

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: TOURISM, OCCUPANCY TAX COORDINATION & WOOD PARK

DATE: JANUARY 29, 2016

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS MERLINO
DICKINSON
CONOVER
SEEBER
SIMPSON
STROUGH
WOOD
BEATY
FRASIER
VANSELOW
LEGGETT

OTHERS PRESENT:

REPRESENTING THE TOURISM DEPARTMENT:

JOANNE CONLEY, TOURISM COORDINATOR
PETER GIRARD, CREATIVE DIRECTOR
TANYA BRAND, GROUP TOUR PROMOTER
LEISA GRANT, PRINCIPAL ACCOUNT CLERK

MIKE SWAN, COUNTY TREASURER

REPRESENTING THE ADIRONDACK CIVIC CENTER COALITION:

ELIZABETH MAHONEY, BOARD MEMBER
NICK CAIMANO, BOARD MEMBER
JEFF MEAD, GENERAL MANAGER OF THE GLENS FALLS CIVIC CENTER
JEFFERY TENNYSON, SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
ROBERT BLAIS, MAYOR, VILLAGE OF LAKE GEORGE
WILLIAM LAMY, PROJECT MANAGEMENT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER
KEVIN B. GERAGHTY, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
PAUL DUSEK, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
AMY BARTLETT, FIRST ASSISTANT COUNTY ATTORNEY
AMANDA ALLEN, CLERK OF THE BOARD
FRANK E. THOMAS, BUDGET OFFICER
CHRISTINA CURLEY, SPECIAL EVENTS COORDINATOR, LAKE GEORGE REGIONAL
CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU
FRED AUSTIN, FORT WILLIAM HENRY
ROGER PHINNEY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, EASTERN NEW YORK MARINE TRADES
ASSOCIATION
GEORGE NORMANDIN, PRESIDENT, NORMANDIN MARKETING LLC
DON LEHMAN, *THE POST STAR*
SAMANTHA HOGAN, SENIOR LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST
FOR ALL OTHERS PRESENT, PLEASE SEE ATTACHED SIGN-IN SHEET

Please note, the following contains a summarization of the January 29, 2016 meeting of the Tourism, Occupancy Tax Coordination & Wood Park Committee; the meeting in its entirety can be viewed on the Warren County website using the following link:

<http://www.warrencountyny.gov/gov/comm/Archive/2016/tourism/>

Mr. Merlino called the meeting of the Tourism, Occupancy Tax Coordination & Wood Park Committee to order at 10:00 a.m.

Motion was made by Ms. Wood, seconded by Mr. Dickinson and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the previous Tourism, Occupancy Tax Coordination and Park O&M Committee meetings, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Copies of the Tourism, Occupancy Tax Coordination and Park O&M agendas were distributed to the Committee members; copies of same are on file with the meeting minutes.

Mr. Merlino noted that they would skip around a bit in their review of the various agendas; he noted they would begin with the report from the Adirondack Civic Center Coalition (ACCC) relative to the close of fiscal year 2015, as listed on the Occupancy Tax Coordination agenda.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Elizabeth Mahoney, Board Member of the Adirondack Civic Center

Coalition. For the benefit of the new Committee members, Ms. Mahoney explained that as per their agreement with Warren County, the ACCC was required to provide periodic updates on activities at the Glens Falls Civic Center; she also who introduced Jeff Mead, General Manger of the Glens Falls Civic Center. She then provided on overview of event highlights from 2015, as well as an update on the general state of affairs of the Civic Center. Mr. Mead advised of upcoming events scheduled for 2016 and he apprised that Glens Falls National Bank had sponsored a new marquee sign for the Civic Center. He said they had made quite a few upgrades to the Civic Center and were now looking into improvements for the sound system. Ms. Mahoney noted she had been emailing monthly reports to Leisa Grant, Principal Account Clerk for the Tourism Department, but noted if anyone else was interested in the receiving the monthly reports she could send them a copy, as well.

At the close of the ACCC update, Mr. Merlino advised that rather than receiving monthly updates from the ACCC, he would prefer they be presented on a quarterly basis and the Committee agreed.

Ms. Grant noted that the ACCC had requested their next funding distribution, in the amount of \$75,000; she requested authorization from the Committee to distribute \$75,000 of the \$250,000 in occupancy tax funding appropriated to the ACCC. Motion was made by Mr. Simpson, seconded by Mr. Dickinson and carried unanimously to approve the disbursement as requested.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Jeffery Tennyson, Superintendent of Public Works, to review the Park O&M agenda. Mr. Tennyson began with a request to authorize reimbursement in the amount of \$6,694.56 to the Village of Lake George for expenses related to turf management for the Wood Park.

