vehicles operated by Clear Path can provide additional rides for Veterans who want to stop by the facility.

In response to a question from Mr. Balles, Deputy County Executive McManus stated two sites that are currently for sale, a former ACHIEVE facility in Johnson City and the former BAE site in Johnson City were ruled out because they were deemed “too urban” by the site selection committee.

In response to a question from Mr. Flagg, County Executive Garnar stated that the only impact in the operational budget would be the \$35,000 maintenance employee plus benefits. Deputy County Executive stated that any services that would be installed would have to be sustainable. If a service needed to be created or expanded, an equal revenue stream would have to be adjusted to reflect the increase. As proposed the estimates included in the \$3,100,000 project include the building renovations and anticipated expenses in year one. Additional costs would include a \$35,000 maintenance position, plus benefits and the one-time equipment costs that would have to be purchased to make the facility functional. An energy estimate for the facility provided by the Department of Public Works totals approximately \$72,000.

In response to a question from Ms. O’Brien, Ms. Boulton stated Phase 1 of the project would also include replacing the septic system, repairing the structural problems and water in the basement and replacing the boilers and windows. Ms. Boulton stated that it would be more expensive to construct a new building at the previously proposed Conklin site than renovating the Vestal Hills site.

In response to a question from Mr. Baldwin, Deputy County Executive McManus says volunteers fill out liability waivers at the Clear Path Facility in Chittenango, but for the proposed Veterans facility, the County would ultimately assume the risk of liability for volunteers who work at the facility, as Broome County is self-insured.

In response to a question from Mr. Flagg, asbestos abatement would be conducted in over 10,000 square feet of space that will be utilized by Veterans Services.

In response to a question from Mr. Flagg, Ms. Spicer stated that Broome County could be a hub for Veterans services in not only Broome, but surrounding counties as well.

In response to a question from Mr. Pasquale, Ms. Spicer stated that donations that are made to Clear Path, stay at Clear Path, but would be designated for programs at the Broome County Veterans Facility.

In response to a question from Mr. Pasquale, Ms. Boulton stated she was unsure of the amount of asbestos and abatement that is needed at the Vestal Hills facility. Mr. Mastin from the Department of Public Works stated that more than 70% of the building that has been tested. Of the areas tested, they found one section of piping in the mechanical room that has asbestos wrap on it along with other areas in the basement.

Ms. O'Brien stated that eighty samples were taken at the site and eleven are positive for lead that were over 1.0 MG. Three samples tested positive for lead that were less than 1.0 MG (Stairwell, Levine Room, Boiler Room and Courtyard)

In response to a question from Chairman Reynolds, Mr. Mastin stated some areas of the site have been renovated since the sampling, so some abatement may have already been done.

In response to a question from Chairman Reynolds, County Executive Garnar stated there are around 14 Veterans that are homeless on any given night. He'd like to eventually build out and include housing for Veterans, but the priority is Phase 1 of the Veterans Facility.

Chairman Reynolds thanked the guests and Legislators for attending and the meeting was adjourned at 6:05 PM.



