

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: OCCUPANCY TAX COORDINATION

DATE: FEBRUARY 27, 2018

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS DICKINSON
MERLINO
LEGETT
DRISCOLL

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

SUPERVISORS SIMPSON
STROUGH
BEATY
FRASIER
GERAGHTY

OTHERS PRESENT:

REPRESENTING THE TOURISM DEPARTMENT:

JOANNE CONLEY, DIRECTOR
LEISA GRANT, PRINCIPAL ACCOUNT CLERK
TANYA BRAND, GROUP TOUR PROMOTER
MICHAEL R. SWAN, COUNTY TREASURER
RONALD F. CONOVER, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
MARY ELIZABETH KISSANE, COUNTY ATTORNEY
SARAH MCLENITHAN, DEPUTY CLERK OF THE BOARD
FRANK E. THOMAS, BUDGET OFFICER
SUPERVISORS DRISCOLL
MAGOWAN
WILD

REPRESENTING THE LAKE GEORGE REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & CVB:

GINA MINTZER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
KRISTEN HANIFAN, SPECIAL EVENTS & CONVENTION SALES DIRECTOR
AMY COLLINS, TOURISM & DOWNTOWN BUSINESS COORDINATOR, CITY OF
GLENS FALLS
FRANK DITTRICH, WARREN COUNTY LODGING ASSOCIATION
DAVID KENNY, MARRIOT COURTYARD
FRED AUSTIN, FORT WILLIAM HENRY
LESLIE LOVELACE, SECRETARY TO THE CLERK OF THE BOARD

Please note, the following contains a summarization of the February 27, 2018 meeting of the Occupancy Tax Coordination 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/2018/occupancy/>

Mr. Dickinson called the meeting of the Occupancy Tax Coordination Committee to order at 2:14 p.m. (Please note due to a lack of attendance, Chairman Conover served to make a quorum of the Committee)

Motion was made by Mr. Leggett, seconded by Mr. Merlino and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the previous Occupancy Tax Coordination Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Copies of the meeting agenda were distributed and a copy of same is on file with the meeting minutes.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Michael R. Swan, Treasurer, who distributed copies of the Occupancy Tax Report, *a copy of which is on file with the meeting minutes.*

Mr. Swan stated occupancy tax collections for 2017 were up by 3.64% as compared to 2016; however, he noted since they had not received all of the collections for the year, he expected the figure would increase slightly more.

Mr. Merlino asked what the total amount of occupancy tax collected in 2017 was and Mr. Swan replied \$4,282,940 had been collected.

Mr. Swan mentioned he was unable to stay for the remainder of the meeting but would like to comment on the agenda item seeking to support the CVB for ATTA ELEVATE 2019. He apprised he had reviewed

the request and was comfortable moving forward with it; however, he said, due to County Policy no monetary advances could be made until a signed contract was in place. He added he did not foresee any issues with the County administering the CFA Market Grant.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Kristen Hanifan, *Special Events & Convention Sales Director, Lake George Chamber of Commerce & CVB*, who provided a brief highlight of her January 2018 CVB Report which was distributed to the Committee members; *a copy of the Report is on file with the minutes.*

Mr. Leggett inquired if the CVB had booked the 1,919 new room nights in January and Ms. Hanifan replied affirmatively. She then expounded upon the 2,499 total room nights booked in January, informing it was a culmination of the new room nights booked, as well as repeat business. Mr. Leggett asked the role of CVB and how they added value. Ms. Hanifan responded the CVB's function was to book new business as well as returning business; she said her role was sales, but she also worked with the Mayor's Office when they booked events. Gina Mintzer, *Executive Director, Lake George Chamber of Commerce & CVB*, added their role was to help plan for activities outside of events at the Festival Commons that the planner may require.

Next, Ms. Hanifan introduced and discussed in detail the Adirondack Travel Trade Association (ATTA) ELEVATE 2019 event and she distributed a packet entitled "2019 Adventure ELEVATE ATTA Event Service Agreement" to Committee members; *a copy is on file with the minutes.* She apprised she was requesting the County's assistance to support and fund a portion of the CFA/Market NY Grant for the ATTA ELEVATE 2019 Conference. She explained the grant funding would be reimbursed back to the County over a nine to twelve month period by the State and she noted the majority of these funds would not be required until later in years 2018 - 2019. She said a contract was required with the County to be the host of the conference and she requested that the Tourism Department co-sign the ATTA Host Conference Agreement with the Lake George Regional Chamber of Commerce & CVB. She informed both parties would have access to the deliverables that were outlined in Appendix A of the Partnership Agreement. She noted they would work cohesively to promote tourism to the industry and the media, as well as potential new consumers to this region.

