

TESTIMONY

Thomas Dunn
Mayor, Town of Wolcott
Before the
Planning & Development Committee
February 1, 2013

RE: HB-5295 AN ACT CONCERNING THE POSSESSIONS OF EVICTED TENANTS

I am here to **support House Bill 5295**, which proposes to eliminate storage expenses paid for by municipalities by requiring property owners of rental properties to take possession of unclaimed personal property of evicted tenants.

Below is a brief outline of our Eviction Procedures:

Receive notification from Marshall of upcoming Eviction.

Make arrangements with Public Works Department to have workers and equipment available for the scheduled eviction.

Make arrangements with Storage Facility to have a unit available for storage.

Day of Eviction

The Public Works Employees and Mayors Assistant are on the scene of Eviction. As the Marshall's packing crew packs up the Evictee's belongings and bring them out, the Mayor's Assistant as well as the State Marshall make a list of each box and its contents. The Public Works Crew then loads the boxes, belongings, and/or furniture on to the trucks and transport the items to the Storage Facility. This process can take hours if the Eviction is at a home where the house is full with the Evictee's belongings. Once the property is emptied, the list of contents is given to the Storage Facility for their records.

The town is responsible to pay for the use of the storage unit for a minimum of 15 days. In the event the evictee does not come back to claim their possessions, the town must either advertise for an auction, incurring publication charges, as well as the time to hold the auction, or go back to the unit, load the contents back on to trucks and trailers and haul the items to be discarded. For the most part, the items in the units are not in a condition to be sold at a tag sale or auctioned OK Remember that it is the Public Works Crew who is required to do this on the taxpayer's dime.

What is most perplexing is that we do not get reimbursed from the state the full cost of the eviction. The cost of the rental is approximately \$225.00 for the month (15 days or 30, same price) and the labor of the Town Employees to be there when there is a more pressing need for them to be doing their jobs maintaining the Town of Wolcott.

It should not be the responsibility of the Tax Payers to pay for any of this. An eviction is a civil matter and should be handled as such. It is not to say that Municipalities have no empathy for someone who is down on their luck, but an eviction process should be kept between the Property Owner, the Renter and the Court System that approves the Eviction. **Please support HB-5295.**