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## Herkimer County legislators adopt land bank resolution

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Herkimer, N.Y.

HERKIMER, N.Y. — The Herkimer County Legislature has established and authorized the creation of a regional land bank.

The Greater Mohawk Valley Land Bank Corporation will have nine members on its board of directors, which include county Legislators Raymond Johnson, District 5 of Ilion, and Kurt Ackerman, District 12 of Little Falls. Johnson was approved for an initial term of two years and Ackerman for an initial term of one year.

The resolution was adopted with a 14-0 vote by the legislature at Wednesday's meeting. Johnson and Ackerman abstained, while county Legislator Patrick Russell was absent.

The state has made funding available for municipalities to address blight in the community through the establishment of land banks. Blight includes deteriorated, abandoned and tax-delinquent properties which can pose a risk to public health and safety, according to the county's resolution. It also states that land banks allow and provide a mechanism for the re-development, repair, improvement or deconstruction of blighted properties.

"Limbo properties or zombie properties, it is a major problem in all the counties," said Johnson during a telephone interview Saturday.

Johnson said the organization is expecting to receive a \$150,000 state grant later this month.

Once the land bank is established, Herkimer County villages will be able to apply and submit applications to Johnson and Ackerman about what properties they feel need to be addressed. Johnson said there is a focus on residential and multi-family residential structures.

The following are other anticipated board appointments:

- Karl Gustafson, representing Montgomery County, for two-year term.
- Kathy Clark and Edwin Frazier, both representing Otsego County, for an initial two-year and one-year term, respectively.
- Steven Wilson, representing Schoharie County, to a two-year term.
- Dennis Gillen, representing the City of Rome, to a one-year term.
- Brian Thomas, representing the City of Utica, to a two-year term.

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•Stephen Smith, representing the Mohawk Valley Economic Development District, to an initial one-year term.

GMVLB board members need to be a resident of the county or city from which they are appointed.

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