

## WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

**COMMITTEE: ECONOMIC GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT**

**DATE: JULY 1, 2015**

---

---

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

SUPERVISORS TAYLOR  
MONROE  
WOOD  
STROUGH

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

ED BARTHOLOMEW, PRESIDENT OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION  
WAYNE LAMOTHE, COUNTY PLANNER  
PAUL DUSEK, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR  
AMANDA ALLEN, CLERK OF THE BOARD  
FRANK E. THOMAS, BUDGET OFFICER  
SUPERVISORS BROCK  
MCDEVITT  
MERLINO  
SEEBER  
DAVID STRAINER, TOWN OF QUEENSBURY RESIDENT  
DON LEHMAN, *THE POST STAR*  
CHARLENE DIRESTA, SR. LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

---

---

**COMMITTEE MEMBER ABSENT:**

SUPERVISOR BEATY

Mr. Taylor called the meeting of the Economic Growth & Development Committee to order at 10:30 a.m. He announced there was no formal agenda available for this meeting.

Motion was made by Mr. Strough, seconded by Ms. Wood 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 Ed Bartholomew, President of the Economic Development Corporation (EDC), who informed he had recently received a letter from the Adirondack Association of Towns and Villages (AATV) indicating that a recent poll of graduating students from the Adirondack Park Region showed that nearly 70% would consider looking for a job in this region and many would consider starting a business in the Adirondacks. He said this was a clear indication that there was a new developing attitude amongst the younger generation. He stated the poll also included items that the graduating students wanted to see improved in the region, such as good paying jobs; more year-round cultural, social and entertainment options; and improved internet and cell phone coverage. Mr. Bartholomew opined that Warren County was currently working on one of these matters through their efforts to improve and expand broadband. He commented many of the municipalities were looking at developing year-round activities. He pointed out that 82% of the graduating students who lived in this area prior to college had participated in the poll.

Mr. Bartholomew advised the EDC had been working with Warren, Washington and Northern Saratoga Counties on completing the surveys for broadband and cell phone coverage in the area. He said he had recently attended a broadband and cell phone coverage meeting. He said they had met with officials after the meeting and had been informed that the grant application would be due sometime in October. He stated New York State recognized that cell phone coverage was equally as important as improving the speed of broadband. He advised the grant application for broadband and cell phone coverage would be a separate application and not part of the Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) process. He noted a water and sewer infrastructure improvement grant application would also be submitted in the fall. He commented the Town Supervisors should have received a letter from the EDC indicating they were prepared to provide some assistance and letters of support for any pending CFA applications by the July 31, 2015 deadline. He noted the EDC would work with the individual Towns, as well as with Wayne LaMothe, County Planner, to assist with CFA process.

Mr. Bartholomew said that regulations had not yet been released on the Upstate Revitalization Investment (URI) Grant Program. He explained that 3 regional councils out of 7 would be eligible to receive \$100 million per year for 5 years. He commented that the definition of upstate revitalization had not yet been determined nor had the regulations for this grant program. He explained the projects submitted would be conceptual projects which would not necessarily be ready to commence in the first year of the grant award. He stated it was important that the submitted projects be connected with the projects of other communities in the region. He mentioned he and Mr. LaMothe would discuss some possible recommended projects which would be sent to the Capital Region Economic Development Council (CREDC) for consideration. He noted the final projects would be selected by the CREDC to be included in the regional grant application which was due in September. He commented the projects submitted should be transformative and not be related to improvements in infrastructure, such as bridge or road construction. Mr. Bartholomew explained that although improved broadband and cell phone coverage would connect the entire region, it was not a good project for submission under the URI Grant Program. He said he would share further details on the grant program once they were released.

Mr. Bartholomew announced his attendance at a CFA Workshop on Friday, June 26, 2015 which had also been attended by Supervisors Conover, Dickinson and Taylor. He noted this Workshop had been attended by over 100 people and he thanked Governor Cuomo's Office and Empire State Development (ESD) for complying with the request to obtain further information on the CFA process. He reiterated the EDC was willing to work with the individual Towns to assist with the CFA process.

