

## WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

**COMMITTEE: TOURISM**

**DATE: NOVEMBER 28, 2012**

---

---

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: OTHERS PRESENT:**

SUPERVISORS MERLINO  
KENNY  
DICKINSON  
STRAINER  
CONOVER  
WOOD  
VANSELOW

KATE JOHNSON, TOURISM DIRECTOR  
AMANDA ALLEN, DEPUTY CLERK OF THE BOARD  
KEVIN GERAGHTY, BUDGET OFFICER

SUPERVISORS LOEB  
MASON  
TAYLOR  
THOMAS  
WESTCOTT

CHRISTINA CURLEY, SPECIAL EVENTS COORDINATOR, LAKE GEORGE  
REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU  
JOHN STROUGH, QUEENSBURY TOWN COUNCILMAN, 3<sup>RD</sup> WARD  
FRED AUSTIN, FORT WILLIAM HENRY RESORT  
DON LEHMAN, *THE POST STAR*  
CHARLENE DiRESTA, SR. LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

---

---

Mr. Merlino called the meeting of the Tourism Committee to order at 11:02 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Kenny, seconded by Mr. Strainer 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 Kate Johnson, Tourism Director, who distributed copies of the agenda to the Committee members; *a copy of the agenda is on file with the minutes.*

Commencing the agenda review, Ms. Johnson presented requests for transfer of funds, as follows:

- ▶ in the amount of \$459 from Tourism Promotion (A.6417 481) to Office Equipment (A.6417 220) to reflect the purchase of an Apple iPad for use at consumer and trade shows;
- ▶ in the amount of \$200 from Tourism Promotion (A.6417 481) to Salaries-Overtime (A.6417 120) to reflect the use of overtime by an employee for attendance at an out-of-State trade show; and
- ▶ in the amount of \$4,000 from Contracts (A.6417 470) to Office Equipment (A.6417 220) to reflect the purchase of equipment and office furniture for the Tourism Information Center.

Ms. Johnson noted that the iPad would be utilized by Tanya Brand, Group Tour Promoter, when she conducted appointments. She added that Ms. Brand's counterparts currently used iPads which allowed them to present materials in a more professional manner. She credited the Information Technology Department for their assistance in the purchase of the device at a government rate.

Motion was made by Mr. Kenny, seconded by Mr. Strainer and carried unanimously to approve the requests for transfer of funds as outlined above and to forward same to the Finance Committee. *Copies of the Request for Transfer of Funds forms are on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Johnson requested authorization for attendance at 2013 in-State and out-of-State consumer shows by Tourism Department personnel and County Supervisors. She noted this resolution was authorized annually to allow attendance at consumer shows.

Motion was made by Mr. Kenny, seconded by Mr. Strainer and carried unanimously to approve the request as presented. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the December 21, 2012 Board meeting.*

Ms. Johnson requested authorization for attendance at 2013 in-State, out-of-State and Canadian Motorcoach trade shows/sales blitzes/marketplaces/conferences by Tourism Department personnel and County Supervisors. She noted this resolution was also authorized on an annual basis to allow attendance at industry trade shows.

Motion was made by Mrs. Wood, seconded by Mr. Strainer and carried unanimously to approve the request as presented. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the December 21, 2012 Board meeting.*

Ms. Johnson requested to extend the existing contract with the Adirondack Regional Tourism Council, Inc. for regional marketing services for a total amount not to exceed \$128,000 for a term commencing January 1, 2013 and terminating December 31, 2013. She informed that when she applied for the New York State Matching Funds Grant, she did so on behalf of the Region. She advised that Warren County Tourism completed marketing programs for the Region to highlight activities such as fishing, snowmobiling, group tours, camping, etc. She said the contract would allow her to support the Region with marketing funds received from the New York State Matching Funds Grant.

Motion was made by Mr. Kenny, seconded by Mr. Strainer and carried unanimously to extend the existing contract as outlined above. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the December 21, 2012 Board meeting.*

Ms. Johnson requested a continuation of the Intermunicipal Agreement with the Village of Lake George to provide funding in the amount of \$25,000 for promotional space within the Lake George Visitor's Center. She commented that Robert Blais, Mayor of the Village of Lake George, sent a letter annually to request \$25,000 in funds from the Tourism Department to assist in support of the Lake George Visitor's Center. Mr. Merlino mentioned that including the \$25,000 for 2013, Warren County has contributed \$145,000 to support the Lake George Visitor's Center since 2007. Mr. Strainer asked if the annual letter from Mayor Blais had been received for the 2013 budget and Ms. Johnson replied affirmatively.