# THE BROOME COUNTY VETERANS SERVICES AGENCY

The VSA

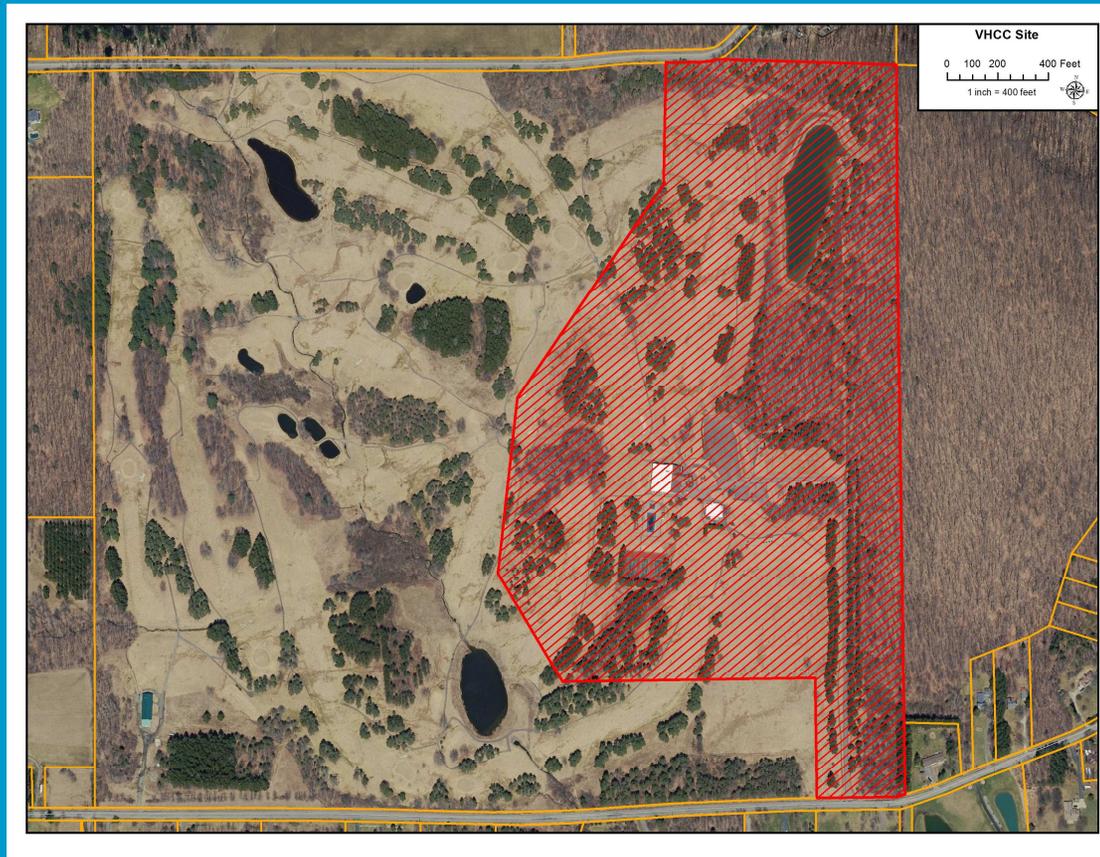


# OVERVIEW

- One-stop shop campus for veterans services and programs
- Facility to serve 13,000 veterans in Broome County
- Welcoming, safe, quiet place for veterans & families to receive services



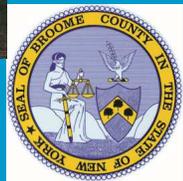
# 3115 WEBB RD., TOWN OF BINGHAMTON



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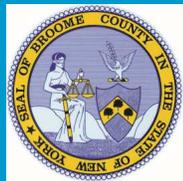


# 3115 WEBB RD., TOWN OF BINGHAMTON



# FINANCES

- Purchase price: \$750,000
  - Includes 18,000 sq. ft building, pro shop and 80 acres



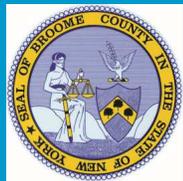
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- Renovation cost estimate: \$2.3 million



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- Purchase price: \$750,000
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- Renovation cost estimate: \$2.3 million
- Total project cost: \$3.1 million



# GRANTS

- Regional Economic Development Council Award: \$620,000
- Requested SAM Grants
  - NYS Assembly: \$500,000
  - NYS Senate: \$1 million



# PHASE 1 RENOVATION

- Building shell improvements – insulation, roof replacement, & window replacement
- Facility code compliance – energy efficiency (heating), ADA access (restroom upgrades & elevator access)
- Site upgrades –ADA parking and external access
- Complete first floor renovation – allocation of space to create modern workflow environment to include:
  1. Office space for Veterans Services Agency, STVSG, Clear Path for Veterans
  2. Common space for gathering, canteen events, etc.
  3. Rehabilitate / cleanup commercial kitchen



