

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: OCCUPANCY TAX COORDINATION

DATE: OCTOBER 22, 2019

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS: DICKINSON
 MERLINO
 SIMPSON
 STROUGH
 BEATY
 FRASIER
 LEGGETT
 GERAGHTY
 DRISCOLL

OTHERS PRESENT:

REPRESENTING THE TOURISM DEPARTMENT:
 PAUL TACKETT, ASSISTANT TOURISM COORDINATOR
 LEISA GRANT, PRINCIPAL ACCOUNT CLERK
RONALD F. CONOVER, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
RYAN MOORE, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
MARY ELIZABETH KISSANE, COUNTY ATTORNEY
AMANDA ALLEN, CLERK OF THE BOARD
FRANK E. THOMAS, BUDGET OFFICER
SUPERVISORS BRAYMER
 HOGAN
 LOEB
 MAGOWAN
 SOKOL
 WILD
MICHAEL SWAN, COUNTY TREASURER
TAMMIE DELORENZO, ASSISTANT TO THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
MARCY FLORES, PUBLIC DEFENDER
REPRESENTING THE LAKE GEORGE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND CVB
 GINA MINTZER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
 KRISTEN HANIFAN, SPECIAL EVENTS & CONVENTION SALES
 DIRECTOR
FRED AUSTIN, WARREN COUNTY RESIDENT
DOUG MILLER, ADIRONDACK SPORTS COMPLEX
LAURA KOHL, CLARIAN INN & SUITES
DAVE KENNY, MARRIOTT COURTYARD
AMY COLLINS, TOURISM & DOWNTOWN BUSINESS COORDINATOR,
 CITY OF GLENS FALLS
DON LEHMAN, *THE POST STAR*
MOLLY GANOTES-GLEASON, LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

Please note, the following contains a summarization of the October 1, 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/tourism/>

Mr. Dickinson called the meeting of the Occupancy Tax Coordination Committee to order at 10:02 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.

Copies of the Occupancy Tax Coordination agenda were distributed to the Committee members and a copy of the same is on file with the minutes.

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 10.06% increase (or \$396,448.67) in occupancy tax revenue collections through October 17, 2019 as compared to the same time period in 2018. He expressed his concern that by the year 2022 there would be a deficit in the Occupancy Tax Reserve if they continued to follow the current course; he noted that if the Reserve was exhausted, monies from the general fund would have to be used for these expenses. Mr. Dickinson explained the Occupancy Tax Reserve funded events. Mr. Wild inquired what the current amount of the Occupancy Tax Reserve was and Mr. Swan estimated it was \$1.5 million. Mr. Magowan suggested to refrain from giving money to large successful events such as the Americade. Mr. Dickinson informed events like the Adirondack Balloon Festival, Americade and the Adirondack Food and Wine Festival did not have sufficient funding on their own to hold their events. He indicated some individuals would not have an event if they were not fully funded. Mr. Leggett stated they did not have the financials in front of them so he could not make a sound decision. Mr. Dickinson informed by the next meeting he would have the information for him. Mr. Wild suggested lowering the percentage allocated to the Towns. Messrs. Dickinson, Geraghty and Beaty voiced their opposition to lowering this amount as the towns used these monies to promote their events.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Kristen Hanifan, *Special Events & Convention Sales Director, Lake George Chamber of Commerce and CVB*. Ms. Hanifan spoke of the Christkindlmarkt event which was returning for its second year, indicating the event attracted 5,000 attendees last year. She informed they had partnered with the Lake George Steamboat Company for cruises with Santa Claus. She indicated the purpose of the event was to drive tourism to the area during the off season; she noted that the destination needed to change and evolve. She stated they were short on funding and were requesting \$10,000 to offer horse drawn carriage rides and a new light show. She reported they received \$18,500 from the Town and Village of Lake George. Mr. Beaty remarked he supported the event and Mr. Geraghty remarked he believed co-marketing was a good idea. Mr. Wild suggested having Supervisors ask for donations like they did at the Adirondack Balloon Festival. Ms. Braymer inquired what the marketing costs were and Ms. Hanifan replied they were using volunteers and a significant amount of social media exposure to spend little to no funds on marketing. A brief discussion ensued.

A motion was made by Mr. Geraghty, seconded by Mr. Driscoll and carried by majority vote, with Supervisor Leggett abstaining, to amend Resolution No. 500 of 2018 to include an award of \$10,000 in Occupancy Tax funding for the 2019 Adirondack Christkindlmarkt event, as well as to approve the appropriation of funds from the Occupancy Tax Reserve to the Tourism Budget for same. The necessary resolution to amend Resolution No. 500 of 2018 was authorized for the November 15th Board Meeting and the appropriation of funds was referred to the Finance Committee. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

Mr. Dickinson stated they would skip over the request from Mayor Blais and revisit it at a future meeting as the Mayor was unable to attend the meeting.

Concluding the agenda review, Mr. Dickinson indicated there was a request to appropriate \$15,000 from Budget Code A.881.00, *Reserve, Occupancy Tax*, to Budget Code A.6417.0002 469, *Tourism/Occupancy, Occupancy Tax, Other Payments/Contributions*, to pay the additional revenue gained to meet the towns 25% share of occupancy tax revenue collections which were higher than anticipated.

Motion was made by Mr. Simpson, seconded by Mr. Strough 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.*

As there was no further business to come before the Occupancy Tax Coordination Committee, on motion made by Mr. Simpson and seconded by Mr. Geraghty, Mr. Dickinson adjourned the meeting at 10:43 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Molly Ganotes-Gleason, Legislative Office Specialist