Motion was made by Mr. Kenny, seconded by Mr. Conover and carried unanimously to authorize continuation of the Intermunicipal Agreement as outlined above. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the December 21, 2012 Board meeting.*

Ms. Johnson requested to extend the existing contract with Lake Placid Advertisers Workshop in an amount not to exceed \$800,000 for a term commencing January 1, 2013 and terminating December 31, 2013. She advised Lake Placid Advertisers Workshop had not been the lowest bidder; however, she requested authorization to select this firm based on an existing relationship with Warren County Tourism and a value added package included in the proposal. She stated Lake Placid Advertisers Workshop had offered an adaptive landing page as part of their proposal which would automatically reformat to the device being used (ei. computer, tablet, iPad, smart phone, etc.). Mr. Merlino opined the work completed by Lake Placid Advertisers Workshop in the past had been beneficial to the

County and he noted they completed work outside of that dictated in their previous proposals. Mr. Kenny asked the price difference between the proposals received and Ms. Johnson replied the quotes received were based on the percentage of commission; she said the lowest commission was 3.5% and Lake Placid Advertisers Workshop was 3.65%. Ms. Johnson added that the industry standard for commissions was 15%.

Motion was made by Mr. Dickinson, seconded by Mr. Kenny and carried unanimously to extend the existing contract as outlined above. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the December 21, 2012 Board meeting.*

Ms. Johnson presented the following requests in connection with the new Tourism Information Center:

- ▶ to amend the 2013 County budget to increase estimated revenues and appropriations in an amount totaling \$25,878 to reflect the costs associated with rental space and staffing of the Tourism Information Center;
- ▶ authorizing a rental agreement with Adirondack Factory Outlet Center, Inc. for office space for the Tourism Information Center in an amount not to exceed \$15,000 for a term commencing January 1, 2013 and terminating December 31, 2013; and
- ▶ to create and fill a new position of Clerk (part-time), Grade 2, pro-rated annual salary of \$10,878, thereby amending the Department's Table of Organization.

Ms. Johnson reminded the Committee that Mr. Merlino had requested \$50,000 for the Tourism Information Center at a previous meeting. She said it was determined \$10,000 would be allocated from the Occupancy Tax Reserve Fund in 2012 with the remainder allocated in 2013. She noted the funds would be utilized to cover the costs associated with the leasing agreement and the salary for a part-time employee to staff the Tourism Information Center. Mr. Kenny stated he was in favor of the use of Occupancy Tax Reserve Funds for the initial cost of establishing the Tourism Information Center but he opined that for 2014 and beyond the cost of operation should be budgeted in the Tourism Department's budget.

Mr. Merlino informed the new Tourism Information Center was established and had been open for Thanksgiving Weekend. He said the space had been set-up with advertising materials and brochures. He noted two televisions had been purchased and would be in place next week to play video advertisements continually. He said Ms. Johnson would send a letter to each of the Town Supervisors requesting materials to enable each Town to have a large poster on the wall with a brochure rack below displaying brochures pertaining to the individual Town. He said the location was ideal and he invited the Committee members to stop by to see the Center. Mr. Merlino reported they had received permission from the Town of Queensbury to place a small sign on the street informing of the Tourism Information Center's location.

Mr. Strainer asked if one part-time employee would be hired and Ms. Johnson replied the Personnel Office had suggested one to two part-time employees to staff the Center. She said she had also considered two of the Tourism Department staff members could staff the Tourism Information Center for one day per week each. She noted she had not yet discussed this possibility with the County Administrator but this scenario, along with an additional employee, would allow the County to only hire one part-time employee to cover the weekend shifts. Mr. Strainer advised that it was vital that the employee hired have knowledge of the tourism based attractions and activities in Warren County. A brief discussion ensued.

Motion was made by Mr. Kenny, seconded by Mr. Strainer and carried unanimously to authorize the rental agreement as outlined above; amend the 2013 County budget as outlined above and forward same to the Finance Committee; and to approve the creation and filling of the vacant position as outlined above and to forward same to the Personnel Committee. *Copies of the resolution request forms are on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the December 21, 2012 Board meeting.*

Mr. Mason asked if the recently implemented hiring freeze would allow for the creation of the part-time Clerk position and Mr. Merlino advised the Committee was approving the position for discussion at the Personnel Committee meeting.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Christina Curley, Special Events Coordinator for the Lake George Regional Chamber of Commerce and Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB), who distributed copies of her monthly report to the Committee members; *a copy of same is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Curley reported she had recently attended two large conferences: the TEAMS 2012 Conference and the Rejuvenate Conference. She noted the TEAMS Conference included event organizers for various sporting events throughout the Country and the Rejuvenate Conference was a faith-based trade show. She added she was working on some leads obtained from the TEAMS Conference. She apprised she was working in connection with the Saratoga CVB on a possible USA Karate event to be held at the Adirondack Sports Complex. She said she was working on follow up calls from both conferences.

Ms. Curley informed the November CVB Meeting was held at the Sagamore Resort and there were 12 attendees representing 8 area properties. She noted there were productive discussions at the meeting pertaining to co-operative opportunities. She reported the CVB would co-sponsor the ESSAE (Empire State Society of Association Executives) Annual Holiday Party & Charity Auction in December, along with the Sagamore Resort and the Fort William Henry Resort and Conference Center. She stated the December CVB Meeting would be held at the Fort William Henry Resort and the January Meeting would be held at the Country Inn and Suites.

