

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: ECONOMIC GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

DATE: MARCH 31, 2015

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS TAYLOR
MONROE
WOOD
BEATY
STROUGH

OTHERS PRESENT:

WAYNE LAMOTHE, COUNTY PLANNER
ED BARTHOLOMEW, PRESIDENT OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
CORPORATION
KEVIN B. GERAGHTY, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
PAUL DUSEK, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD
SUPERVISOR DICKINSON
JODI CENTERBAR, LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST
CHARLENE DIRESTA, SR. LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

Mr. Taylor called the meeting of the Economic Growth & Development Committee to order at 12:49 p.m.

Motion was made by Ms. Wood, seconded by Mr. Strough and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the previous Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Wayne LaMothe, County Planner, who distributed copies of the agenda to the Committee members; *a copy of the agenda is on file with the minutes.*

Mr. LaMothe requested to amend Resolution No. 147 of 2015, which authorized the retainment of the temporary GIS (Geographic Information Systems) Technician position, in order to increase the hours per year from 200 to 1,000 and to increase the hourly rate from \$15 to \$20. He commented that Resolution No. 147 of 2015 had already extended the temporary position until June 1, 2016. He explained the Enhanced 911 System required a lot of additional time and labor and the temporary position would be needed to assist with this. He pointed out the County had received approximately \$115,000 in grant funding for a Hazard Mitigation Plan update of which GIS was a significant component. He advised Jim Lieberum, District Manager of the Soil and Water Conservation District, had requested the Planning & Community Development Department to complete the GIS component of this project for which \$20,000 of the grant funding would be utilized to offset this salary. Mr. LaMothe stated he had spoken to the temporary GIS Technician who had a Master's Degree in GIS and would need to leave another part-time job in order to continue working for the County on a part-time basis. He commented the employee wanted to keep current and proficient in the GIS field and had agreed to continue working for the County until June 1, 2016 if the hourly rate was increased from \$15 per hour to \$20 per hour.

Mr. LaMothe stated he had requested this change at the previous Committee meeting but he acknowledged the paperwork he had submitted had not clarified exactly what he was requesting. He said the budget amendment for the extension of the temporary position had been approved at the March 20, 2015 Board meeting. He mentioned it had been his understanding that the Department's Table of Organization did not include part-time employees and therefore he had not requested to amend it at the previous meeting. Paul Dusek, County Administrator, noted this was a significant increase and he asked if the employee was currently working for the County at \$15 per hour. Mr. LaMothe replied affirmatively and he explained the employee currently only worked 8 hours per week and in order for him to work for the County for 20 hours per week it would be

necessary for him to leave other employment where the employee made more than \$20 per hour. Mr. Dusek asked if Mr. LaMothe felt it was necessary to increase the hourly rate to \$20 in order to retain this employee and Mr. LaMothe replied affirmatively.

Motion was made by Mr. Strough, seconded by Mr. Monroe and carried unanimously to amend Resolution No. 147 of 2015, which authorized the retainment of the temporary GIS Technician position, in order to increase the hours per year from 200 to 1,000 and to increase the hourly rate from \$15 to \$20 and to forward same to the Personnel Committee. A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.

Mr. LaMothe informed that as part of the Enhanced 911 System, Verizon had contacted the Department to advise that they were placing phones in the America's Best Value Inn and Suites. Under the Enhanced 911 System, he continued, all 130 rooms for this hotel would require a separate 911 address which was GPS (Global Positioning System) located. He stated that completing the address points for this one hotel would require at least one full work day for one employee. He noted this would also be required for each hotel, motel, apartment building, etc. which would be a time consuming task over the next two years. Mr. Monroe opined this was overkill because if there was an emergency at a hotel, the emergency responders would go to the management office to determine the location of the emergency. Mr. LaMothe explained this was a requirement of the new Enhanced 911 System and was intended to eliminate circumstances, such as response to apartment complexes where there was no manager to direct the emergency responders to the correct location. A brief discussion ensued.

This concluded the Planning & Community Development portion of the Committee meeting and the Economic Development Corporation (EDC) portion commenced at 12:56 p.m.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Ed Bartholomew, President of the EDC, who distributed copies of a handout to the Committee members; *a copy of the handout is on file with the minutes.*

Pertaining to the handout, Mr. Bartholomew informed that the EDC, in collaboration with the Adirondack Gateway Council (AGC), was entering into one of the final phases of undertaking an economic development strategy for Warren, Washington and Northern Saratoga Counties. He commented that surveys had been emailed to the municipality officials, businesses, community services organizations and economic development organizations and the internet addresses for these surveys were listed on the handout. He stated that as part of this economic development strategy there would be a total of 6 meetings and the first 3 meetings would be held in April, as follows:

- ▶ Monday, April 6, 2015 at 6:30 p.m. at the Town Hall in the Town of Chester;
- ▶ Thursday, April 23, 2015 at 6:30 p.m. at Fire Company Building Station No. 1 in the Town of Fort Edward; and
- ▶ Monday, April 27, 2015 at 6:30 p.m. at the Town Hall in the Town of Hadley.