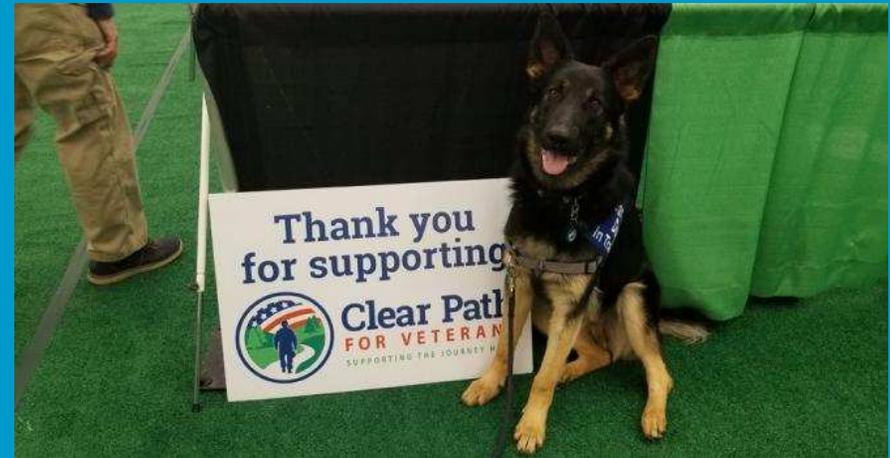
# AGENCIES

- **Broome County Veterans Services Agency**
- **Southern Tier Veterans Support Group**
- **Clear Path for Veterans Inc.**



# SERVICES

- Veteran Benefits
- Canine Program
- Peer/Wingman Programs
- Canteen Meals
- Veterans Forums



# PARTNER SERVICES

- Community Gardens - VINES
- Workforce Development
- CCE – Veterans in Agriculture
- Art Projects and Murals



Cornell University  
Cooperative Extension  
Broome County



american**job**center  
Broome-Tioga Workforce New York



# BROOME COUNTY VETERANS SERVICES AGENCY

- Assisted 750 veterans in 2018
- Filed almost 300 claims for benefits in 2018, resulting in \$195,000 in monthly awards and \$750,000 in retroactive awards for veterans and their families
- Claims and contacts have increased by 25% and 12% respectively from 2016 to 2018



