

# TIMES TELEGRAM

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## Legislature looking to get involved in Mohawk Valley Land Bank

**Wednesday**

Posted Oct 5, 2016 at 8:36 PM

At its quarterly meeting Wednesday afternoon, the Herkimer County Legislature approved two resolutions to start the process for joining the Greater Mohawk Valley Land Bank.

By Samantha Madison

HERKIMER — At its quarterly meeting Wednesday afternoon, the Herkimer County Legislature approved two resolutions to start the process for joining the Greater Mohawk Valley Land Bank.

The first resolution authorized the county to apply to the Empire State Development for approval of the Greater Mohawk Valley Land Bank Corporation.

The county is applying for \$150,000 to start the process of becoming a part of the land bank.

The second resolution established the land bank on behalf of the county and appointed representatives from the county to serve on the land bank board.

Herkimer County Legislators Raymond Johnson and Kurt Ackerman were appointed to be on the board.

“I think the big thing is, we’re seeing more and more properties being abandoned,” said Herkimer County Administrator James Wallace. “And if the land bank is successful, you can rehab those buildings and the land bank would be able to generate money and it would be able to fix other buildings. It’s a real neat idea.”

The primary focus of a land bank is the acquisition of real property that is tax delinquent, tax foreclosed, vacant and/or abandoned.

The tools of the program are then used to eliminate the harms and liabilities caused by such properties, according to the website of Empire State Development Corp., the state's economic development arm.

Land banks have taken shape across the state, including in Syracuse, Buffalo, Rochester and the Capital Region.

“It’s a good thing for the area,” Wallace said. “There’s a tremendous need in this area. It really exploded here in the last five years. This could be a piece of the answer. ... We need to start somewhere. We can’t just let six to eight properties go dormant every year.”

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