

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: TOURISM & OCCUPANCY TAX COORDINATION

DATE: APRIL 29, 2021

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS GERAGHTY
MERLINO
BRAYMER
WILD
HOGAN
BEATY
STROUGH

OTHERS PRESENT:

REPRESENTING THE TOURISM DEPARTMENT:

JOANNE CONLEY, DIRECTOR
LEISA GRANT, PRINCIPAL ACCOUNT CLERK
KRISTEN HANIFAN, DEVELOPMENT/EVENT COORDINATOR
RACHEL E. SEEBER, CHAIRWOMAN OF THE BOARD
AMANDA ALLEN, CLERK OF THE BOARD
ROBERT TERWILLIGER, FIRST ASSISTANT COUNTY ATTORNEY
FRANK E. THOMAS BUDGET OFFICER
SUPERVISOR MAGOWAN
TOSHA BROWNELL, HELP DESK TECHNICIAN
JACKIE FIGUEROA, DIRECTOR, HUMAN RESOURCES
DON LEHMAN, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS
TAMMIE DELORENZO, ASSISTANT TO THE COUNTY ADMINISTER
MOLLY GANOTES-GLEASON, LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

Please note, the following contains a summarization of the April 29, 2021 meeting of the Tourism & Occupancy Tax Coordination Committee; the meeting in its entirety can be viewed on the Warren County website using the following link: <https://warrencountyny.gov/mma>

Note: As per Governor Cuomo’s Executive Order 202.1: “Article 7 of the Public Officers Law, to the extent necessary to permit any public body to meet and take such actions authorized by the law without permitting in public in-person access to meetings and authorizing such meetings to be held remotely by conference call or similar service, provided that the public has the ability to view or listen to such proceeding and that such meetings are recorded and later transcribed”. All of the Committee members were physically present aside from Supervisor Strough who participated remotely.

Mr. Geraghty called the meeting of the Tourism & Occupancy Tax Coordination Committee to order at 12:44 p.m.

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

Copies of the Occupancy Tax Coordination agenda were distributed to those in attendance and those participating virtually accessed the agenda via the Warren County website; *a copy of the agenda is on file with the meeting minutes.*

Mr. Geraghty said the purpose of this meeting was to discuss occupancy tax applications, but noted that at this point the applications were not ready to be reviewed. He read aloud the listing of applications that had been submitted. He informed Kristen Hanifan, *Development/Event Coordinator*, would work on items that were effected by COVID-19. He suggested holding a workshop meeting in the following weeks to continue discussions regarding Occupancy Tax applications and to develop a different type of scoring sheet. Ms. Hogan asked for a copy of the scoring sheet and Mr. Geraghty said he would distribute it, along with other documents as well. Mr. Wild voiced that he wanted to include a value portion along with a calendar. Mr. Geraghty stated they should include a portion for profit and for not-for-profit. He reported the total amount of occupancy tax available for events was \$285,000. Ms. Hogan informed she wanted to publish the fact that the County was receiving applications.

Mr. Strough exited the meeting at 12:55 p.m.

Regarding the Occupancy Tax Allocation to the Towns, Mr. Geraghty informed the County would need just over \$826,000 for the Towns. He advised the County did not have sufficient funding available in the Fund Balance to pay allocations to the Towns this coming June. He conveyed that it was very disconcerting. Leisa Grant, *Principal Account Clerk*, advised the County had the funds to pay the June allocation, but they did not have the funds for the October balance that was collected in 2020. She said the Treasurer's Office had yet to provide her the figures for 2020. A brief discussion ensued regarding the Occupancy Tax Allocations to the Towns.

Continuing discussion pertaining to Occupancy Tax Allocation for events, Ms. Hogan inquired if the funds for the Adirondack Balloon Festival remained in the budget and Mr. Geraghty replied affirmatively. Mr. Merlino advised some events occurred at the Charles R. Wood Festival Commons space such as Improve Records who provided six shows, adding they could not over book dates that were reserved for them. Chairwoman Seeber asked for a spreadsheet to be included to provide that all the information was included along with a calendar. She spoke of the unspent Winter Fest funds that could be used to fund a new event. Ms. Grant reported she had not received the invoices from Winter Fest in order to pay the \$40,000 that would be reimbursed to the County Treasurer. Mr. Merlino suggested that all the Towns donate to the weekly fireworks over Lake George considering they provided revenue in many Towns on a weekly basis.

Mr. Geraghty discussed short-term rentals, noting the County had not received occupancy tax from them since 2018. He asked that the Supervisors request that the properties in there towns register. He remarked because of this the County had lost a million dollars in occupancy tax funds. Ms. Hogan advised the Treasurer had a comprehensive list of rentals and she requested that it be distributed.

As there was no further business to come before the Tourism & Occupancy Tax Coordination Committee, on motion made by Mr. Merlino, seconded by Mr. Wild and carried unanimously, Mr. Geraghty adjourned the meeting at 1:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Molly Ganotes-Gleason, Legislative Office Specialist