

## WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

**COMMITTEE: OCCUPANCY TAX COORDINATION**

**DATE: February 10, 2011**

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**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

SUPERVISORS KENNY  
MERLINO  
BENTLEY  
CHAMPAGNE  
MCCOY  
CONOVER

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

KATE JOHNSON, DIRECTOR OF TOURISM  
LEISA GRANT, PRINCIPAL ACCOUNT CLERK, TOURISM  
DANIEL STEC, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD  
PAUL DUSEK, COUNTY ATTORNEY/ADMINISTRATOR  
JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD  
KEVIN GERAGHTY, BUDGET OFFICER  
SUPERVISORS THOMAS  
STRAINER  
TAYLOR  
GIRARD  
LOEB  
MICHAEL CONSUELO, SPECIAL EVENTS COORDINATOR  
LUISA CRAIGE-SHERMAN, COUNCIL OF CHAMBERS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
MICHAEL BORGOS, CHAIRMAN OF THE EDC  
DAVID BULMER, GORE MOUNTAIN REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
KEVIN ROSA, COUNCIL OF CHAMBERS PRESIDENT  
JANICE FOX, COUNCIL OF CHAMBERS VICE-PRESIDENT  
JEFF BURNS, OLYMPIC REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
THOM RANDALL, ADIRONDACK JOURNAL  
JON ALEXANDER, *THE POST STAR*  
JOANNE COLLINS, LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

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**COMMITTEE MEMBER ABSENT:**

SUPERVISOR GOODSPEED

Mr. Kenny called the meeting of the Occupancy Tax Coordination Committee to order at 12:50 p.m.

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

Mr. Kenny apprised of the need to discuss the Occupancy Tax Reserve Fund and he stated that he had become aware of a section of the Law, which was drafted in 2003, which required the establishment of an Occupancy Tax Reserve Fund. He further stated that the Fund was derived from collections in year one, with a current balance of \$900,000 to be used for expenses related to Tourism promotion. Paul Dusek, County Attorney/Administrator, stated that he required time to examine the Legislation to determine the appropriate use of the reserve fund, as well as the balance requirements.

Motion was made by Mr. Champagne, seconded by Mr. McCoy and carried unanimously to table action regarding the Occupancy Tax Reserve Fund to allow time for Mr. Dusek to research the matter.

Mr. Kenny referred to a previous Committee meeting discussion in connection with changes to the Special Event Funding Application process to require more definitive data on the application; thereby improving the integrity of the evaluation process. He also recommended that the Committee consider changing the annual December application review meeting to November to allow additional time for the Tourism Department to compile the necessary data prior to December. Mr. Conover expressed his support for the change to a November meeting and he asked for a draft of the

changes for the Committee. Mr. Kenny stated that he would meet with Kate Johnson, Director of Tourism, and Leisa Grant, Sr. Account Clerk, regarding the matter. Mr. Merlino expressed his support for the application enhancements and said he felt the Committee meeting held with Ms. Grant for application review was beneficial for evaluative purposes.

Continuing, Mr. Kenny apprised of a change received from Luisa Craige-Sherman, Council of Chambers, on behalf of the Lake George Chamber Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) as a result of a reduction in funding for the 2011 Annual Lake George Restaurant Week. The request, he said, was for a reduction in the duration of the event from three to two weeks. He noted that funding had been reduced from \$8,000 in 2010 to \$2,500 for 2011 and noted the Lake George Chamber of Commerce recommended two weeks as they could facilitate a successful two week event with the 2011 funding award.

Motion was made by Mr. McCoy, seconded by Mr. Merlino and carried unanimously to approve the request to reduce the Restaurant Week event to two weeks and maintain the original funding award of \$2,500 for 2011.

Responding to a question from Mr. Merlino regarding the Towns applying for occupancy tax funding Mr. Kenny stated that it had been agreed upon by the Committee at a previous meeting to forgo changes to the application criteria at this time.

Addressing the 2011 Centurion Cycling Event, Mr. Kenny informed that he attended a meeting with the Centurion group which included members of the LGRCC and CVB, as well as event supporters, Kevin Rosa, Council of Chambers President, Ms. Craige-Sherman, and Micheal Consuelo, Special Events Coordinator. The Centurion Cycling Event, he apprised, had been awarded \$33,000 for 2011, and the CVB had additional information to share today.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Ms. Craige-Sherman who thanked the Chairman and Committee members for their time. She stated that the Cycling event was a new regional event which required both tangible and intangible investments by the local communities. She stated Mr. Rosa and Janice Fox, Chamber Vice President, were in attendance and Ms. Fox would show a four minute video narrated by Graham Frazier, CEO of the Centurion Cycling Event and Founder/Promoter of the Lake Placid Ironman Event which included up-to-date information for the Committee and attendees. Ms. Fox stated that other videos were accessible from the [Centurioncycling.com](http://Centurioncycling.com) website and encouraged all to view them.

