

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: OCCUPANCY TAX COORDINATION

DATE: OCTOBER 27, 2015

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS: KENNY
MERLINO
CONOVER
DICKINSON
FRASIER
SIMPSON
STROUGH

OTHERS PRESENT:

MICHAEL SWAN, COUNTY TREASURER
LEISA GRANT, PRINCIPAL ACCOUNT CLERK TOURISM DEPARTMENT
REPRESENTING THE ADIRONDACK CIVIC CENTER COALITION:
ELIZABETH MAHONEY, BOARD MEMBER
JEFF MEAD, GLENS FALLS CIVIC CENTER GENERAL MANAGER
PAUL DUSEK, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
MARTIN AUFFREDOU, COUNTY ATTORNEY
AMANDA ALLEN, CLERK OF THE BOARD
SUPERVISORS BEATY
BROCK
MONROE
SEEBER
TAYLOR
WESTCOTT
LAURA KOHLS, CLARION INN & SUITES
MICHAEL CONSUELO, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE LAKE GEORGE
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND CVB
FRANK DITTRICH, WARREN COUNTY LODGING ASSOCIATION
FRED AUSTIN, FORT WILLIAM HENRY
DON LEHMAN, *THE POST STAR*
MOLLY GANOTES, LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

Mr. Kenny called the meeting of the Occupancy Tax Coordination Committee to order at 10:45 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Simpson, 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.

Commencing the Agenda review, privilege of the floor was extended to Michael Swan, County Treasurer, who distributed copies of the Occupancy Tax Revenue Report to the Committee members; *a copy of the report is on file with the minutes.*

Mr. Swan provided a brief overview of the Occupancy Tax Revenue Report, noting an increase of 5.7% from September 2014; he informed the disbursements to the Towns for the month of October had been released.

Privilege of the floor was then extended to Elizabeth Mahoney, of the Adirondack Civic Center Coalition (ACCC), who notified the Committee she submitted the third quarter events update and Performance Report via email. She distributed photos of the lobby renovation, adding the new marque would be in place by January 1, 2016. She expressed she was working on securing sponsorships that would provide more revenue for the Coalition.

Next, Jeff Mead, Glens Falls Civic Center General Manager, indicated Comedian Gilbert Gottfried would be performing at the Glens Falls Civic Center on January 7, 2016; he advised he would be making an announcement for an event scheduled for December 19, 2015. He reported the Garden Brothers Circus was a success and the LARAC Fall Festival was scheduled for October 31st - November 1, 2015. He informed on Halloween there would be Beatles and AC/DC tribute bands playing in Heritage Hall. He said the Adirondack Stamped Rodeo was scheduled for the first week of November, which traditionally had been a good event for the Civic Center. He stated November 20th was the New York State Public High School Athletic Association (NYSPHSAA) Volleyball Championship that would amount to 400 hotel room bookings in the region. He reported the Special Olympics opening ceremonies were held at the Civic Center wherein they served 955 athletes dinner; he noted 800 hotel rooms were booked for the event. He indicated the Five Finger Death Punch concert had been a success, with the Queensbury Hotel reporting they had sold out all of their available rooms. He

advised the Civic Center had commenced tracking the number of hotel rooms used during events, which he would continue to report.

Ms. Mahoney provided a list of the zip codes from individuals who purchased tickets on-line and via telephone from January 1, 2015 through October 2015 and she said they would commence collecting zip codes shortly at the box office. *A copy of the zip code list is on file with the meeting minutes.*

Ms. Seeber praised the Coalition for the success with the Special Olympics. She voiced the concern of her constituent's regarding to the price of hockey tickets and beer. She suggested the Civic Center offer discounted prices to Warren County residents, as she felt this would be well received. Ms. Mahoney stated they gained control over the food and beverage operation October 1, 2015 and now had the ability to consider such requests. She added the catering for the Special Olympic athletes was donated by one of the Coalition members at a cost of \$10,000. Mr. Mead informed they partnered with Spector Coffee and Fitzgerald Dango's Pizza to have a local business presence inside the Civic Center; he added they offered \$2.00 beer specials along with popcorn and soda specials during hockey games. He notified the Coalition had no control of the price of tickets to games, as this was regulated by the Adirondack Thunder. Mr. Beaty asked for a Revenue Report to compare sales from 2014 to 2015. Ms. Mahoney indicated there would be a detailed year-end report in December and added in 2014 there was a large deficit making it difficult to calculate the earnings from individual events. Mr. Beaty asked for a comparison of events for 2014 and 2015 and Ms. Mahoney indicated she would include the information in the year-end report along with 2016 projections. Mr. Mead notified the Committee there would be many events in the future.

Mr. Swan spoke regarding the perimeter fence surrounding the Festival Commons at the Charles R. Wood Park; he estimated the cost was between \$183,000 and \$185,000. He informed a resolution was authorized giving him authority to bond the cost of the fence; however he said he did not want to borrow money and therefore, the fence was paid for out of the Unappropriated Fund Balance. He suggested allocating \$182,000 from the Occupancy Tax fund to the Unappropriated Fund Balance to cover the funds used and bill the Village of Lake George for their portion of the cost. Paul Dusek, County Administrator, informed the cost for the fence was actually \$159,432. He suggested paying for the County's portion of the fence from the following budget codes;

- A.6417 480, Tourism-Special Events (\$5,000)
- A.6417 480.03, Tourism-Special Events Discretionary Fund (\$22,000)
- A.6417 480.04, Tourism-Warren County Projects (\$46,000)
- A.881 Reserve Occupancy Tax (\$28,847)

Mr. Dusek advised the Mayor of the Village of Lake George had indicated they would be able to pay half the balance immediately and the remaining balance June 1, 2016. He stated if the Committee could wait until June the entire situation would be cleared up and Mr. Conover concurred. Mr. Conover mentioned adjusting the Fund Balance in terms of growth and distribution to the Towns and inquired about a timeline. Mr. Dusek responded he would have projections available shortly, noting figures would be stronger than originally projected because Occupancy Tax was growing faster than anticipated. He stated additional money could be allocated to the Towns, Village and City with guidance as to the manner of increase. He noted the projections for the Fund Balance could be brought forth after the January 2016 Board Meeting.

Motion was made by Mr. Conover, seconded by Mr. Sokol and carried unanimously to authorize the appropriation of funds as outlined above to pay for the County's portion of the fence at the Festival Commons, as well as authorizing the acceptance of half the balance due from the Village of Lake George's share of the cost of the fence now with the remaining balance being paid on June 1, 2016 and to refer same to the Finance Committee.

Mr. Beaty inquired as to the increases for Occupancy Tax and Sales Tax and Mr. Swan replied Occupancy Tax was up 6% and Sales Tax was up .06%. A brief discussion ensued regarding the decrease in Sales Tax revenue.

There being no further business to come before the Occupancy Tax Coordination Committee, on motion made by Mr. Conover and seconded by Mr. Strough, Mr. Kenny adjourned the meeting at 11:17 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Molly Ganotes, Legislative Office Specialist