

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

DATE: **February 26, 2007**

Committee Members Present:

Supervisors
Monroe
Stec
Mason
Champagne
F. Thomas
Girard
Sokol

Others Present:

Representing Warren County Economic
Development Corporation:
Leonard Fosbrook, President
Peter Wohl, Director, Adirondack Regional
Business Incubator
John Wheatley, Project Manager, Queensbury
Industrial Park
Joan Parsons, Commissioner of Administrative &
Fiscal Services
Joan Sady, Clerk of the Board
Hal Payne, Administrator, Westmount Health
Facility
Nicholas Caimano, Budget Officer
Barbara Bennett, Town of Lake Luzerne
Maury Thompson, *The Post Star*
Debra L. Schreiber, Legislative Office Specialist

Mr. Monroe called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Mason, seconded by Mr. F. Thomas, and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the January 29, 2007 meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Mr. Fosbrook, President, Economic Development Committee, Warren County, who distributed copies of his agenda packet to members of the Committee, a copy of which is on file with the minutes.

Commencing with the first item on the agenda, Mr. Fosbrook indicated at the last Local Development Corporation (LDC) meeting it was determined Warren County would continue to operate their LDC by reducing the Board to the Planning & Community Development Committee. He said a request was made that Peter Wohl, Director, Adirondack Regional Business Incubator (ARBI), serve as CEO (Chief Executive Officer) and he would serve as CFO (Chief Financial Officer). Mr. Fosbrook recommended the Committee review the legal services of Harris Beach (which they currently utilized), as they were extremely knowledgeable in the field of community development.

Mr. Fosbrook apprised that when Warren County adopted their 2007 budget, the EDC was granted an increase of \$50,000 in their budget from \$300,000 in 2006 to \$350,000 in 2007; however, he said, Resolution No. 69 of 2007 that was passed at the January 19, 2007 Board Meeting only authorized a \$300,000 budget.

Motion was made by Mr. F. Thomas and seconded by Mr. Champagne authorizing the request to amend Resolution No. 69 of 2007 to reflect an increase of \$50,000 in the 2007 EDC budget from \$300,000 to \$350,000.

Mr. Fosbrook explained that at the August 2006 Committee meeting, a resolution was approved in support of the \$350,000 Economic Development Corporation budget; however, it was incorrectly stated in Resolution No. 69 of 2007.

After discussion, Mr. Monroe called the question, the motion was carried unanimously; and the necessary resolution was authorized for the March 16, 2007 Board Meeting.

With respect to the Hudson River Local Development Corporation (HRLDC), Mr. Fosbrook apprised a new budget request of \$200,000 was approved at the August 2006 meeting; however, he said because this organization had no previous budget, it was overlooked. He stated the HRLDC budget of \$200,000 was approved in the 2007 County budget to assist with the match for the road at the Queensbury Industrial Park (QIP).

Motion was made by Mr. Mason, seconded by Mr. Sokol and carried unanimously authorizing a contract with Hudson River Local Development Corporation (HRLDC), for a lump sum amount of \$200,000; and the necessary resolution was authorized for the March 16, 2007 Board Meeting. A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.

Mr. Thompson entered the meeting at 12:09 p.m.

Relative to the Queensbury Industrial Park (QIP), John Wheatley, Project Manager, updated the Committee on the status of the funding for the EDA (Economic Development Agency) grant. While the application had been completed and forwarded to the appropriate agency and the normal response time was approximately 45 days, he said, he had been advised it could potentially take longer. While they had a good ongoing relationship with the National Guard, he indicated it was just a matter of coordinating the time tables. Mr. Wheatley said the National Guard had informed him their design phase was 95% complete and they anticipated commencing construction on the second facility simultaneously with the regular facility. While they were repeatedly advised a response to their funding request was imminent only to be delayed even longer, Mr. Fosbrook assured the Committee his Department had done everything possible, including asking for assistance from Senator Little and Assemblywoman Sayward. He said there was the possibility this grant could potentially fall through, but it was his intention to keep the Board of Supervisors and the Committee informed of the status. Mr. Monroe suggested forwarding a resolution from the full Board of Supervisors to their local legislators, and Mr. Fosbrook commented he thought that would be helpful. Mr. Champagne asked if Warren County were unsuccessful in obtaining this EDA grant, who would become the responsible party and Chairman Thomas responded Warren County. Mr. Fosbrook apprised this EDA grant of \$500,000 was a 50/50 match with the County and he anticipated going to bid within the next two weeks; however, he added, unfortunately the contracts could not be awarded until the funds were available. He said if they did not receive a response in the next 30-45 days, he felt they had no other alternative but to review other options.

Mr. Stec entered the meeting at 12:13 p.m.