Motion was made by Mr. Simpson, seconded by Mr. Dickinson and carried unanimously to approve the request and refer same to Finance, Personnel & Higher Education Committee. *Note: subsequent to the meeting it was determined that action had already been taken to appropriate funding and authorize this reimbursement in 2015.*

Moving on to the Referral/Pending Items, Mr. Tennyson stated the only item listed referred to the development of a policy/procedure for handling the reimbursement of deposits for cancelled events. Mayor Blais, Village of Lake George, confirmed the current policy required event organizers to submit a \$500 deposit which was non-refundable if the event was cancelled less than 90 days prior to the event. He noted the currently policy seemed to be working well and as they had not encountered any issues, he did not feel a change was necessary. Based on this information, Mr. Tennyson requested that this issue be removed from the list of Referral/Pending Items.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Mayor Blais who noted they were nearing to the end of construction on the Festival Commons, with there being only a few large projects remaining including the stage and the water feature. Mayor Blais opined the water feature was important because it would draw attention to the Festival Commons. At Mayor Blais' prompting, William Lamy, Project Management Executive Committee Member, spoke about financing for the construction, apprising there was not enough grant funding left to cover the cost of the water feature; he noted they would need any additional \$150,000. When asked the balance of the occupancy tax reserve fund, Mike Swan, County Treasurer, indicated that it was approximately \$1.9 million.

Motion was made by Mrs. Frasier, seconded by Mr. Dickinson and carried unanimously to appropriate \$150,000 from the occupancy tax reserve to Budget Code A.6417 480.04, Warren County Projects to fund the water feature for the Wood Park Festival Commons and refer same to Finance, Personnel & Higher Education Committee. *A copy of the request is on file with the minutes.*

Mayor Blais announced that due to the unseasonably warm winter which had kept the Lake from freezing sufficiently for safe use, the Lake George Winter Carnival was seeking events that did not

require the ice. He advised they were requesting authorization to use the Festival Commons for events that would include dog sled rides, helicopter rides and setting the record for the largest corn-hole game. Mr. Tennyson commented that he did not foresee any opposition to allowing use of the Festival Commons, provided there were no vehicles driven on the turf and that they were conscious of the sprinkler system. Additionally, Mr. Tennyson recalled a prior decision made by former County Attorney, Martin Auffredou, indicating that helicopter rides would not be permitted.

Following a brief discussion, motion was made by Mr. Vanselow, seconded by Ms. Seeber and carried unanimously to authorize the Lake George Winter Carnival to use the Festival Commons for events during their upcoming Winter Carnival, excluding helicopter rides, and to waive the all fees for said use except the \$500 security deposit and the necessary resolution was authorized for the February 19th Board meeting.

Next, Mayor Blais expressed a desire to purchase a used golf cart from 5 Star Golf Carts and Utility at a cost of \$4,245. He proposed that they expend funds from the Wood Park maintenance account for this purchase as the golf cart was intended for the sole purpose of being used by maintenance staff to navigate through Wood Park. The Committee expressed their support of the purchase by a motion made by Mr. Dickinson and seconded by Mr. Simpson.

Finally, Mayor Blais announced fourteen events had been booked for the Wood Park in 2016; however, he added, five had cancelled due to either lack of success or because there was insufficient signage and parking.

Resuming the review of the Occupancy Tax Coordination agenda, Mr. Merlino extended privilege of the floor to Mr. Swan who indicated he would not have anything new to report on occupancy tax collections until everything was finalized in March.

Ms. Grant pointed out information included in the agenda pertaining to the continuation of and increase to the Occupancy Tax Spending Plan, and she noted that both the 2015 and 2016 Plans were provided to support an increase in funding for promotion of events in Warren County.

A lengthy discussion ensued, following which a motion was made by Mrs. Frasier, seconded by Mr. Simpson and carried by a majority vote, with Ms. Seeber voting in opposition, to approve the increased 2016 Occupancy Tax Spending Plan, as well as to appropriate an additional \$210,000 from the occupancy tax reserve (A.881.00) to various codes to support such expenditures, and refer same to Finance, Personnel & Higher Education Committee. *A copy of the request is on file with the minutes.*

Moving on, Ms. Grant presented a request to carry over the 2015 funding decision which authorized agreements and the allocation of funds to provide Warren County's share of a traffic study for the Route 9 Corridor in the amount of \$25,000.

Motion was made by Mr. Conover, seconded by Mrs. Frasier and carried unanimously to approve the request as presented. *A copy of the request form is on file with the minutes. Note: Subsequent to the meeting it was determined this resolution was not necessary as Resolution No. 419 of 2015 had already authorized the funding and was not dependent upon any identified time frame.*

Next, Ms. Grant presented a request to appropriate \$58,500 from the occupancy tax reserve (A.881.00) to Budget Code A.6417 480, Tourism-Special Events, to fund additional events approved at the December 3, 2015 Occupancy Tax Workshop and by (Resolution No. 618 of 2015).

