

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: TOURISM, OCCUPANCY TAX COORDINATION & WOOD PARK

DATE: FEBRUARY 22, 2016

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS MERLINO
DICKINSON
CONOVER
SEEBER
SIMPSON
STROUGH
WOOD
FRASIER
VANSELOW
LEGGETT

OTHERS PRESENT:

REPRESENTING THE TOURISM DEPARTMENT:
JOANNE CONLEY, TOURISM COORDINATOR
PETER GIRARD, CREATIVE DIRECTOR
LEISA GRANT, PRINCIPAL ACCOUNT CLERK
MIKE SWAN, COUNTY TREASURER
REPRESENTING THE ADIRONDACK CIVIC CENTER COALITION:
JEFF MEAD, GENERAL MANAGER OF THE GLENS FALLS CIVIC CENTER
JEFFERY TENNYSON, SUPERINTENDENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
ROBERT BLAIS, MAYOR OF THE VILLAGE OF LAKE GEORGE
PAUL DUSEK, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
AMANDA ALLEN, CLERK OF THE BOARD
FRANK E. THOMAS, BUDGET OFFICER
SUPERVISORS BRAYMER
BROCK
JULIE BUTLER, PURCHASING AGENT
FRED AUSTIN, FORT WILLIAM HENRY
FRANK DITTRICH, WARREN COUNTY LODGING ASSOCIATION
MICHAEL CONSUELO, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, LAKE GEORGE REGIONAL
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
KEVIN MARKHAM, RAMADA, GENERAL MANAGER
LAURA KOHLS, CLAIRON INN
THOM RANDALL, *ADIRONDACK JOURNAL*
DON LEHMAN, *THE POST STAR*
SAMANTHA HOGAN, SENIOR LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

COMMITTEE MEMBER ABSENT:

SUPERVISOR BEATY

Please note, the following contains a summarization of the February 22, 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 10:09 a.m., noting that this would be the last time Wood Park business would be addressed by the Committee. He stated that a special sub-Committee needed to be re-established to conduct business for Wood Park in order to allow appropriate voting power by both the County and the Village of Lake George, as was previously established by resolution. He indicated that he would work with Chairman Geraghty to re-establish the Sub-Committee and set its membership.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Jeffery Tennyson, *Superintendent of the Department of Public Works*, who distributed copies of the Park O &M (*Operations & Management*) agenda to the Committee members; *a copy of the agenda is on file with the minutes*. Commencing the agenda review, Mr. Tennyson presented a request to appropriate \$423.59 from Budget Code A.691.07 (*Deferred Revenue, Gaslight Village Parking Fees*) to Budget Code A.1625 470 (*Gaslight Village Property, Contract*), and authorize reimbursement to the Village of Lake George for expenses incurred for maintenance of the Charles R. Wood Festival Commons.

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

This concluded the review of the Park O&M agenda; copies of the Occupancy Tax Coordination agenda were distributed to the Committee members and a copy of same is on file with the meeting minutes.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Jeff Mead, *General Manager of the Glens Falls Civic Center*, who addressed the Committee relative to a recent article in *The Post Star* referencing the lack of promotional Warren County signage at the Civic Center. Mr. Mead assured that he and the Adirondack Civic Center Coalition would be more than happy to rectify this situation and add Warren County promotional items, such as banners to be displayed at events, in recognition of Warren County's support for the Glens Falls Civic Center.

Commencing the review of the Occupancy Tax Coordination agenda, privilege of the floor was extended to Michael Swan, *Warren County Treasurer*, to provide the Report on Revenues. Mr. Swan noted revenues were up about 8.2% as compared to this time last year and he opined this had a lot to do with increased room rates, rather than an increase in the number of visitors to the area.

Mr. McDevitt raised the question of whether occupancy tax funding could be used to fund invasive species eradication efforts, rather than funding them through the County budget, as Lake George was a large attraction to the area. Following a brief discussion, it was decided that the County Attorney would be asked to research and make a determination on the matter of whether this would be a legally appropriate use of occupancy tax funding.

Moving on to the Action Agenda items, Ms. Grant presented a request to authorize an agreement with the Adirondack Hot Air Balloon Festival for an additional \$30,000 to be funded from A.6417 480.04 (*Warren County Projects*). She explained Resolution No. 304 of 2014 had authorized an additional \$15,000 to the Adirondack Hot Air Balloon Festival which was paid from the Tourism Budget to assist with the promotional costs of the Balloon Festival event. Ms. Grant noted the Adirondack Hot Air Balloon Festival had erroneously believed this additional \$15,000 would be provided annually by the County and had included the funding in their 2015 and 2016 budgets; however, she noted, Resolution No. 304 of 2014 had provided authorization for only one year of funding, in 2014.

