

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: OCCUPANCY TAX COORDINATION

DATE: JANUARY 25, 2019

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS MERLINO
SIMPSON
STROUGH
FRASIER
DRISCOLL

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

SUPERVISORS DICKINSON
BEATY
LEGGETT
GERAGHTY

OTHERS PRESENT:

REPRESENTING THE TOURISM DEPARTMENT:

JOANNE CONLEY, DIRECTOR
LEISA GRANT, PRINCIPAL ACCOUNT CLERK
PAUL TACKETT, ASSISTANT TOURISM COORDINATOR
RONALD F. CONOVER, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
RYAN MOORE, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

AMANDA ALLEN, CLERK OF THE BOARD

AMY LAVINE, FIRST ASSISTANT COUNTY ATTORNEY

FRANK E. THOMAS, BUDGET OFFICER

SUPERVISORS BRAYMER

HOGAN

LOEB

MAGOWAN

WILD

MICHAEL R. SWAN, COUNTY TREASURER

REPRESENTING THE ADIRONDACK CIVIC CENTER COALITION:

ELIZABETH MAHONEY, BOARD MEMBER

JEFF MEAD, COOL INSURING ARENA GENERAL MANAGER

FRED AUSTIN, FORT WILLIAM HENRY

AMY COLLINS, TOURISM & DOWNTOWN BUSINESS COORDINATOR, CITY OF
GLENS FALLS

FRANK DITTRICH, WARREN COUNTY LODGING ASSOCIATION

TYLER HERRICK, QUEENSBURY HOTEL

DON LEHMAN, *THE POST STAR*

SARAH MCLENTHAN, DEPUTY CLERK OF THE BOARD

Please note, the following contains a summarization of the January 25, 2019 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/2019/occupancy/>

In the absence of Committee Chairman Dickinson, Mr. Merlino, as Vice Chairman, called the meeting of the Occupancy Tax Coordination Committee to order at 1:00 p.m.

Motion was made by Mrs. Frasier, seconded by Mr. Driscoll 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 Swan, *County Treasurer*, who distributed a copy of the 2018 Occupancy Tax Report, a copy of which is on file with the minutes. He reviewed the report briefly, stating occupancy tax revenues were up by 4.17% as compared to 2017; however; he noted, since they had not received all of the collections for the year, he expected the figure would increase slightly more. Frank Dittrich, *representing Warren County Lodging Association*, asked if Mr. Swan knew the location where the occupancy tax collections had increased and where there was a decrease; Mr. Swan replied he was unsure, but could look into this. Mr. Dittrich explained the reason he asked was because contributions could change due to new development and that would provide insight on the changing dynamics for businesses not located on Lake George, as well as businesses near new development.

Mr. Swan presented a request to authorize a new agreement with AlltheRooms Inc. to provide internet search services to reveal all short-term rentals in Warren County at a cost not to exceed \$1,000 to be funded by an appropriation from the Occupancy Tax Reserve to the County Treasurer's Budget. Joanne Conley, *Director, Tourism Department*, indicated she would also be requesting a contract, but the purpose of this one was to provide three annual analysis reports on short-term rentals in the County.

Mr. Simpson asked Mr. Swan if the short-term rental information would be available to share with town assessors and Mr. Swan replied affirmatively.

Motion was made by Mr. Simpson, seconded by Mrs. Frasier and carried unanimously to approve the request as outlined above and the necessary resolution was authorized for the February 15th Board meeting. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Conley presented a request to authorize a new agreement with AlltheRooms Inc. to provide three annual analysis reports on short-term rentals in Warren County at a cost not to exceed \$4,960 to be funded by an appropriation from the Occupancy Tax Reserve to the Tourism Budget.

Motion was made by Mrs. Frasier, seconded by Mr. Simpson and carried unanimously to approve the request as outlined above and the necessary resolution was authorized for the February 15th Board meeting. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

The next request was to appropriate a total of \$5,960 from Budget Code A.881.00 Reserve, Occupancy Tax, to Budget Codes A.1325 470 (\$1,000) and A.6417.0001 470 (\$4,960) to fund the contracts with AlltheRooms Inc.

Motion was made by Mrs. Frasier, seconded by Mr. Driscoll and carried unanimously to approve the request as outlined above and refer same to the Finance Committee. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

Privilege of the floor was extended to Leisa Grant, *Principal Account Clerk*, who apprised the following changes had been made to the Adirondack Civic Center Coalition contract to simplify the reporting in an effort to reduce the workload for the limited number of employees at the Adirondack Civic Center Coalition:

- The Adirondack Civic Center Coalition attend meetings on a quarterly basis to report on activities.
- The Adirondack Civic Center Coalition provide an attendance record and income statement at the end of the year.

Ms. Grant then presented a formal request to authorize a new contract with the Adirondack Civic Center Coalition, Inc. authorizing a funding agreement to commence upon execution and terminate December 31, 2019, in an amount not to exceed \$250,000.

A lengthy discussion ensued, subsequent to which a motion was made by Mr. Strough, seconded by Mr. Simpson and carried unanimously to approve the request and the necessary resolution was authorized for the February 15th Board Meeting. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

Mr. Merlino reported Mr. Dickinson was in the process of working with Black Dog Design for Festival Space advertising. Tyler Herrick, *General Manager, The Queensbury Hotel*, inquired if a website for all local outdoor venues would be more economical rather than one web site specifically for the Festival Space venue. Ms. Conley advised the Tourism Department was working with the Lake George Chamber of Commerce and CVB to develop a page for venues on the current Lake George website. Mr. Herrick reiterated a site dedicated to all events in the County would make more sense than a site for just one venue as County funds were used.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Jeff Mead, *General Manager, Cool Insuring Arena*, who apprised their Economic Event Study had been released, indicating since taking over the building there was a \$10.6 million impact and the impact for 2018 was \$13.2 million. He added, the study showed annual attendance in 2015 - 2016 at 150,000 and had increased last year to 208,000. Mr. Mead apprised 155 jobs were supported due to activities at the arena. He provided an overview of the events held at the arena in 2018, as well as upcoming 2019 events. Mr. Mead informed two big events had been booked; one would be announced next month and the other announced in March. He stated Adirondack Thunder hockey ticket sales were up 10% and apprised the arena had earned \$1,500 in revenue as compared to a loss of over \$1 million. Mr. Mead acknowledged the County, City and State for their support.

Mr. Merlino requested Mr. Mead distribute copies of his report to Committee members at future meetings and Mr. Mead agreed to do so. Ms. Braymer reiterated the Economic Report indicated the arena had a \$13 million economic impact on the community, adding the returning State Basketball Tournament and the Aurora Games were enormous events for the area and Mr. Merlino concurred.

As there was no further business to come before the Occupancy Tax Coordination Committee, on motion made by Mrs. Frasier and seconded by Mr. Driscoll, Mr. Merlino adjourned the meeting at 1:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah McLenithan, Deputy Clerk of the Board
As transcribed by Leslie Lovelace, Secretary to the Clerk of the Board