Motion was made by Mr. Simpson, seconded by Mr. Strough and carried unanimously to approve the request as outlined and refer same to the Finance, Personnel & Higher Education Committee. *A copy*

of the request is on file with the minutes.

Finally, Ms. Grant presented a request to amend the County Budget to reduce Budget Code. A.6417 480.04, Warren County Projects, by \$7,440 to offset additional funds expended from the occupancy tax reserve (A.881.00) in December of 2015 for the Wood Park Festival Commons perimeter fence.

Motion was made by Mr. Dickinson, seconded by Mr. Conover and carried unanimously to approve the request as presented and refer same to the Finance, Personnel & Higher Education Committee. *A copy of the request is on file with the minutes.*

Privilege of the floor was extended to Roger Phinney, Executive Director of the Eastern New York Marine Trades Association, and George Normandin, President of Normandin Marketing LLC, who distributed copies of a flyer advertising a new website "BOATUPSTATENY.COM", as well as an executive brief regarding the new website and how it could promote and encourage tourism in Warren County; *copies of these handouts are on file with the meeting minutes.* Messrs Phinney and Normandin gave a lengthy narrative of their proposal, at the close of which they indicated they were requesting occupancy tax funding for up to 50% of their projected website launch costs for 2016 (\$35,000).

Supervisor Strough left the meeting at 11:46 a.m.

Mr. Dusek stated that this was a very unique proposal and, as such, he suggested that the County Attorney be asked to review and provide counsel on the request as he was unsure whether Warren County was able to make an investment of this nature in a private partnership. Mr. Dickinson thanked Messrs Phinney and Normandin for their presentation and indicated the proposal would be referred to the County Attorney to determine whether the County was legally able to entertain it.

Ms. Wood left the meeting at 11:57 a.m.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Joanne Conley, Tourism Coordinator, who proceeded with a review of the Tourism agenda, presenting the following requests:

1. For a new contract with Working Pictures, Inc. in an amount not to exceed \$61,740 for the creation and production of television commercials and photography assets over the term commencing January 1, 2016 and terminating December 31, 2016. Peter Girard, Creative Director, provided a brief overview of how Working Pictures, Inc. was selected as outlined in the Evaluation of Proposals document provided in the agenda packet.

Motion was made by Mr. Dickinson, seconded by Mr. Simpson and carried unanimously to approve the request and the necessary resolution was authorized for the February 19th Board meeting. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

2. To continue the contractual relationship with Adirondack Regional Tourism Council, Inc. for regional marketing services, including those pertaining to fishing snowmobiling, group tours, camping, etc., through the use of New York State Matching Funds.

Motion was made by Mr. Dickinson, seconded by Mr. Vanselow and carried unanimously to approve the request and the necessary resolution was authorized for the February 19th Board meeting. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

3. To recognize the First Wilderness Heritage Corridor Program as equal in status to other local promotional agencies, such as Chamber of Commerce, in an effort to raise awareness of the First Wilderness Heritage Corridor program.

Motion was made by Mr. Dickinson, seconded by Mrs. Frasier and carried unanimously to approve the request as presented and the necessary resolution was authorized for the February 19th Board meeting. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

Moving on to the Information for Discussion/Review portion of the agenda, Ms. Conley gave a brief update on the status of Tourism Department activities, noting the new Travel Guide was very well received. She also advised they were looking into the possibility of obtaining an intern from SUNY Adirondack this year to assist in the Tourism Office.

Mr. Dickinson left the meeting at 12:10 p.m.

Tanya Brand, Group Tour Promoter, outlined the Group Tour Update document provided in the agenda packet which referred to the New York Times Travel Show pre-FAM Tour and American Bus Association activities. *A copy of Ms. Brand's Group Tour Update is on file with the meeting minutes.*

Privilege of the floor was extended to Christina Curley, Special Events Coordinator, Lake George Regional Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB), who provided a brief overview of her January 2016 Monthly Report; *a copy of Ms. Curley's Report is on file with the meeting minutes.*

Mr. Simpson asked whether the Tourism Department could use their social media links to hold a photo contest where visitors and residents could submit photos of themselves doing things they enjoyed in the area to provide stories that could be used in future publications. Mr. Girard indicated that they were doing something very similar already. A discussion ensued.

There being no further business to come before the Tourism, Occupancy Tax Coordination & Wood Park Committee, on motion made by Mr. Beaty and seconded by Mr. Simpson, Mr. Merlino adjourned the meeting at 12:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Samantha Hogan, Senior Legislative Office Specialist