

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: ECONOMIC GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

DATE: MARCH 26, 2018

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS MCDEVITT
BEATY
LEGGETT
BRAYMER
STROUGH
HOGAN
MAGOWAN
SIMPSON
WILD

OTHERS PRESENT:

REPRESENTING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION:
ED BARTHOLOMEW, PRESIDENT
JOHN WHEATLY, VICE PRESIDENT
REPRESENTING WARREN COUNTY PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:
WAYNE LAMOTHE, COUNTY PLANNER
CHRIS BELDEN, ASSISTANT COUNTY PLANNER
RONALD F. CONOVER, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
KEVIN B. GERAGHTY, ACTING COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
MARY ELIZABETH KISSANE, COUNTY ATTORNEY
AMY LAVINE, ASSISTANT COUNTY ATTORNEY
AMANDA ALLEN, CLERK OF THE BOARD
FRANK E. THOMAS, BUDGET OFFICER
SUPERVISORS DRISCOLL
HYDE
LOEB
SOKOL
MIKE COLVIN, DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
BUD YORK, SHERIFF
PATTI MILLER, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, TRAFFIC SAFETY BOARD
WALTER YOUNG, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, LAKE CHAMPLAIN-LAKE GEORGE
PLANNING BOARD
BETH GILLES, LAKE CHAMPLAIN-LAKE GEORGE PLANNING BOARD
TRAVIS WHITEHEAD, TOWN OF QUEENSBURY RESIDENT
DON LEHMAN, *THE POST STAR*
CHRISTOPHER SOUTH, SUN COMMUNITY NEWS
LESLIE LOVELACE, SECRETARY TO THE CLERK OF THE BOARD

Please note, the following contains a summarization of the March 26, 2018 meeting of the Economic Growth & Development Committee; the meeting in its entirety can be viewed on the Warren County website using the following link: <http://www.warrencountyny.gov/gov/comm/Archive/2018/economic>

Mr. McDevitt called the meeting of the Economic Growth & Development Committee to order at 9:45 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Strough, seconded by Mr. Magowan 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 Ed Bartholomew, *President of the Economic Development Corporation (EDC)*, who reviewed a power point presentation outlining EDC activities, and a discussion ensued; *a copy of the presentation is on file with the minutes.*

Mrs. Hogan entered the meeting at 9:46 a.m.; Ms. Braymer entered the meeting at 9:49 a.m.

Moving on to the Planning & Community Development portion of the meeting, privilege of the floor was extended to Wayne LaMothe, *County Planner*, who distributed copies of his agenda to the Committee members; *a copy of the agenda is on file with the minutes.*

Commencing his agenda review, Mr. LaMothe presented the following requests:

- 1) To amend Resolution No. 73 of 2014, which ratified the actions of the Board of Supervisors in

executing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Lake George Park Commission for Invasive Species Management and Control to include the Lake George Association and the Fund for Lake George, as requested by the grantor agency.

Motion was made by Mr. Leggett, seconded by Mr. Simpson and carried unanimously to approve the request and the necessary resolution was authorized for the April 20th Board meeting. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

- 2) To amend the Table of Organization and Salary Schedule to create the position of Junior Planner, Grade 12, at an annual salary to be determined pursuant to a salary study to be performed by the County Human Resources Director, and to delete the position of Planner, which was funded in the 2018 Budget for a partial salary of \$16,000, effective July 1, 2018.

Motion was made by Mr. Strough, seconded by Mr. Magowan and carried unanimously to approve the request and forward same to the Personnel & Higher Education Committee. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes. Note: subsequent to the meeting the County Human Resources Director recommended this position be created at a Grade 12 level with an Annual Base Salary of \$37,835.*

- 3) To amend the Table of Organization and Salary Schedule to change the Construction Cost Coordinator position from full-time to part-time, Annual Salary \$53,562 pro-rated to 20 hours per week, effective April 20, 2018.

Motion was made by Mr. Simpson, seconded by Mr. Magowan and carried unanimously to approve the request and forward same to the Personnel & Higher Education Committee. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

Mr. Leggett inquired whether retirement and benefit funds were included in the budget. Mr. LaMothe replied he had inquired about this, as he was under the assumption a budget code had been set up for that purpose, but was informed this was not the case.

There being no further Planning & Community Development business to come before the Committee, privilege of the floor was extended to Walter Young, *Executive Director, Lake Champlain-Lake George Regional Planning Board*, who began by explaining the purpose of the Planning Board's Revolving Loan Program which was to supply a working capital or a fixed asset loan to high risk local businesses who had been denied conventional bank loans. He added that the Planning Board met a minimum of twice annually and the Loan Committee met on an on-call basis for the purpose of reviewing potential loans. Mr. Young noted the Lake Champlain-Lake George Regional Planning Board was created as a result of the US Commerce Department in 1987 for the purpose of providing high risk financing for local business expansions and business start-ups. He advised to date his organization had funded two hundred-forty projects, \$13 million total direct loan financing. He added there was currently \$3 million in outstanding loans, but the program was self sustaining and Warren County had not provided direct funding.

Ms. Braymer inquired how the loans were granted and who made the decision to grant or reject a loan and Mr. Young replied the Loan Committee made those decisions and he distributed a list of current loans the Board had granted within the last three years, which he noted, was not a list of current outstanding loans. *A copy of the Outstanding Loan Portfolio list is on file with the meeting minutes.*

Mr. Beaty inquired what the difference was between their organization and the Local Development Corporation (LDC). Mr. Young advised the LDC's purpose was to accept grants to start a revolving loan corporation and report to the US Department of Agriculture. He noted there was no connection between the Lake Champlain-Lake George Regional Planning Board and the LDC.