# SOUTHERN TIER VETERANS SUPPORT GROUP



# Clear Path for Veterans

## Supporting the Journey Home

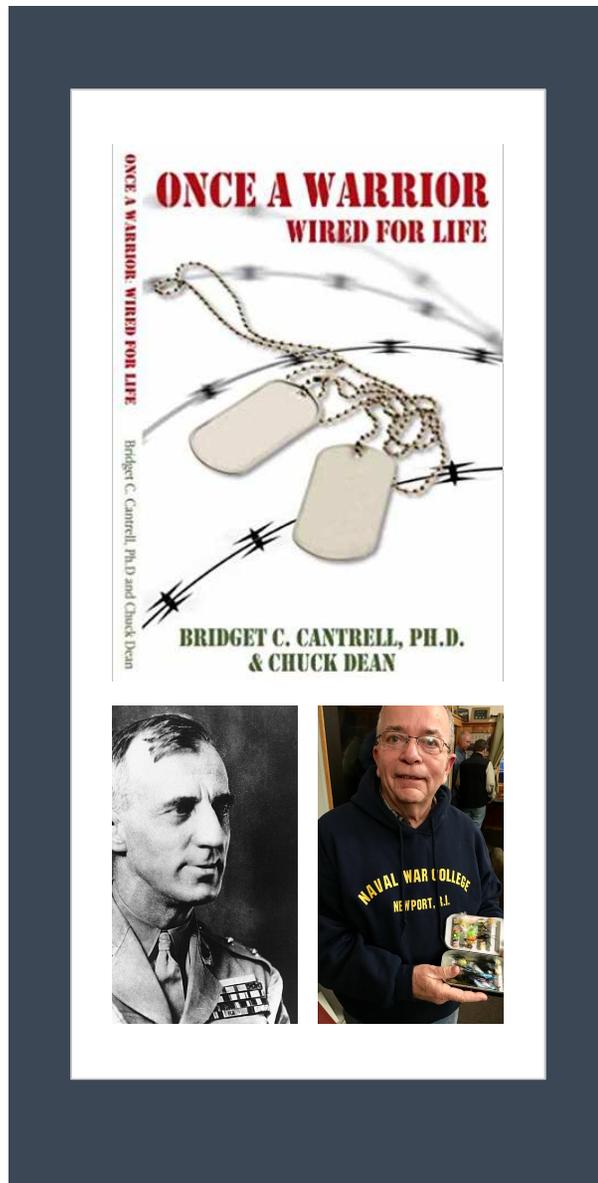


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FOR VETERANS  
SUPPORTING THE JOURNEY HOME™

# Lifecycle of a Warrior



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FOR VETERANS  
SUPPORTING THE JOURNEY HOME™



# Community Response

Boys (and now girls) with a normal viewpoint are taken from the fields, offices and factories and put into ranks. Put shoulder to shoulder they are entirely changed. We use them for a while and suddenly we discharge them and ask them to make another “about face.” This time they are asked to do their own self adjusting. They were no longer needed, so we scattered them into our communities ...

**Smedley Butler, USMC – WWI (left)**



# Our Headquarters



**Clear Path**  
**FOR VETERANS**  
SUPPORTING THE JOURNEY HOME™

# Our View



# Our Message:



**Clear Path**  
FOR VETERANS  
SUPPORTING THE JOURNEY HOME

# Why We're Here



**Clear Path**  
FOR VETERANS  
SUPPORTING THE JOURNEY HOME™

# Mission & Vision

## Our Mission

Recognizing the responsibility of communities to help those who serve, Clear Path for Veterans empowers service members, veterans and their families through supportive programs and services in a safe, respectful environment.

## Our Vision

To be *the* Veteran Service Organization (VSO) that Veterans turn to in order to improve their physical and emotional well-being and general sense of self-worth



**Clear Path**<sup>™</sup>  
**FOR VETERANS**  
SUPPORTING THE JOURNEY HOME<sup>™</sup>

# Our Programs

Dogs2Vets  
December 2010

- Wellness Launched in 2012
- Peer Support & Canteen launched in 2013
- Employment & Female Veteran launched 2015



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# Who We Serve



# And Families



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# Programs & Services

Canine Programs

Integrative Medicine

Peer Support & Referrals

Canteen & Culinary Events

Social Engagement

Warriors Working

## Six Dimensions of Wellness



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# How We Deliver

## Core Purpose

To Enable Veterans to Live a Healthy and Happy Life

## Our Promise

At CPV you'll find a welcoming environment where you will connect with people who understand you and that will provide you with the skills or activities needed for you to be more relaxed, feel better emotionally and physically and overall improve your well-being.

**\*\*Value Proposition** – We are the only VSO that helps veterans significantly improve their well-being by offering a welcoming environment and programming focused on three key areas:

1. Social Connectivity
2. Physical and Mental Wellness
3. Job Readiness



**Clear Path**  
FOR VETERANS  
SUPPORTING THE JOURNEY HOME™

# Net Promoter Score

- THE FACT THAT CPV HAS A WORLD CLASS NET PROMOTER SCORE OF 72.7% SAYS VOLUMES ABOUT THE QUALITY OF THIS ORGANIZATION

First, some background: In 2003, business strategist Fred Reichheld published an article in the Harvard Business Review titled “One Number You Need to Grow”. Anything over +50 is excellent, and over +70 is considered world-class

Company	NPS
USAA 	80
Costco 	78
Nordstrom 	75
Apple/iPhone 	70
Amazon 	69
Southwest 	66



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# Life Cycle of a Warrior



**Clear Path**  
FOR VETERANS  
SUPPORTING THE JOURNEY HOME™

# How We Sustain Our Model

- [SupportClearPath.com](http://SupportClearPath.com)
- Sponsor or Attend an Event
- Volunteer
- Spread the Word
- Joseph Dwyer Grant



**Clear Path**  
**FOR VETERANS**  
SUPPORTING THE JOURNEY HOME™

# QUESTIONS?

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