

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: OCCUPANCY TAX COORDINATION

DATE: JUNE 4, 2019

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COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS DICKINSON  
MERLINO  
STROUGH  
BEATY  
FRASIER  
GERAGHTY  
DRISCOLL

OTHERS PRESENT:

REPRESENTING THE TOURISM DEPARTMENT:

JOANNE CONLEY, DIRECTOR  
LEISA GRANT, PRINCIPAL ACCOUNT CLERK  
PAUL TACKETT, ASSISTANT TOURISM COORDINATOR  
RYAN MOORE, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR  
AMANDA ALLEN, CLERK OF THE BOARD  
RYAN DICKEY, SECOND ASSISTANT COUNTY ATTORNEY  
FRANK E. THOMAS, BUDGET OFFICER

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

SUPERVISORS SIMPSON  
LEGGETT

SUPERVISORS BRAYMER  
DIAMOND  
HOGAN  
WILD

MICHAEL R. SWAN, COUNTY TREASURER

REPRESENTING THE ADIRONDACK CIVIC CENTER COALITION:

ELIZABETH MAHONEY, BOARD MEMBER  
JEFF MEAD, COOL INSURING ARENA GENERAL MANAGER  
ROBERT BLAIS, VILLAGE OF LAKE GEORGE MAYOR  
AMY COLLINS, TOURISM & DOWNTOWN BUSINESS COORDINATOR, CITY OF GLENS  
FALLS

REPRESENTING THE LAKE GEORGE REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & CVB :

GINA MINTZER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
KRISTEN HANIFIN, SPECIAL EVENTS & CONVENTION SALES DIRECTOR  
FRANK DITTRICH, WARREN COUNTY LODGING ASSOCIATION  
TRAVIS WHITEHEAD, TOWN OF QUEENSBURY RESIDENT  
DAVID KENNY, MARRIOTT COURTYARD  
FRANK DITTRICH, WARREN COUNTY LODGING ASSOCIATION  
DON LEHMAN, *THE POST STAR*  
LESLIE LOVELACE, SECRETARY TO THE CLERK OF THE BOARD

\*SEE SIGN IN SHEET FOR ADDITIONAL MEETING ATTENDEES

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*Please note, the following contains a summarization of the June 4, 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/>*

Mr. Dickinson called the meeting of the Occupancy Tax Coordination Committee to order at 11:09 a.m.

Motion was made by Mrs. Geraghty, seconded by Mr. Beaty 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 2019 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 8.79% as compared to 2018. Mr. Swan apprised as a result of hiring an auditor he was able to do more enforcement and he estimated his office would be collecting \$500,000 to \$750,000 on delinquent properties with the help of the County Attorney's Office. Mr. Geraghty asked Mr. Swan how his office was doing collecting tax from Airbnb and Mr. Swan replied

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he had not started, as he was awaiting a contract from the County Attorney's office with Airbnb, as well as other organizations such as Trip Advisor. Ryan Dickey, *Second Assistant County Attorney*, apprised the contract had been held up due to litigation in New York City resulting from Airbnb's unwillingness to agree with the terms of the contract. Mr. Swan apprised he had received a list of 1,845 rental properties in the area that would fall under the tax law, which he explained was far more work than his office could handle, as they were already finding it difficult collecting from 250 delinquent properties; he stated that without a contract there was no way his office was capable of collecting on such a large number. Ryan Moore, *County Administrator*, remarked Airbnb had a template contract which was all or nothing, apprising he would meet with the County Attorney's Office to figure out what the issues were and how they could move forward.

A brief discussion ensued in regards to the property rental law.

Mr. Dickinson informed there was a request from North Creek Business Alliance for occupancy tax funding and he asked Mr. Geraghty to explain. Mr. Geraghty replied the North Creek Business Alliance had requested \$12,500 per year for three years to help fund shuttle buses to promote tourism in the community.

