

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: OCCUPANCY TAX COORDINATION

DATE: JANUARY 30, 2020

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS: DICKINSON
MERLINO
STROUGH
BRUNO
FRASIER
GERAGHTY
LEGGETT
SEEBER

COMMITTEE MEMBER ABSENT:

SUPERVISOR: BRAYMER

OTHERS PRESENT:

REPRESENTING THE TOURISM DEPARTMENT:

JOANNE CONLEY, DIRECTOR
LEISA GRANT, PRINCIPAL ACCOUNT CLERK
FRANK E. THOMAS CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
RYAN MOORE, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
MARY ELIZABETH KISSANE, COUNTY ATTORNEY
AMANDA ALLEN, CLERK OF THE BOARD

SUPERVISORS BEATY

DIAMOND

DRISCOLL

HOGAN

MAGOWAN

MCDEVITT

WILD

MICHAEL SWAN, COUNTY TREASURER

TAMMIE DELORENZO, ASSISTANT TO THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

ROBERT BLAIS, MAYOR, VILLAGE OF LAKE GEORGE

DOUG MILLER, ADIRONDACK SPORTS COMPLEX

TRAVIS WHITEHEAD, TOWN OF QUEENSBURY RESIDENT

DON LEHMAN, *THE POST STAR*

THOM RANDALL, ADIRONDACK JOURNAL

MOLLY GANOTES-GLEASON, LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

Please note, the following contains a summarization of the January 30, 2020 Meeting of the Occupancy Tax Coordination Committee; the meeting in its entirety can be viewed on the Warren County website using the following link: <https://www.warrencountyny.gov/gov/comm/Archive/2020/occupancy/>

Mr. Dickinson called the meeting of the Occupancy Tax Coordination Committee to order at 12:01 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Geraghty, seconded by Mrs. Frasier 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 presented to Robert Blais, *Mayor, Village of Lake George*, who spoke regarding the new wastewater treatment plant for the Village of Lake George. He apprised \$9.4 million was received from the Governor Cuomo, but the Village was still looking for additional funding. He informed \$17 million was secured which would allow construction to commence in August of 2020, to be completed by August 2021; he advised he was able to raise an additional \$16 million for the project and there were 995 residents who were also helping. He asked the Committee to consider funding the plant through occupancy tax funding, as well. He noted that the Village of Lake George contributed to occupancy tax funding, and stated he did not want to stop holding the Thursday-night fireworks which cost about \$75,000 per year. He remarked the Village hosted over 60 concerts each year, along with other events and he apprised the Town and the County had been good partners. He notified the Village was losing events because hotel rates were rising. Mr. Geraghty suggested the County consider turning over revenues obtained from parking at the County-owned parking lots in Lake George to the Village of Lake George for a few years beginning in 2021, rather than contributing occupancy tax, to assist with the cost of the wastewater treatment plant.

A discussion ensued, following which a motion was made by Mr. Geraghty, seconded by Mr. Merlino and carried

unanimously to refer to the Public Works Committee for consideration the idea of turning over revenues obtained from parking in County-owned parking lots in Lake George to the Village of Lake George, beginning in 2021, to assist with the cost of the wastewater treatment plant.

Regarding the Spending Plan for 2020, Mr. Dickinson commenced the discussion by reviewing the 2019 Occupancy Tax Spending Plan. He suggested providing the Town of Lake George \$150,000, reinstating \$60,000 to the Towns of Queensbury and Bolton and to keep the current allocation to the remaining Towns and the City. Mr. Geraghty suggested decreasing the Town and City allocations by \$2,500 each and reducing the Towns of Lake George, Bolton and Queensbury by \$5,000, as well as to also reduce the Tourism Budget by \$23,250 to make up the overage of \$60,750 allocated above the budgeted amount for 2020 events.

A discussion ensued regarding the need to develop a long-term plan for occupancy tax distributions and the need to review and update current policies, at the conclusion of which a motion was made Mr. Geraghty, seconded by Ms. Frasier and carried unanimously to adopt an Occupancy Tax Spending Plan for 2020 which would include a reduction in the 2019 Spending Plan amounts by \$5,000 for the Towns of Lake George, Bolton and Queensbury, \$2,500 for the remaining towns and the City of Glens Falls, as well as to use \$23,250 from within the Tourism Department's promotions budget line, to cover the \$60,750 awarded over what was budgeted for event distributions in 2020.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Doug Miller, *Adirondack Sports Complex*, who was in attendance to inform the Committee his business was in need of funding. He apprised he had financial figures from 2012 that showed an economic impact of \$20,221,000 was generated against the \$262,000 they received which equaled 1.3%. He reported he was losing teams due the high room rates at area hotels and competition from a new sports complex in Hartford, Connecticut. He noted insurance costs had increased by \$35,000 which he had not accounted for, and he informed the Dome was not making any revenue. Mr. Geraghty indicated there was a trend with hotels and they were pricing themselves out. Leisa Grant, *Principal Account Clerk*, notified since his business was year-round, the figures for 2019 were not yet available and so she attached his figures from 2018; she added as soon as she received his 2019 figures she would distribute them with the Committee.

As there was no further business to come before the Occupancy Tax Coordination Committee, on motion made by Mrs. Frasier and seconded by Mr. Geraghty, Mr. Dickinson adjourned the meeting at 1:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Molly Ganotes-Gleason, Legislative Office Specialist