Mr. Beaty inquired who the Loan Committee members were and who the Planning Board members were. Mr. Young replied the Loan Committee Members were: Peter Marshall, of Marshall Associates; Harrison Sangster, of Glens Falls National Bank; John LaPointe, from the Town of Putnam; Tori Riley, who used to work with Adirondack Regional Chamber of Commerce; Lou Tessier, Town of Lake George Resident and former Supervisor of the Town of Lake George; and Beth Hunt, the Treasurer from Hamilton County. Mr. Beaty inquired how many times in 2017 the Loan Committee met and Mr. Young replied they had ten loans so the Committee had met ten times. Discussion ensued on the guidelines of the Revolving Loans and Management Plan, which Mr. Beaty requested Mr. Young supply a copy of to all members of the Board of Supervisors.

Mr. Beaty informed he had reviewed a copy of the Marvin Report which showed thirty-five percent of the loans were in the interest default mode and he asked if that was correct. Mr. Young stated he was not aware of that, and to his knowledge there were only four delinquencies for a total of roughly \$89,000; he then explained their process for non payment was delinquent, default then collection. Mr. Beaty inquired how many members were on the Lake Champlain-Lake George Regional Planning Board and Mr. Young replied there were thirty members from five Counties (Clinton, Essex, Hamilton, Warren and Washington Counties) which included each County's Treasurer, Chairman of the Board, Highway Superintendent, and three additional members from each County as appointed by the respective Chairman of the Board. Mr. Beaty inquired how many times a year the members met and if there had been any difficulty reaching a quorum. Mr. Young replied the minimum number of meetings was two a year and, he noted, they had no challenges with quorums. Mr. Beaty mentioned the LDC and EDC (Economic Development Corporation) provided the County with updates on the loans that were facing challenges and he recommended the Lake Champlain-Lake George Regional Planning Board do the same; he also thanked Mr. Young for providing the information for review. Ms. Braymer advised she, as well, was interested in knowing how many delinquent loans there were and who they were with, as she noticed some businesses on the list Mr. Young distributed were no longer active. Mr. Young informed those businesses were still paying on their loans; he added that his organization tried to keep delinquencies and write-offs below four percent.

Mr. Leggett inquired what the Regional Planning Board was and how many Boards there were in New York State. Mr. Young explained the Planning Boards were created through General Municipal Law in 1967 and there were ten in New York State. Mr. Leggett inquired what the purpose of the Planning Board was and Mr. Young replied they had been set up to assist local communities and branched out to economic development and water quality where the needs were. Mr. Leggett inquired what agencies the Lake Champlain-Lake George Regional Planning Board worked with in the community and Mr. Young replied they worked with the towns, LDC's, Soil & Water Conservation Districts, as well as highway crews.

Mr. Wild inquired as to why the Budget Analysis Report showed Lake Champlain-Lake George Regional Planning Board with payroll and benefits and asked what the County's relationship was. Mary Elizabeth Kissane, *County Attorney*, replied there was an agreement in place dating back to 1978, which was based on a 1977 resolution, that stated Planning Board employees were deemed to be employees of Warren County for the purpose of determining and paying the employees contributions for Social Security, Retirement, Medical Insurance, Workers Compensation and Unemployment Insurance. Mr. Wild queried if that in fact meant the Lake Champlain-Lake George Regional Planning Board employees were County employees and Mrs. Kissane replied affirmatively.

Mr. Leggett inquired if the other Planning Boards in New York State operated in a similar manner with regard to employee benefits administration being the responsibility of a particular County and Mr. Young replied affirmatively, adding that one of the Counties had to assume responsibility for each Planning Board the same way Warren County had for Lake Champlain-Lake George Regional Planning Board.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Travis Whitehead, *Town of Queensbury Resident*, who read aloud

information from the Marvin Report and informed it had been a month since he had requested minutes, resolutions and a list of loans from Mr. Young, but had only received half of the requested resolutions and some of the loans made from the years 2015, 2016 & 2017, noting it was a much smaller list than the one Mr. Young had distributed today. He added he had found discrepancies on the list he was provided, which led him to research mortgages for the loans on the County Clerk's website. He inquired why there was not a mortgage listed for DLS Enterprises because a mortgage was filed in October 2017 with mortgagees names listed as Supervisor Sokol and four of his immediate family members for a loan of \$50,000. Mr. Sokol explained this loan belonged to his parents and informed that he himself had no stake in the company; he added that he had filled in for his father during the loan process because his father was ill. Mr. Young noted the Lake Champlain-Lake George Regional Planning Board had a Full Disclosure Statement. Mr. Whitehead apprised he was more concerned that Mr. Sokol had not listed the mortgage on his disclosure statement which the entire Board of Supervisors were required to complete and that Mr. Sokol had been advocating for the \$7,000 payment to the Lake Champlain-Lake George Regional Planning Board in the past months. Mr. Sokol interjected the property in question was not his nor did he have anything to gain financially from the property or loan that had been made. Mr. Whitehead replied that it would have been appropriate for Mr. Sokol to inform the rest of the Supervisors of his direct financial interest in the matter. Mr. Sokol reiterated he did not have any interest in the business nor did he own the property being mentioned. Mr. Whitehead suggested Mr. Sokol contact the attorneys listed on the legal document that had been filed with the Warren County Clerk as it had his name listed.

Mr. McDevitt thanked Mr. Young for attending the meeting and providing insight on the Revolving Loan Program and advised he looked forward to learning more about the organization and other benefits provided to the community.

There being no further business to come before the Economic Growth & Development Committee, on motion made by Ms. Braymer and seconded by Mr. Strough, Mr. McDevitt adjourned the meeting at 10:29 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Leslie Lovelace, Secretary to the Clerk of the Board