Motion was made by Mr. Geraghty, seconded by Mr. Strough and carried unanimously to approve the funding request as outlined above and the necessary resolution was authorized for the June 19<sup>th</sup> Board meeting. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

Privilege of the floor was extended to Robert Blais, *Village of Lake George Mayor*, who informed the Village of Lake George Wastewater Treatment Plant Project had gone out-to-bid and the estimated cost had risen to \$24.5 million, with a 5% contingency; he noted that a 10% contingency would result in a cost over \$25.5 million. He stated he had two conference calls over the last three weeks with representatives from the Governor's Budget Office and he had hoped to hear back from their office. Mayor Blais added they filed an application for a grant of up to \$500,000 for two years through the North Country Alliance which was a Canadian/American group that helped support various projects in Counties. He added he would be meeting with the Lake George Town Board on Monday in an effort to accept bids and have a contract by the July 17<sup>th</sup> deadline, with work starting in August and an anticipated completion in 2021, per the consent order.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Elizabeth Mahoney, *Board Member representing Adirondack Civic Center Coalition*, who stated she was asked to apologize for the absence of Ed Moore, *Board Member, Adirondack Civic Center Coalition*, who was unable to attend the meeting. Ms. Mahoney apprised when the Adirondack Civic Center Coalition took over operating the Cool Insuring Arena four and a half years ago the City was losing hundreds of thousands of dollars in operating costs, but once they took over they removed the deficit from the City tax rolls. She remarked she was pleased to report they had made their final lease payment last year and had also completed paying the grant funding for improvements. She explained the strides they had made and stated the arena needed attention in certain areas and a list entitled, "Cool Insuring Arena Building Capital Projects/Immediate Needs", was distributed which she reviewed as well as an Economic Impact Study that had been conducted; *copies of both documents are on file with the minutes.* Ms. Mahoney explained they were requesting an additional \$100,000 a year for five years for capital improvement funds in addition to the \$250,000 a year they received for operational funding from the County.

A brief discussion ensued following which the Committee decided they would need to review funding and make a decision at a later date.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Jeff Mead, *General Manager, Cool Insuring Arena*, who provided an overview of past and upcoming events. Mr. Mead informed they had two concert bids in, as well as a family show.

A brief discussion ensued in regards to the value of the Cool Insuring Arena for the area.

Mr. Dickinson explained the next request was from Prime Time Lacrosse, Inc. for funding in the amount of \$30,000 for the returning event in their third year at Golden Goal Sports Park on July 13 - 14, 2019.

A brief discussion ensued in regards to peak season for hotels at the time of the Prime Time Lacrosse event and rebates to the event from hoteliers.

Mr. Beaty suggested they fund Prime Time Lacrosse, Inc. with the provision that the event be held next year in the first or second weekend in July to help fill the hotels during slow dates.

Mr. Driscoll made the motion to fund Prime Time Lacrosse, Inc. in the amount of \$20,000. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Frasier and carried unanimously, authorizing the necessary resolution for the June 19<sup>th</sup> Board meeting. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

Mr. Dickinson then presented a request from The Hyde Collection for \$25,000 in occupancy tax funding to support marketing efforts.

A brief discussion ensued, subsequent to which a motion was made by Mr. Geraghty and seconded by Mr. Merlino to approve funding in the amount of \$10,000.

Amy Collins, *Tourism & Downtown Business Coordinator, City of Glens Falls*, apprised there was a new Executive Director, Norman Dascher Jr., who had really made an effort to involve the community and was working more aggressively to market the museum.

A lengthy discussion ensued, subsequent to which Messrs. Geraghty and Merlino amended their motion to fund The Hyde Museum in the amount of \$15,000. Mr. Dickinson called the question and the aforementioned motion was carried unanimously and the necessary resolution was authorized for the June 19<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

Privilege of the floor was extended to Kristen Hanifin, *Special Events & Convention Sales Director, Lake George Chamber of Commerce & CVB*, who provided a brief highlight of her April 2019 CVB Report which was distributed to the Committee members; *a copy of the Report is on file with the minutes.*

Mr. Wild reiterated his request from last month to be allotted time to make his presentation on occupancy tax, asking that he be allowed to do so at the next meeting. Mr. Dickinson noted this was an oversight and he advised the presentation would be included on the agenda for the next meeting.

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 12:19 p.m.

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