

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: OCCUPANCY TAX COORDINATION

DATE: AUGUST 27, 2013

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS KENNY
MERLINO
BENTLEY
CONOVER
DICKINSON
FRASIER
MASON

OTHERS PRESENT:

KATE JOHNSON, DIRECTOR OF TOURISM
LEISA GRANT, PRINCIPAL ACCOUNT CLERK, TOURISM
MICHAEL R. SWAN, COUNTY TREASURER
KEVIN B. GERAGHTY, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
PAUL DUSEK, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD
FRANK E. THOMAS, BUDGET OFFICER
SUPERVISORS LOEB
STRAINER
TAYLOR
WESTCOTT
WOOD
PAUL BRICOCOLI, ADIRONDACK RACE MANAGEMENT
CHRISTINA CURLEY, SPECIAL EVENTS COORDINATOR, LAKE GEORGE
REGIONAL CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU
DON LEHMAN, *THE POST STAR*
CHARLENE DiRESTA, SR. LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

Mr. Kenny called the meeting of the Occupancy Tax Coordination Committee to order at 10:31 a.m.

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

Copies of the agenda packet were distributed to the Committee members; *a copy of the agenda packet is on file with the minutes.*

Commencing the agenda review, Mr. Kenny informed that the Randonnée Cycliste Tournament scheduled for September 28-29, 2013, had been cancelled and the occupancy tax funding award of \$31,500 would be returned to the Special Event Fund. He said there had been difficulties in organizing the event in the allotted time frame. Mr. Mason asked if the event had received a two-year award commitment and Mr. Kenny replied in the negative. Leisa Grant, Principal Account Clerk for the Tourism Department, commented the event had received funds which had been returned as a result of the cancellation of the Centurion Cycling Event.

Mr. Kenny announced an application for Occupancy Tax Special Event Funding in the amount of \$30,000 had been received from The Hyde Collection for their Ansel Adams Photo Secession Event scheduled for January 25, 2014 through April 20, 2014. He opined it was inappropriate to discuss funding this event with 2013 Special Event Funding as the event would not take place until 2014. He suggested the application be discussed in December with all of the other applications for 2014 Occupancy Tax Special Event Funds. Mr. Mason informed that his wife was the Financial Officer for The Hyde Collection and she had informed him that the advertising literature for events were produced well in advance. He said The Hyde Collection held four expositions per year and the expositions held during the winter months were quite successful. Mr. Kenny stressed that the Occupancy Tax Committee had never funded events for the following year with funds from the current year. Mr. Conover agreed with Mr. Kenny and pointed out when funds became available from cancelled events, the process for applications for funding was lost. Mr. Bentley suggested the

returned \$31,500 from the Randonnée Cycliste Tournament could be used towards the efforts to eradicate invasive species in Lake George. Mr. Conover pointed out there had been other events that applied for Occupancy Tax Special Event Funding and were either denied or received less than requested. A brief discussion ensued.

Mr. Kenny apprised \$30,000 had already been awarded to The Hyde Collection for other events in 2013 and if they were awarded an additional \$30,000, it would be in direct violation of the \$50,000 maximum funding rule. Mr. Dickinson suggested The Hyde Collection could be awarded an additional \$20,000 in funding and Mr. Kenny responded that would make The Hyde Collection equal to Americade. Mr. Bentley opined the Ansel Adams Photo Secession Event would take place at the time of year in which they wanted to promote events in Warren County. Ms. Grant pointed out The Hyde Collection had been awarded \$18,000 in 2013 Occupancy Tax Special Event Funding.

Motion was made by Mr. Bentley, seconded by Mr. Dickinson to award \$20,000 in Occupancy Tax Special Event Funding to The Hyde Collection for their Ansel Adams Photo Secession Event scheduled for January 25, 2014 through April 20, 2014. The motion failed due to the lack of majority vote, with Messrs. Conover, Kenny and Merlino voting in opposition and Mr. Mason abstaining from the vote.

Kate Johnson, Director of Tourism, commented the majority of the events started spending money on advertising in advance of the event. She advised The Hyde Collection could apply for 2014 funding and submit the invoices for advertising expenses, once they were awarded funding.

Paul Bricoccoli, of Adirondack Race Management, stated the Committee had awarded \$12,000 of the \$20,000 to \$25,000 requested for the Lake George Triathlon. He said he was requesting any additional funding the Committee might be willing to provide for a Flashlight 5K Run event which was being planned during the same time period in which the Randonnée Cycliste Tournament would have taken place. He advised that Robert Blais, Mayor of the Village of Lake George, had approached him requesting Adirondack Race Management come up with an event to fill the gap left by the cancellation of the Randonnée Cycliste Tournament. He noted the road closures and vendors had already been planned and it had been a matter of coordinating the run which would be held at night.

Mr. Bricoccoli stated he understood the frustration of the Committee in having awarded funding to cycling events with no track record, only to have the Randonnée Cycliste Tournament cancel on short notice. He said Adirondack Race Management appreciated the funding awarded, as marketing the Lake George Triathlon was difficult. He mentioned 75% of the triathlon participants arrived prior to the event, fulfilling the requirements of Occupancy Tax Special Event Funding. He said some of the participants arrived early to complete preview rides of the course. Mr. Bricoccoli advised that any additional funding would be helpful as the Lake George Triathlon had lost one of their major sponsors this year. He added marketing for the additional Flashlight 5K Run event on such short notice would be challenging. Mr. Dickinson asked the amount of funding being requested and Mr. Bricoccoli replied that any amount of funding would be appreciated; however, he continued, an additional \$10,000 in funding would go a long way towards marketing the Flashlight 5K Run which would fill the gap left by the cancellation of the Randonnée Cycliste Tournament.

Following a brief discussion, motion was made by Mr. Mason, seconded by Mr. Dickinson and carried unanimously to award \$10,000 in Special Event Funding to Adirondack Race Management to support the Lake George Triathlon and Flashlight 5K Run events. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the September 20, 2013*

Board Meeting.

Michael R. Swan, County Treasurer, distributed copies of the Warren County Occupancy Tax Report as of August 23, 2013 to the Committee members; *a copy of same is on file with the minutes.* He noted the Report had not been amended to include the \$31,500 in Special Event Funding which was returned by the Randonnée Cycliste Tournament. He advised that Occupancy Tax collections for the year had increased by 8.4% compared to the same time period for 2012. He stated the last six weeks had shown a significant increase in collections and he noted the percentage of increase in July had been 4.7%.

Mr. Loeb informed that he and his wife had attended the festivities in Potterville this past weekend and had stayed at the Panther Mountain Inn in Chestertown. He said they had visited several restaurants and bars, as well as the Main Street Ice Cream Parlor. He commented they had visited the Natural Stone Bridges and Caves in Pottersville and The Railroads on Parade. As a tourist, he reported he and his wife had a great weekend and had expended approximately \$525.

As there was no further business to come before the Occupancy Tax Coordination Committee, on motion made by Mr. Conover and seconded by Mr. Dickinson, Mr. Kenny adjourned the meeting at 10:54 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Charlene DiResta, Sr. Legislative Office Specialist