Ms. Curley said one of the Warren County properties had informed her that they were contacted by the New York State Federation of Lake Associations, Inc. regarding the North American Lake Management Society Annual Conference. She commented the group was looking to host the 2015 or 2016 conference in the area but were also considering Lake Placid or Saratoga Springs due to an abundance of conference center space available.

Ms. Curley mentioned that Queensbury High School would be hosting the New York State Cross Country Championships on Saturday November 9, 2013. She added a Request for Proposals (RFP) was sent to area properties for group rates and 10 properties had responded. She commented that Queensbury High School would also host the Queensbury Invitational (cross country) on Saturday, September 21, 2013 and she added four properties had responded to the RFP for group rates. She attributed the lower number of RFP responses received to the event being held the same weekend as the Adirondack Balloon Festival.

Ms. Curley informed of a conference call with Orienteering USA and Empire Orienteering Club regarding their May 10-12, 2013 events which were scheduled to take place at Moreau State Park and Camp Wakpominee in Fort Ann. She said the call pertained to assistance with hotel group rates

as Warren County was between the two locations. She added an RFP would be developed and sent to area hotels to solicit proposals for the groups.

Ms. Curley advised the New York State Snowmobile Association would not be considering Warren County for their 2014 or 2015 Annual Meeting as they have decided to host the meeting in western New York State. She commented that Warren County's properties did not have the indoor space necessary to accommodate the meeting.

Ms. Curley mentioned an email she received from the Adirondack Coast Visitors Bureau pertaining to the East Coast Snocross event scheduled to take place in Lake George in late January 2013. She said she would be assisting the group with hotel reservations. She stated she had received an email from a representative from the Army Reserves regarding a location within a ten mile radius of Lake George for a Family Fun Day event to be held in July of 2013. She added 135 soldiers would be conducting a training session at the Naval Center in Saratoga Springs and their families would accompany them. She said the group was looking for two nights accommodations and area attractions and events during their stay for the family members. She advised the soldiers would be traveling under Government Orders and a government rate for the hotel rooms was necessary.

Pertaining to the final item on the agenda, Mr. Vanselow gave a report on Tourism in the Town of Johnsbury and the hamlet of North Creek. He said poor weather last winter had resulted in an early closing of Gore Mountain due to an inability to make snow for the mountain. While Gore Mountain was open, he added, the skiing season was good due to an investment in new snow making machinery. He noted the Ski Bowl and tubing activities had also been positive considering the weather. He stated that overall the best was made out of a bad situation caused by the lack of snow last winter. Mr. Vanselow commented that thus far, it did not look like the ski season would be much improved over last winter.

Mr. Vanselow reported that the Spring Kickoff had been held on May 1<sup>st</sup> commencing with the Whitewater Derby and the Adventurefest. He added whitewater season had been positive and he noted additional investments had been made in the Town, such as Beaverbrook Outfitters plans to relocate to North River. He advised that Whitewater Challenge had opened a paintball arena and added a zipline course. He informed of a celebration held at the end of June in honor of all of the new and expanded businesses in North Creek.

Pertaining to the Saratoga North Creek Railroad (SNCR), Mr. Vanselow said the General Manager had reported ridership had almost doubled which was beneficial to the businesses on Main Street in North Creek. He said issues with the shuttle service continued but there were a few shuttles in operation. He stated Gore Mountain had opened this summer for the first time with a few activities to attract train riders. He noted the Town had a six-passenger golf cart to assist with shuttle services. He advised there was limited parking available on Main Street in North Creek and plans were in the works to optimize use of the parking lot next to the Train Station.

Mr. Vanselow reported that usually North Creek experienced a shoulder season following Harvest Day held around the Columbus Day holiday; however, he added, now it seemed as if North Creek was busy every weekend. He commented that the Copperfield Inn used to shut down for a month but were now open year round. He announced a Lights On, Christmas tree lighting event on Friday, November 30, 2012 and a parade and calendar signing on Saturday, December 1, 2012.

Mr. Merlino opined the Tourism Department should be relocated to Route 9N and announced his intentions to work towards that end in 2013. He said the location would be advantageous to tourism

---

promotion and the relocation would be a good use of occupancy tax funds. He commented that almost \$400,000 in occupancy tax funds had been allocated to the Glens Falls Civic Center and approximately \$500,000 had been allocated towards efforts to eradicate the Asian Clams infestation in Lake George. A brief discussion ensued.

As there was no further business to come before the Tourism Committee, on motion made by Mr. Strainer and seconded by Mr. Dickinson, Mr. Merlino adjourned the meeting at 11:35 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Charlene DiResta, Sr. Legislative Office Specialist