Mr. Bartholomew commented that economic development consultants would attend these meetings and updates would be provided on the broadband initiative, agricultural and farmer's markets, affordable housing and transportation. He commented the Governor's budget would be approved by the legislature on April 1, 2015 and would contain grant funding for broadband initiatives which presented an opportunity to submit an application. He stated the Governor's initiative was to create a mandate to increase the capacity and speed of broadband State-wide. He commented that better communication was a current challenge for Northern Warren, Washington and Saratoga Counties for both cell phone coverage and broadband.

Mr. Bartholomew encouraged the Supervisors to attend any of the meetings listed on the handout and he advised another series of meetings would be scheduled in May. He commented the reports based on the surveys would be concluded and compiled by June 30, 2015. He mentioned the surveys would be helpful in assisting the region and providing assistance to the individual Counties. He pointed out the AGC website address was www.agcny.org and the information would be posted there, as well.

Mr. Bartholomew informed of another collaboration between SUNY (State University of New York), the Tri-County Transition Team and the Southern Chapter of Adirondack Harvest. He explained the first meeting had been held Thursday, March 27th at Dunham's Bay Lodge with farmers and restauranteurs. He explained restaurants were being encouraged to work with the farmers to determine how local restaurants could be at the forefront of buying fresh local food. He commented the meeting had been a successful introduction of the local farmers to the restauranteurs and a number of the Warren County restaurants had expressed their willingness to work with the farmers.

Mr. Bartholomew apprised he had toured Apex Solar on Corinth Road in the Town of Queensbury that morning and he mentioned the owner of this business was Stan Dobert. He said Apex Solar currently had 70 employees and were principally involved in residential solar conversions although they did venture into work with some municipalities and businesses. He stated Apex Solar was looking for available funding for the modernization of their building and were considering increasing their workforce with an additional 30 employees. He pointed out that at least two of Apex Solar's employees were graduates of the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) job training program. A brief discussion ensued.

Mr. Bartholomew apprised the Governor's budget also contained funding for economic development and the regulations would be released next month. He said they would discuss the regulations at the next Committee meeting, as well as potential projects. He announced the Bi-County Loan Program for Warren and Washington Counties was being developed with 5 banks in the New York State Business Corporation. He said they hoped to have an announcement and start the loan program soon. He noted this would be an additional loan portfolio of \$500,000 between Warren and Washington Counties. He commented the EDC would be responsible for the loans and there would be a Business Loan Review Committee consisting of bankers and the New York State Business Development Corporation would be the underwriter of the loans. He said he was encouraged by the number of newer businesses that were looking to expand or modernize.

Mr. Taylor stated that a representative of the Saratoga & North Creek Railway (SNCR) had indicated the railroad operated at a million dollar loss per year and he asked if the EDC had been contacted by the SNCR. He asked if SNCR would be eligible for a loan program and Mr. Bartholomew responded that would need to be reviewed by the Empire State Development Corporation to determine eligibility. Mr. Bartholomew apprised the EDC's efforts for the railroad had been to work on the concept of rail freight which would potentially increase revenues for SNCR. He said he would schedule a meeting to discuss the needs of the SNCR. He noted one of the frustrations for the SNCR was that in order to get from North Creek to Albany it was necessary to deal with three other railroads. He said there were no rules or regulations and negotiations could be time consuming. He stated if the idea was to sell to a fourth railroad, they would want to ensure the County had some input into the agreements. He opined the least favorable option would be for a municipality to be engaged in the ownership of the rail line. A brief discussion ensued.

Mr. LaMothe announced the new First Wilderness Heritage Corridor website had been launched on March 30, 2015. He said there were still some glitches to be worked out but he invited the Committee members to view the website at www.firstwilderness.com. He explained the website had been re-vamped to allow it to be viewed on mobile devices; however, he continued, the software provider recognized there was a glitch with the Android tablet application which they anticipated resolving within a week.

There being no further business to come before the Economic Growth & Development Committee, on motion made by Ms. Wood and seconded by Mr. Beaty, Mr. Taylor adjourned the meeting at 1:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Charlene DiResta, Sr. Legislative Office Specialist