Mr. Bartholomew informed the tax cap requirement had been extended for 4 years until 2020. He said slight adjustments had been made to the tax cap in terms of defining what was available particularly pertaining to the payment in lieu of taxes for Industrial Development Agencies (IDA's). He commented that currently they were not including the revenues received by IDA's but they had incorporated restrictions on that. He announced that additional funds had been budgeted for the next 4 years for the Property Tax Freeze Credit which would allow County residents to receive rebate checks. He mentioned that a community in which the school district exceeded the tax cap would not be eligible to have their residents receive rebate checks. He explained that if the Queensbury Union Free School District exceeded the tax cap, then the residents of the Town of Queensbury would not be eligible to receive rebate checks. He informed the rebate checks were anticipated to start at approximately \$185 and to increase to \$532 by 2019.

Pertaining to the recent poll conducted by the AATV discussed earlier in the meeting, Mr. Bartholomew stated that several incidents had been cited of families returning to the Adirondacks. He explained these individuals graduated from college in this area, moved away to start a business and returned to the area to operate their business locally. He presented a couple of examples of this for Warren County. He said he would be sending a letter to each Town Supervisor requesting them to compile a list of businesses in their Town which had been created or continued by former local residents who had moved back to the area.

Mr. Monroe asked if there was any further information on the issuing of licenses for the manufacture of medical marijuana. He noted he had received a call from Hillary Peckham, of Etain, regarding their submission of an application for a license. Mr. Bartholomew said he had heard that there were a large number of applicants, some of whom included the involvement of large corporations. He commented that he had not heard any details pertaining to the award of the licenses but he felt the Peckhams had submitted a strong application. He noted that representatives from Washington County had also submitted a strong application. He commented there was a possibility that New York State would decide to increase the number of licenses issued above the original 5 licenses based on the number of applications received. Mr. Taylor advised there had been 43 applications

submitted for licenses for the manufacture of medical marijuana and Mr. Bartholomew agreed. A brief discussion ensued.

Mr. Bartholomew displayed the CFA 2015 Binder which he and Mr. LaMothe had compiled that included all of the details on the CFA process and all of the programs involved in the process. He stressed the importance of municipalities keeping them informed of their CFA applications so in the event they were contacted, it showed that Warren County was organized.

Mr. Taylor asked if the Broadband Grant Program presented the opportunity for a multi-year grant award. Mr. Bartholomew informed one of the issues stalling the development of regulations for this grant program was that currently the funding was a 20% State grant program with 80% required from private business. He said they were required to work with providers in the area and the providers were reluctant to extend broadband services to an area which might not be profitable for them. He said the grant program required the municipalities to obtain commitments from the providers indicating their willingness to look into the possibility of extending services into more remote Towns. He added that providers were indicating that 80% was too much for them to expend and they would prefer the grant ratio to be 50/50 or 40/60 rather than the current ratio of 20/80. A brief discussion ensued.

Mr. LaMothe advised that because the broadband project would be partially funded with grant monies it would be subject to minority procurement regulations and prevailing wage rates. He commented that with a project receiving a 20% match, if these requirements increased the costs by 30%, there would be no real savings. He noted if the grant funding was a 50/50 match program, it was possible to offset the costs by completing some in-kind services. Mr. Bartholomew stated this was the fifth round of funding for the Broadband Grant Program and he and Mr. LaMothe were becoming more educated about the concerns. He said they were careful about telling potential applicants about the rules and regulations at the very beginning of the process. He commented that the Women and Minority Owned Business requirement was now at 30% with some agencies and included Veteran Owned Businesses, as well. He pointed out that many companies in the area were beginning to take advantage of the tax credits outside of the CFA process by hiring veterans.

Mr. Strough mentioned one of the greatest expenses for a broadband or cell phone coverage project was the placement of the tower and purchase of the land for same. He suggested the uses of the towers be consolidated to include broadband, cell phone, emergency services, etc. He said he understood there might be grant program restrictions which would forbid this concept. Mr. Bartholomew advised the EDC was working on this possibility and he was pleased to have the expertise of Brian LaFlure, Director of the Office of Emergency Services/Fire Coordinator, to assist with this matter. Mr. Monroe pointed out the Adirondack Park Agency placed restrictions on the height of the towers which would make the consolidation of uses difficult because none of the providers or entities would want to be on the bottom of the tower which would be below the tree line. A brief discussion ensued.

There being no further business to come before the Economic Growth & Development Committee, on motion made by Ms. Wood and seconded by Mr. Strough, Mr. Taylor adjourned the meeting at 11:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Charlene DiResta, Sr. Legislative Office Specialist