Ms. Craige-Sherman introduced today's attendees who were in support of the event which included Jeff Burns, of the Olympic Regional Development Authority, who was instrumental in bringing the event to Warren County, Attorney Michael Borgos, Chairman of the Warren County Economic Development Corporation (EDC) Board, David Bulmer, of West Mountain Ski Resort and Mr. Consuelo.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Mr. Consuelo who informed that he had attended the Centurion event held in Toronto. It was a thrill, he said, to attend the event from a spectator's perspective. He noted the event showed potential to become a local attraction for years to come. When Warren County was selected as the home site, he stated a long range agreement/partnership and a letter of intent for five years was issued for this event to come to the northeast for the first time. He praised the skill, knowledge and planning experience of the organizers who understand the details of running a successful event with enjoyment and safety as the foremost priorities for both participants and spectators. He said marketing in a timely manner was equally critical to the

success of the event and he noted that planning time would be insufficient in ensuring optimum results for a June 2011 event. If the event were postponed until 2012, he asserted, a more successful outcome for the inaugural event could be ensured. As a result of many discussions held over the past few days, he stated that a 2012 event would allow the necessary marketing and promotion which would begin immediately. The June 2011 date would be retained; however, he stated, the well orchestrated June event would become the kick-off or preview event by invitation only. He said the marketing effort would commence immediately to reach out to all cycling organizations in the Northeast and to local organizations for sponsorships.

Mr. Bulmer thanked the Committee and stated that Centurion's recommendation for the postponement of the event would mean the difference between a good or excellent outcome in 2011 or 2012, respectively in terms of participation numbers. He said the preliminary ride or kick-off event held in June would be a signature event with approximately 200 participants and would introduce the event to bicycle clubs and companies. He apprised that planning was essential to the marketing effort, and forecasted many notable business opportunities. In terms of volunteers, Mr. Bulmer stated that Centurion anticipated 250 to 300 volunteers for the event and offered donations to not-for-profit agencies that provided volunteer efforts which evidenced the economic impact of the event to the entire County. He said that two to three people per rider were expected for up to four overnight stays and with the additional planning time, plans for children's events would ensue. He added that the Chamber efforts throughout the County were already preparing for the event which could gain National significance.

Mr. Rosa thanked the Chamber Boards for their support. He apprised that in terms of marketing he was impressed with the professional, knowledgeable staff and was confident in the marketing effort. He informed that the CVB Board fully supported the event which would benefit every community in the County.

Ms. Fox expressed her support for the decision to delay the inaugural ride until 2011. She stated that she had asked the Centurion Cycling group what factors had drawn them to Warren County and she informed the three reasons were the challenging cycling course, the family oriented location which was a destination area, and the sufficient population to draw from.

Mr. Burns, said he had been very involved with Mr. Bulmer and Mr. Consuelo on this project and recognized their commitment as well as the desire and commitment of many others to move forward. The largest hurdle, he opined, was securing the necessary funding. He stated he had known Mr. Frazier since he had brought the community based Ironman event to Lake Placid ten years ago. He apprised that he had given Mr. Frazier a tour of the County and the Gore Mountain area with the assistance of Mr. Consuelo and it became apparent immediately that the Village of Lake George was an ideal location in which to stage the event. He said that time was needed to raise money and to grow a sponsor base which would serve as the foundation to move forward with an organized event of this stature.

Ms. Craige-Sherman informed that Centurion Cycling had offered a booth at one of their 2011 events which would enable promotion of the region and was within the 2011 marketing budget. She requested to retain the 2011 Occupancy Tax Funds in the amount of \$33,000 in order to begin the marketing effort.

Committee discussion ensued which showed the full support of the Committee. Chairman Stec cautioned of one caveat which was attendance of under 200 participants for the June 2011 event which could effect future funding decisions.

Motion was made by Mr. Merlino, seconded by Mr. McCoy to approve the request to hold a kick-off cycling event in June of 2011, and to postpone the inaugural event to a date to be determined in 2012, with the 2011 Occupancy Tax Funding Award of \$33,000 to remain unchanged.

A short discussion ensued and Ms. Craige-Sherman confirmed that a request would be made for 2012 Occupancy Tax Funding depending upon the usage of the 2011 funds which she anticipated would be expended in 2011. Mr. Dusek recommended a stipulation in the contract to ensure a contract with Centurion for 2011 through 2012.

Mr. Kenny called the question and the motion was carried unanimously to utilize 2011 Occupancy Tax Funding for the 2011 Centurion kick-off event, and to plan the inaugural event for 2012 as outlined above.

As there was no further business to come before the Occupancy Tax Coordination Committee, on motion made by Mr. Bentley and seconded by Mr. McCoy, Mr. Kenny adjourned the meeting at 1:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Joanne Collins, Legislative Office Specialist