Mr. Fosbrook added the Queensbury Economic Development Corporation (QUEDC) committed to purchasing a lot in the Queensbury Industrial Park (QIP) to assist in financing the road. He said he thought a resolution from this Committee to the full Board of Supervisors would help their elected officials in Washington. Mr. Monroe suggested forwarding a letter from Chairman Thomas

based upon a resolution from this Committee.

Motion was made by Mr. F. Thomas, seconded by Mr. Stec and carried unanimously approving the request as outlined above; and the necessary resolution was authorized for the March 16, 2007 Board Meeting.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Peter Wohl, Director, Adirondack Regional Business Incubator (ARBI), who reported after reviewing the bylaws, there were currently 10 members of the ARBI Board of Directors and one vacancy. Presently, he said, Mr. Stec was serving on the ARBI Board as a representative from the Town of Queensbury as well as the County. While Mr. Stec acknowledged he would continue to serve on the Board, he stated that Matthew Sokol, Supervisor from the Town of Queensbury, expressed his interest in serving as well. After a recent discussion with Michael Barody, former member of the ARBI Board and Town of Queensbury Supervisor, Mr. Sokol acknowledged his willingness to serve on the ARBI Board of Directors, if nominated.

Mr. Caimano entered the meeting at 12:13 p.m.

Mr. Champagne recommended appointing Mr. Sokol to the ARBI Board of Directors, as he was a business person within the community.

Motion was made by Mr. Champagne, seconded by Mr. Girard and carried unanimously approving the appointment as outlined above; and the necessary resolution was authorized for the March 16, 2007 Board Meeting. A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.

At the previous Committee meeting, Mr. Wohl said he was asked to update the Committee on the ARBI facility and building. He stated over the past year, a majority of the focus had been on equating the program to the building; however, he said, they existed independently of one another and there was no reason the program could not be operational prior to the building being completed. In addition, Mr. Wohl stated, they had developed marketing materials and brochures about the program and services they would provide.

Mr. Wohl briefly gave an overview of the ARBI website utilizing extensive flashes and advanced technology that would appeal to entrepreneurs generally between the ages of 20 and 45. He said the website revealed the facility floor plan depicting conference rooms, classrooms and various tenant locations. Mr. Wohl apprised a Directors' Blog was included on the website home page that listed the many ongoing activities within the facility and program. One of the features that would make the ARBI unique, he said, was an inclusion of a clean room facility that focused on the medical device industry, as well as the nanotechnology field. In addition, he said, there was a description of the program, client expectations, educational information, eligibility, entrance and exit criterion, as well as the ability to download applications.

Mr. Wohl stated the facility and its location would be a major asset to the program so they incorporated a video in an attempt to sell the community to new businesses that contemplated relocating to Warren County. He said they did not want this to be a stand-alone program but rather a component of an entrepreneurial assistance program; therefore, he said, they enlisted input from the local Chamber of Commerce, as well as the Planning Department, who currently provided business assistance within the County. Mr. Wohl apprised that most information relative to the program was available online.

Mr. Wohl related that the design and bid documents were submitted for bid on February 19, 2007 in addition to being submitted to EDA for their review. He indicated there was the possibility of some additional expenses utilizing the EDA grant instead of a public/private partnership approach to renovating the existing facility on Elm Street. He said they were currently awaiting a response from EDA relative to the bid documents and the potential time line, as well as alternative uses of the EDA grant. At the same time, he stated, they were obtaining comparable costs from private developers for renovating the building. In summation, Mr. Wohl said they were using due diligence in an attempt to locate a home for the incubator program, as well as renovating the facility in the most efficient and effective way possible.

Mr. Champagne queried whether there was the possibility of a dual public/private developer approach to completing the facility and Mr. Wohl responded affirmatively. Upon gaining control over the site, he said, they would perform the remediation or Brownsfield work, which made the building more appealing to a private developer.

Mr. Caimano added he attended a Municipal Shared Services meeting last week at Mayor Akins' Office, City of Glens Falls, in which Peter Wohl advised he had experience assisting municipal people in achieving success as entrepreneurs for taxpayer benefit. Therefore, he said, he would suggest Mr. Wohl become a permanent member of the Municipal Shared Services Committee. Mr. Fosbrook commented he had contacted a State agency that would support that effort prior to Mr. Wohl becoming involved with that Committee.

Mr. Monroe stated he wished to thank Mr. Fosbrook and Mr. Wohl for their guidance and support on the Town of Chester waterline project.

There being no further business to come before the committee, on motion by Mr. Stec and seconded by Mr. Girard, Mr. Monroe adjourned the meeting at 12:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra L. Schreiber
Legislative Office Specialist