

**WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

**COMMITTEE: OCCUPANCY TAX COORDINATION**

**DATE: AUGUST 28, 2019**

---

---

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

SUPERVISORS: DICKINSON  
MERLINO  
STROUGH  
BEATY  
FRASIER  
LEGGETT  
GERAGHTY  
DRISCOLL

**COMMITTEE MEMBER ABSENT:**

SUPERVISOR: SIMPSON

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

REPRESENTING THE TOURISM DEPARTMENT:

JOANNE CONLEY, DIRECTOR  
PAUL TACKETT, ASSISTANT TOURISM COORDINATOR  
LEISA GRANT, PRINCIPAL ACCOUNT CLERK  
TANYA BRAND, GROUP TOUR PROMOTER  
RONALD F. CONOVER, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD  
RYAN MOORE, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR  
RYAN DICKEY, SECOND ASSISTANT COUNTY ATTORNEY  
SARAH MCLLENITHAN, DEPUTY CLERK OF THE BOARD

FRANK E. THOMAS, BUDGET OFFICER

SUPERVISORS BRAYMER

HOGAN  
SOKOL  
WILD

REPRESENTING THE LAKE GEORGE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND CVB

GINA MINTZER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

REPRESENTING THE ADIRONDACK CIVIC CENTER COALITION:

ED MOORE, BOARD MEMBER  
JEFF MEAD, GLENS FALLS CIVIC CENTER GENERAL MANAGER  
MICHAEL SWAN, COUNTY TREASURER  
TAMMIE DELORENZO, ASSISTANT TO THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR  
TRAVIS WHITEHEAD, TOWN OF QUEENSBURY RESIDENT  
MOLLY GANOTES-GLEASON, LEGISLATIVE SPECIALIST

\*SEE SIGN IN SHEET FOR ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES

---

---

*Please note, the following contains a summarization of the August 28, 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: <https://www.warrencountyny.gov/gov/comm/Archive/2019/occupancy/>*

Mr. Dickinson called the meeting of the Occupancy Tax Coordination Committee to order at 10:34 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Beaty, seconded by Mrs. Frasier and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the previous Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Mike Swan, *County Treasurer*, who distributed copies of the Occupancy Tax Report, a copy of which is on file with the minutes. Mr. Swan proceeded with a review of his report, which reflected a 10.02% increase in occupancy tax revenue collections through August 19, 2019. He informed the actual percentage was 8% because the remaining included collections from delinquent accounts. Mr. Dickinson inquired where they were with short-term occupancy and Mr. Swan replied a proposed contract was forwarded to Airbnb for their review and approval; he added he had contacted other internet rental providers and worked on agreements or actual collections. Mr. Swan said he hoped to have them all on board by early spring.

Mr. Leggett entered the meeting at 10:36 a.m.

Mr. Dickinson apprised a letter was received from the Southern Adirondack Realtors which spoke to changing the Occupancy Tax Law. Mr. Swan conveyed he spoke to area attorneys and the Chairman of the Board of Supervisors regarding the letter; he explained under the current Law if a property containing occupancy rooms was being sold, the owner was required to contact his office and provide a notice that they were up-to-date with their occupancy tax submissions. He said in this case that was never done and the law stated the new owner of the property was required to pay the outstanding occupancy tax owed. He advised the Board of Realtors was concerned about that stipulation and they asked if the Law could be changed to remove stipulations resulting in a new buyer being charged; he added they also requested a more accurate way to determine whether an individual had outstanding occupancy tax owed on a property. He advised the problem with this request related to confidentiality within the Law which prevented this information from being divulged in a public forum, unlike property taxes. Finally, Mr. Swan relayed the Southern Adirondack Realtors recommendation that occupancy tax be collected on a quarterly basis.

