

## WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

**COMMITTEE: ECONOMIC GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT**

**DATE: JULY 28, 2015**

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**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

SUPERVISORS TAYLOR  
WOOD  
STROUGH

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:**

SUPERVISORS MONROE  
BEATY

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

REPRESENTING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION:  
ED BARTHOLOMEW, PRESIDENT  
KEVIN B. GERAGHTY, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD  
PAUL DUSEK, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR  
SARAH MCLENITHAN, DEPUTY CLERK OF THE BOARD  
FRANK E. THOMAS, BUDGET OFFICER  
SUPERVISORS MERLINO  
DICKINSON  
CONOVER  
THOM RANDALL, *ADIRONDACK JOURNAL*  
MOLLY GANOTES, LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

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Mr. Taylor called the meeting of the Economic Growth & Development Committee to order at 12:01 p.m. and he announced that no formal agenda had been prepared for this meeting.

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 Ed Bartholomew, President of the Economic Development Corporation (EDC), who distributed copies of various handouts which he reviewed in detail. *Copies of the handouts are on file with the minutes.*

Mr. Bartholomew informed he was busy working on Consolidated Funding Applications (CFA) grants. He indicated he had reported to the New York State Empire State Development (NYSESD) that he continued to receive grant inquiries from not-for-profit entities, development corporations, museums, art groups and trails. He said he had looked into the process of obtaining grant funds and had found that the process typically took 14 months from beginning to end; he added that this timeline was very difficult for individuals planning a project. Mr. Bartholomew stated he was interested in developing an intermediate CFA process where individuals could submit important economic development projects and he said he would continue to work with the NYSESD on the matter. He stated the majority of the applications were from not-for-profit groups in Warren, Washington and upper Saratoga Counties, but noted there were also significant applications from engineering and environmental groups, as well as some concerning the waters of Lake George. He stated they had not received interest from the business community.

Mr. Bartholomew remarked the EDC was continuing work on a grant for cell and broadband coverage for 2015. He announced before a date could be set they needed to know the rules and regulations relating to these technologies. He said the difference between this year's application and those submitted in prior years was that they were gearing the application toward allocating funds to the providers, such as Verizon and PrimeLink, because communities did not have the funding to set up broadband and cell service in their areas. He added they were looking for 5 to 1 coverage, meaning Verizon, PrimeLink and Time Warner would be required to fund the lion's share; he added there were ongoing discussions in Albany regarding additional funding being allocated to private individuals. He informed Verizon and Primelink would not provide coverage in rural areas unless it was subsidized, and he was currently working on encouraging Empire State and New York Connect to review the issue.

Mr. Bartholomew informed funds would be available for infrastructure in 2016, which included roads, bridges, waste water treatment plants and water facilities. He said the rules and regulations had yet to be established and the process of putting together applications from EDC would continue through the fall.

Mr. Bartholomew expressed Lake George was the top lake in New York State according to a national survey of the 50 States. Additionally, he commented that the City of Glens Falls was included as one of the top four best places to start a small business in New York State according to an article from *NerdWallet.com*.

Mr. Bartholomew advised Warren County was an economic cluster, including businesses such as medial device manufactures CR Bard and Angio Dynamics; health and medical facilities such as Glens Falls Hospital and Hudson Headwaters Health Network (HHN); as well as a plethora of other businesses in the wood products, tourism and hospitality arenas. He noted the tourism industry continued to bring in revenue for Warren County and upstate New York. He stated unemployment rates were down 4.6% from the previous years percentage of 5.4%. He noted the EDC was commencing the third and final class for Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) job training in early September and he noted these classes would be attended by individuals from Warren, Saratoga and Washington Counties. He stated that he hoped following the completion of classes the EDC would be eligible for another grant to continue them in 2016.

Chairman Geraghty asked if the participants had all found job placement and Mr. Bartholomew replied that of the first class of 23, 17 participants had been placed; he added that of the second class of 20, 14 had found job placement. He indicated some individuals had taken seasonal positions which did not count towards the program. He said he was responsible for tracking the individual graduates for three to five years. He mentioned the key to the program was the 40-hour Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response Standard (HAZWOPER) program, the 10-hour Occupational Safety And Health Administration (OCEA) class and the Hazardous Waste course component. He indicated his desire to add a Commercial Driver's Licence (CDL) training program with a Hazardous Materials concentration to future programs.

Continuing his report, Mr. Bartholomew announced he would be conducting site visits to all current loan applicants in order to observe and verify employment issues they may be able to assist in resolving. He added he would like to schedule a meeting with the Town Of Queensbury and Warren County Airport staff to pursue the question of available land for Airport development, as well as non-related Airport development, in case land in that area could be promoted. He said work was continuing on the west side of the Adirondack Northway in an effort to make those available parcels marketable; he noted Global Foundries had made inquires with regard to these particular parcels.

Returning to the topic of unemployment, Mr. Bartholomew stated he would like to employ those who were unemployed using tax credits especially in the areas of tourism and hospitality. Mr. Merlino expressed the unemployment structure need to be changed, and he stated his belief that healthy individuals should be working. He commented that foreign workers were brought in to fill vacancies and brought their earnings to their home countries, some of which disliked the United States, while American citizens collected unemployment. Mr. Bartholomew responded with his agreement that this problem needed to be addressed.

Mr. Taylor expressed his concerns regarding the increase in minimum wage for fast food workers to \$15.00 per hour and the State's movement to decrease the mandated tax cap to below 1% in

2016, indicating that these factors would impact economic growth. Mr. Bartholomew remarked in the coming year McDonalds Corporation would be using robots in test areas that would handle certain responsibilities within the fast food chain. He stated there would be pressure on legislators and the Governor to add additional job classifications to the fast food industry. He continued the number of employment hours available would decrease which would impact health benefits. He added this would make things harder for small business. He verbalized this was the first time New York State had recognized the differential in minimum wage between the downstate and upstate areas; he added this was also the first time the State had recognized a justification for splitting the wage, which could be helpful in the future, as this was an adjustment that currently needed to be reviewed.

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 12:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Molly Ganotes, Legislative Office Specialist