A discussion ensued, during which it was recognized that the Balloon Festival was a very large event for the area and should receive higher occupancy tax distributions, similar to the Americade event. The Committee determined that the requested funding would be provided to offset the Adirondack Hot Air Balloon Festival's 2015 and 2016 budgets; the Committee also determined the Adirondack Hot Air Balloon Festival should be made aware that in the future, all funding requests should be brought to the Occupancy Tax Coordination Committee through the annual event funding request process.

Motion was made by Ms. Wood, seconded by Mr. Dickinson and carried by a majority vote, with Mr. Leggett voting in opposition, to approve the request and the necessary resolution was authorized for the March 18th Board meeting. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Seeber inquired whether a sunset clause was included in the occupancy tax distribution policy to cease funding for events once they had been in place for a certain number of years. Mr. Dusek responded that he believed this was something they had originally intended to implement, but had never re-addressed.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Robert Blais, *Mayor of the Village of Lake George*, who explained the Chill Music Festival had decided to move to Pennsylvania for 2016; he indicated that the event organizers intended to develop another event for the area in 2017 and would re-apply for funding for that event next year.

Next, Mayor Blais reminded the Committee that they had previously awarded \$25,000 in occupancy tax funding to the Village of Lake George for use to assist in promoting events for the Festival Commons

that were scheduled after the typical occupancy tax funding awards were made, as well as to cover the rental cost of the Festival Commons for returning events. He distributed a chart reflecting the remaining balance of the \$25,000 distribution, which currently totaled \$20,275, and he advised he desired to use \$19,500 of this balance to fund the Festival Commons rental fees for the events returning for 2016 as listed in the chart. Mayor Blais commented that if not for the offer to cover the Festival Commons rental fees, these events might not otherwise return to the area due to poor turnout in the prior year.

Motion was made by Mr. Dickinson, seconded by Mr. Strough and carried unanimously to authorize Mayor Blais to expend funds from remaining occupancy tax distributions to fund Festival Commons rental fees on behalf of returning events and the necessary resolution was authorized for the March 18th Board meeting. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

Mr. McDevitt inquired whether a permanent stage had been constructed at the Festival Commons and Mayor Blais responded they had applied for a grant to fund construction of a permanent stage and were also seeking sponsorship to cover any remaining expenses.

There being no further Occupancy Tax Coordination business to discuss, privilege of the floor was extended to Joanne Conley, *Tourism Coordinator*, who distributed copies of the Tourism agenda to the Committee members; *a copy of the agenda is on file with the minutes.*

Commencing the agenda review, Ms. Conley presented a request to amend the County Budget in the amount of \$22,190 to reflect the receipt of an Empire State Development matching funds grant award of \$11,095 more than originally budgeted.

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

Continuing, Ms. Conley presented the following requests:

- Item 2 - To providing ratifying authorization to exceed the GSA rate requirements specified in the Warren County Travel Policy for travel to the American Bus Association Marketplace in Louisville, KY which took place on January 9-13, 2016.
- Item 3 - Waiving the GSA rate requirement specified in the Warren County Travel Policy for travel to Warehouse Hotel at the Nook in Manheim, PA for two motorcoach shows on March 29-31, 2016.
- Item 4 - Waiving the GSA rate requirement specified in the Warren County Travel Policy for travel to Homewood Suites by Hilton in Southington, CT for the Destinations of New York State event on March 23-24, 2016.

Motion was made by Ms. Wood, seconded by Mr. Dickinson and carried unanimously to approve the aforementioned requests and the necessary resolutions were authorized for the March 18th Board meeting. *Copies of the resolution request forms are on file with the minutes.*

Next, Mr. Merlino presented a request to extend Ms. Conley's temporary appointment as Tourism Coordinator for an additional six months, pending a decision to fill the Tourism Director position.

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

Mr. Merlino announced an executive session would be necessary to discuss the credit history of a particular company.

Motion was made by Mr. Dickinson, seconded by Mrs. Frasier and carried unanimously to enter into an executive session pursuant to Section 105(f) of the Public Officer's Law.

Executive session was held from 11:04 a.m. until 11:39 a.m.

Upon reconvening, Mr. Merlino announced that no action had been taken during the executive session.

Motion was made by Mr. Dickinson, seconded by Ms. Wood, and carried by majority vote, with Ms. Seeber voting in opposition, to award the contract for consulting services to evaluate and analyze the tourism strategies of Warren County to BBG&G Advertising, Inc. and to develop a second Request for Proposal (RFP) for data oriented services and the necessary resolution was authorized for the March 18th Board meeting. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

As there was no further business to come before the Tourism, Occupancy Tax Coordination & Wood Park Committee, on motion made by Mr. Dickinson and seconded by Ms. Wood, Mr. Merlino adjourned the meeting at 11:40 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Samantha Hogan, Senior Legislative Office Specialist