Regarding Action Agenda Item #1, Mr. Dickinson spoke of a referral from the Public Works Committee, asking for consideration of an annual user agreement with Adirondack Lyme Timber to use their property to create a public hiking trail to Swede Fire Tower located in the Town of Hague at a cost of \$2,500-\$3,000. Ryan Moore, *County Administrator*, interjected the Public Works Committee also requested that the cost of the agreement be allocated from the Occupancy Tax Fund. Mr. Strough opined they should seek an easement, rather than a user agreement and Mr. Moore indicated there were already various easements with this company in place and he informed Adirondack Lyme Timber was requesting an annual contract because there was a blackout period when the property could not be used. Mr. Leggett notified the County owned the top of the mountain, as well as the tower, and he agreed the County should seek a permanent easement. Mr. Moore advised the County already had access to maintain the tower and this additional agreement would be for access to create a public hiking trail. He apprised he had negotiated an annual contract amount of \$2,500.

Motion was made by Mr. Strough, seconded by Mr. Merlino and carried unanimously to approve a user agreement with Adirondack Lyme Timer for access to the Swede Fire Tower at an annual cost of \$2,500 to be paid from the Occupancy Tax budget, as outlined above, and the necessary resolution was authorized for the September 20<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting.

Next, Mr. Dickinson indicated there was a request to appropriate \$20,000 from Budget Code A.881, *Reserve-Occupancy Tax*, to pay the additional ATTA (*Adventure Travel Trade Association*) Elevate Conference expenses. Gina Mintzer, *Executive Director, Lake George Chamber of Commerce and CVB*, notified when they did the MOU (*Memorandum of Understanding*) with the County it was for a 75%/25% grant from the State in the amount of \$166,000, adding the MOU was for the amount of \$200,000. She indicated they received grant funds in the amount of \$87,000 which brought the total grant funds to \$107,000, explaining they received the 75% which they would bill to the State and when reimbursed; she added that once the State reimbursement was received, they would reimburse this \$20,000 to the County.

Motion was made by Mr. Strough, seconded by Mrs. Frasier and carried unanimously to approve the request as presented 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 Ed Moore, *Board Member, Adirondack Civic Center Coalition*, who presented a request to fund the Cool Insuring Arena an additional \$100,000 annually for a five-year term to aid with capital costs. He explained the arena required a lot of work, adding they spent \$74,000 on an annual basis for maintenance costs and they could not stay ahead. He said they had to raise \$250,000 for infrastructure repairs. Mr. Dickinson commented they could accommodate the request and Mr. Beaty concurred. Mr. Leggett apprised there was more

value in a capital project.

Motion was made by Mr. Beaty, seconded by Mr. Merlino and carried unanimously to approve the request and the necessary resolution was authorized for the September 20<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Ms. Mintzer who distributed the Lake George Regional Convention & Visitors Bureau 2020 Sales & Marketing Plan to the Committee members which she reviewed in detail and answered questions posed by the Committee; *a copy of the Plan is on file with the minutes.*

Following, Mr. Dickinson presented a request to increase the annual Lake George Regional Chamber of Commerce and CVB contract to \$550,000.

Motion was made by Mr. Strough, seconded by Mr. Merlino and carried unanimously to approve the request and the necessary resolution was authorized for the September 20<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Norm Dascher, *Chief Executive Officer, the Hyde Collection*, who thanked the County for their support. He explained their goal was to expand the catchment area; he said they focused on educating children, and had revamped their website, increased advertisements on social media, and had received a grant from Google which lead to free advertising. He advised they were looking for collaborative relationships. He stated they were open on Mondays during the Saratoga Race Track season and had provided a shuttle service to and from the track. He apprised the next big show would be the work of Picasso. He advised they had an auditorium that could be used by the public, indicating one house had not been developed and could be a coffee shop, a retail store or a bed & breakfast. He explained he was looking for ideas to enhance the property.

Mr. Geraghty entered the meeting at 11:42 a.m.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Mr. Wild who provided a Power Point presentation entitled "*WC Occupancy Tax Review, April 2019, A Look at our Return on Investment*" which he reviewed in detail and answered questions posed by the Committee and attendees. *A copy of the presentation is on file with the minutes.*

As there was no further business to come before the Occupancy Tax Coordination Committee, on motion made by Mr. Merlino and seconded by Mrs. Frasier, Mr. Dickinson adjourned the meeting at 12:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Molly Ganotes-Gleason, Legislative Office Specialist