



# The Chairman's Corner

by

**Matt B. Murell**

[Matt.Murell@ColumbiacountyNY.com](mailto:Matt.Murell@ColumbiacountyNY.com)

## 11 WARREN STREET – PART TWO

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With a number of factors under consideration as the decision was arrived at for Columbia County to purchase the building located at 11 Warren Street, Hudson, ultimately that decision centered primarily around county infrastructure concerns that have arisen over recent years.

The projected total cost of the 11 Warren Street purchase (\$3,350,000) and other factors total \$8,859,000. Those other factors would include renovations (18,622 square feet at \$250 per square foot) at \$4,655,500; architectural/engineering fees at \$387,500; and 10 percent for contingencies at \$466,000.

In part one last time, I noted that among those major concerns has been to build or locate a new space for the county Board of Elections in regards to staff and voting machines. As things stand in its current office space in the county building at 401 State Street, Hudson, the board operates in 4,712 square feet of space. At 11 Warren Street, plans call for the Board of Elections to occupy 6,052 square feet.

Among the Board of Elections issues are a lack of an adequate training area, poor access for moving equipment in and out of storage, as well as dampness in the basement, where the voting machines are stored, and its lack of handicap accessibility. There has been a large financial commitment to the voting machines, and placing them in a dry, stable environment is crucial to their long-term operability.

Apart from the Board of Elections, also anticipated to make the move into 11 Warren Street are current 610 State Street occupants Probation, Public Defender, and the 911 backup call center.

As I noted last time, a long-term third-party building condition estimate to maintain 610 State Street (a building constructed in 1886) conducted in 2019 and adjusted for inflation, stood at \$5,090,400 as of last August. I'll also reiterate that with the purchase price of \$3,350,000 and anticipated renovations and contingencies, the overall projected project cost of 11 Warren Street is \$8,715,500.

Erect a new structure elsewhere, as opposed to purchasing 11 Warren Street? Given the current high cost of commercial construction, the sum required to put up a structure that would solve the needs under consideration essentially makes that option prohibitively expensive. Under a recent bid put out by the county on a new construction project for office space, bids were received at more than \$1,000 per square foot. That price did not include the cost of land acquisition.

Throughout the 11 Warren Street process public input on this project has been sought. In seeking comment on the proposed vision of the building exterior and its façade, noted county Commissioner of Public Works Ray Jurkowski in May as part of his presentation to a meeting of the county Space Utilization Committee, "During each of the last two public meetings regarding 11 Warren Street, I have requested input from the public regarding the proposed vision of the building exterior and its façade. To date I have not received any constructive input. It is my opinion that the county should receive input from the public on this issue in order to provide direction and scope to the design professional prior to undertaking this task." *More on the 11 Warren Street project next time.*