

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: OCCUPANCY TAX COORDINATION

DATE: NOVEMBER 19, 2019

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS: DICKINSON
MERLINO
SIMPSON
STROUGH
BEATY
FRASIER
GERAGHTY
DRISCOLL

COMMITTEE MEMBER ABSENT:

SUPERVISOR: LEGGETT

OTHERS PRESENT:

REPRESENTING THE TOURISM DEPARTMENT:

JOANNE CONLEY, DIRECTOR
LEISA GRANT, PRINCIPAL ACCOUNT CLERK
RYAN MOORE, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
MARY ELIZABETH KISSANE, COUNTY ATTORNEY
AMANDA ALLEN, CLERK OF THE BOARD
FRANK E. THOMAS, BUDGET OFFICER
SUPERVISORS DIAMOND
LOEB
MAGOWAN
MCDEVITT
SOKOL
WILD

REPRESENTING THE LAKE GEORGE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND CVB

GINA MINTZER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
KRISTEN HANIFAN, SPECIAL EVENTS & CONVENTION SALES
DIRECTOR
ROBERT BLAIS, MAYOR, VILLAGE OF LAKE GEORGE
JEFF MEAD, REPRESENTING THE COOL INSURANCE ARENA
TAMMIE DELORENZO, ASSISTANT TO THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
DON LEHMAN, *THE POST STAR*
THOM RANDALL, *ADIRONDACK JOURNAL*
MOLLY GANOTES-GLEASON, LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST
See sign-in sheet for other meeting attendees

Please note, the following contains a summarization of the November 19, 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/>

In the absence of Committee Chairman Dickinson, Supervisor Merlino, as Vice-Chair, called the meeting of the Occupancy Tax Coordination Committee to order at 10:42 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Geraghty, 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 Robert Blais, *Mayor of the Village of Lake George*, who asked for the County's support in constructing a new wastewater treatment plant, which was estimated to cost \$24 million.

Mr. Dickinson entered the meeting at 10:45 a.m. and assumed the Chair.

Mayor Blais advised the Village secured \$7.5 million in grant funding which left a balance of \$17 million that was bonded through the EFC (*Environmental Facility Corporation*). He informed they broke ground four weeks ago and the plant was on schedule to be completed by May 2021. He apprised they put \$50,000 a year in a reserve fund in

anticipation of upgrading the wastewater treatment plant. He indicated the village did not plan for a new facility because he believed the plant was as operational as every other plant in the region; however, he informed when the previous plant operator became ill and passed away they found he had falsified test results. He stated they reported it immediately to the NYSDEC (*New York State Department of Environmental Conservation*) following which NYSDEC placed them under a consent order to replace the entire plant by 2021. He mentioned over the past five to eight years the Village had invested \$3.2 million in a plant they thought was operating efficiently. He reported they did not have enough in the reserve fund to defray the costs of a new plant. He informed over the next ten years money would be put in a reserve fund and returned to the County. He said property taxes in the Village would increase by \$450, while larger taxpayers such as the Fort William Henry, the Marriott and the Georgian would see an increase of \$60,000 to \$70,000 a year. He reported the Town of Caldwell Sewer District rate would increase by 100% if there was no additional funding. He apprised the Village received a hardship grant because the average income in the Village was \$41,383. He voiced the Village and Town of Lake George hosted forty-five concerts, the Lake George Jazz Festival, Thursday fireworks, the Lake George Music Festival and the Winter Carnival which raised the quality of life in the County and brought tourists to the area, adding all these events were free. He apprised he was requesting \$100,000 a year for the next five years from the County, which was under the tax cap. He indicated without additional funding the Village would not have the funds to replace the seating in Shepards Park, improve the stage or keep the walkway clean. He reported \$115,000 a year was spent to clean and maintain the two restroom facilities. He apprised they had been a great partner with the County, but when the County took 25% of the proceeds from County-owned Beach Road parking lot it hurt them then and continued to hurt them today. He point out they took care of the West Brook parking lot and they were partners with the County on the Charles R. Wood Festival Commons. He added the Village had bought out the Town of Lake George when it looked like the Festival Commons project was going to fall apart. He apprised the Village was seeking help because they truly needed it.

Mr. Geraghty inquired what the cost of bond payments were and Mayor Blais replied \$500,000 a year. He indicated the most important goal was to protect the lake. He said there was no guarantee they would receive any further funding from the State or Federal Government that they had applied for. Mr. Geraghty inquired if the County funding would pay the bond and Mayor Blais replied affirmatively. Mr. Dickinson said to stay hopeful and they would accept his application for consideration in January.

Mr. Simpson exited the meeting at 10:56 a.m.

Mr. Wild remarked he supported the Mayor and inquired if the funds should be allocated from occupancy tax or an alternative funding source.

Motion was made by Mr. Merlino, seconded by Mr. Strough and carried unanimously to review other funding scenarios available, other than occupancy tax funding, to support the construction of a new Wastewater Treatment Plant in the Village of Lake George.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Jeff Mead, *Representing the Cool Insurance Arena*, who provided an update on the fourth quarter events at the Cool Insuring Arena. He informed there were six hockey games with more than 2,100 attendees, a gun show which had 750 attendees, and a rock concert with the band Ghost which had 2,000 attendees. He reported they held the Annual Stamped Rodeo, A Day to Remember concert which had 3,200 attendees. He informed Alice Cooper would be playing this Friday and they hosted girls volleyball. He stated overall the Adirondack Thunder Hockey hosted 19 games and there were 52 other events which included WWE wrestling, 5 concerts, Comedian Bill Engvall, Federation Basketball along with Section 2 Basketball. He notified in March 2020 they would host the NYSPHSAA Boys Basketball and Harlem Globetrotters. He stated \$75,000 was invested throughout the year, with \$20,000 being spent for a new workout room. Mr. Geraghty inquired how many years they hosted the rodeo and Mr. Mead answered 29 years. Mr. Wild asked for revenue projections and Mr. Mead replied

they were ahead of October 2018 by \$50,000.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Kristen Hanifan, *Special Events & Convention Sales Director, Lake George Chamber of Commerce and CVB* who distributed the CVB 4th Quarter Report 2019 to the Committee members which she reviewed in detail, *a copy of the report 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. Geraghty and seconded by Mrs. Frasier, Mr. Dickinson adjourned the meeting at 11:24 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Molly Ganotes-Gleason, Legislative Office Specialist