Ms. Hanifan reviewed in detail the value statement included in Item 4 of the Cover Sheet. She noted she met with one of SUNY Adirondack's key individuals involved in their Adventure Travel Program Certificate this morning. She stated this individual was excited about this conference due to its relation to their certificate program. With regard to how this conference would benefit municipalities other than Lake George, Ms. Hanifan apprised the conference would have a pre and post day to allow them to craft familiarization types of tours for the buyers and the media to showcase these opportunities in and around the area. She continued, more locally they would be building with ATTA what was referred to as "The Days of Adventure" on the first day of the conference. She explained those were half and full day excursions for the itineraries to book ahead of time that would take in the local flavors and unique recreational opportunities such as a tour of the local craft beverage trail with a beer historian step on guide that traveled to the City of Glens Falls, Queensbury and Lake George.

Mr. Merlino commented he was supportive of the request and praised the idea. He inquired what amount of funding was requested and Ms. Hanifan replied she was not looking for any funding at the present time, rather she was requesting the Tourism Department to co-sign the agreement with Lake George Regional Chamber of Commerce & CVB in their efforts to hold ATTA ELEVATE 2019 in the Lake George area and for the County to administer the CFA/Market NY grant on behalf of the Lake George Regional Chamber of Commerce & CVB to support their efforts to hold ATTA ELEVATE 2019 in Lake George area. Mr. Merlino stated he had previously discussed administering the grant with both Joanne Conley, Tourism Director, and Mr. Swan who were both in agreement. He inquired what the matching amount requested was and Ms. Mintzer replied \$50,000 but reiterated they were not presently requesting funding. Mr. Merlino advised they should be, instead of waiting until November or December; he added

that both the Occupancy Tax Committee and Tourism Committee would be able to contribute and suggested all towns be asked to come up with \$1,000 from their occupancy tax funds to help reach the funding amount needed, which he volunteered to do. He noted he previously had a conversation with Mr. Dickinson and they agreed the reserved emergency occupancy tax funds could be used as the grant was a guaranteed reimbursement. Ms. Mintzer requested assistance from Leisa Grant, *Principal Account Clerk*, with the grant writing process. Ms. Grant apprised she was not familiar with the CFA grant process, but noted she was willing to participate. Chairman Conover asked Ms. Hanifan to confirm the request to the County was for advance funds in an amount of as much as \$166,410 as New York State would reimburse the amount the County expended for the match over nine to twelve months and Ms. Mintzer responded it was not a lump sum they were seeking rather an amount to get started as she understood the grant to be similar to “pay as you go.” He noted a grant for \$166,410 was not a significant amount and the purpose was not for bed nights but to expose the area to a global marketing audience. Ms. Hanifan offered to provide the after action reports from Idaho and Quebec (where the ATTA ELEVATE conferences had previously been held) for deliverables and demographics after the conferences, and also offered to contact their organizers as to how they were currently doing.

Mr. Dickinson inquired what amount of money Ms. Hanifan required this year and how much would be required next year, she replied fifty percent this year to pre-book and the other half next year.

Chairman Conover asked what I LOVE NY’s response was in regards to being a statewide partner for the 2019 ELEVATE Conference, Ms. Hanifan said it was the main market I LOVE NY was going after. She noted I LOVE NY was fully vested, the governors office was in support as well as DEC and that NYS Parks had verbally agreed to sponsor an unspecified monetary contribution. He inquired whether there would be an opportunity for businesses to set up booths in the 2019 event and she replied the CVB had a lot of leeway with ATTA to set it up how they chose to.

Motion which was made by Mr. Merlino, seconded by Mr. Leggett and carried unanimously to approve the request to authorize the Tourism Department to co-sign the agreement with Lake George Regional Chamber of Commerce & CVB in their efforts to hold ATTA ELEVATE 2019 in Lake George area and the necessary resolution was authorized for the March 16th Board meeting. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

Next the Committee entertained a request to authorize an appropriation of \$83,205 from Budget Code A.881, Reserve-Occupancy Tax, in 2018 and \$83,205 in 2019 to the Lake George Chamber of Commerce and CVB to provide funding for ATTA ELEVATE 2019 event which will be reimbursed when the CFA/Market NY grant funding is received.

Motion was made by Mr. Leggett, seconded by Mr. Merlino and carried unanimously to approve the request and forward same to the Finance Committee. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

Mr. Dickinson inquired whether the Committee had the authority to administer a grant and Chairman Conover replied affirmatively. Mr. Merlino reported he spoke to Mr. Swan who indicated as long as there was a commitment from New York State for reimbursement, the Treasurer’s Office would approve it.

Motion was made by Mr. Conover, seconded by Mr. Merlino and carried unanimously to approve the request to authorize the County to administer the CFA/Market NY grant on behalf of the Lake George Regional Chamber of Commerce & CVB to support their efforts to hold ATTA ELEVATE 2019 in Lake George area and the necessary resolution was authorized for the March 16th Board meeting. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

Mr. Leggett inquired about the status of the RFP for the Festival Commons website creation and Ms.

Conley replied the RFP had gone out and the deadline for responses was March 9th. She noted the RFP was for the website, social media and brochure for the Festival Commons at Charles R. Wood Park.

As there was no further business to come before the Occupancy Tax Coordination Committee, on motion made by Mr. Driscoll and seconded by Mr. Merlino, Mr. Dickinson adjourned the meeting at 2:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Leslie Lovelace, Secretary to the Clerk of the Board