

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: OCCUPANCY TAX COORDINATION

DATE: FEBRUARY 10, 2025

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS: CROCITTO
RUNYON
PATCHETT
ETU
THOMAS
MERLINO

OTHERS PRESENT:

REPRESENTING THE TOURISM DEPARTMENT:

HEATHER BAGSHAW, DIRECTOR
PAUL TACKETT, TOURISM COORDINATOR
KEVIN B. GERAGHTY, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
JOHN TAFLAN, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
LARRY ELMEN, COUNTY ATTORNEY
AMANDA ALLEN, CLERK OF THE BOARD

COMMITTEE MEMBER ABSENT:

SUPERVISOR: GILLIGAN

SUPERVISORS BEAN

CONOVER

DRISCOLL

MADAY

MAGOWAN

STRAINER

STROUGH

TURNER

WILD

TAMMIE DeLORENZO, ASSISTANT TO THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
DAN DONOHUE, ACCOUNTANT, WARREN COUNTY TREASURER'S OFFICE
SARAH FRANKENFELD, GIS ADMINISTRATOR
ETHAN GADDY, COUNTY PLANNER
ROBERT LYNCH, DEPUTY WARREN COUNTY TREASURER
WILLIAM VANNESS, REPUBLICAN COMMISSIONER, BOARD OF ELECTIONS
JOHN CARR, LAKE GEORGE BUSINESS OWNER
LAURA KOHLS, TOWN OF QUEENSBURY RESIDENT
JIM NILES, LAKE LUZERNE TOWN COUNCIL
JIM SIPLON, PRESIDENT, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
JIM WILLIAMS, TOWN OF JOHNSBURG BOARD MEMBER
TONY HALL, *LAKE GEORGE MIRROR*
LUKE MOSSEAU, *THE POST STAR*
LESLIE LOVELACE, SECRETARY TO THE CLERK OF THE BOARD
*SEE SIGN IN SHEET FOR ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES

Please note, the following contains a summarization of the February 10, 2025 meeting of the Occupancy Tax Coordination Committee; the meeting in its entirety can be viewed on the Warren County website using the following links:

Warren County website - <https://warrencountyny.gov/mma>

Warren County's YouTube Channel - Part 1 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=viojNzKpjiU>

Part 2 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KGz41-8TKE>

Mr. Crocitto called the meeting of the Occupancy Tax Coordination Committee to order at 10:02 a.m.

Copies of the meeting agenda were distributed; a copy of the agenda is on file with the meeting minutes.

Privilege of the floor was extended to the following individuals:

Jim Williams, *Town of Johnsborg Board member*, who spoke regarding the municipal supplemental funding

application submitted by the Town of Johnsbury, which was included in the agenda packet. He explained he had been assigned to head the Johnsbury Sewer Committee and provided a brief explanation of the process leading to the development of the sewer project along with the benefits it would have. He explained the request for funding was the last option to allow bid awards for the sewer project, advising if the funding was not provided it would likely lead to a delay in the opening of the new ORDA (*Olympic Regional Development Authority*) Ski Bowl Lodge.

Mr. Bean spoke with regard to a five acre piece of property across from the North Creek Railroad Station that the owner planned to develop as retail and residential space which would benefit from the sewer project resulting in additional tax revenue.

Jim Siplon, *President, Warren County Economic Development Corporation*, informed he had been a part of the Sewer Committee from its inception and he spoke with regard to the necessity of the sewer project for future economic development.

Mr. Wild expressed his support for the project and the opportunity it would provide the County. He suggested grant funding to relieve the County of a portion of funding, as well as reserving the funds to allow the project to move forward.

Jim Niles, *Lake Luzerne Town Councilman*, apprised as a result of an updated Town of Lake Luzerne Master Plan in 2023 it had been determined the Town was losing students and a recommendation to attract young people was to build a new playground. He requested that he be allotted time on the next agenda to discuss the matter, and a funding request, further.

Mr. Strough spoke about the use of Occupancy Tax funds for capital projects of this magnitude and voiced his concerns using Occupancy Tax funding for the North Creek Municipal Wastewater Treatment Plant.

John Carr, *Lake George Business Owner*, expressed his concern with using Occupancy Tax as a funding source for infrastructure; however, he noted, he was in support of the project.

Laura Kohls, *Town of Queensbury Resident*, indicated she concurred with both Messrs. Strough and Mr. Carr, and she recommended caution when considering requests and the proposed uses of Occupancy Tax.

Mr. Bean spoke once again explaining bids for the project would end on February 19th and the U.S. Department of Agriculture would not allow bid award until a commitment of \$10.1 million in funding was obtained. He said the funds did not need to be spent right away and could be set aside.

Robert Lynch, *Deputy County Treasurer*, requested a financial analysis to indicate how much additional Occupancy Tax would be generated as a result of the waste water treatment plant, and he requested consideration of a matching grant.

There being no further public comment, Committee commenced with a review of the Action Agenda/New Business Items portion of the agenda, which included the following request:

- a. To award the Town of Johnsbury \$2,500,000 (paid over a ten-year term at a rate of \$250,000 per year) to assist funding the North Creek Municipal Wastewater Treatment Plant for a term commencing upon execution and terminating December 31, 2035.

A lengthy discussion ensued amongst the Committee members regarding loaning the funds, as well as concern with the length of funding.

Mr. Crocitto indicated he had legal questions and asked Larry Elmen, *County Attorney*, if an executive session was

necessary. Mr. Elmen responded if the Committee was willing to go into an executive session which would include employees from the Tourism Department and County Treasurer's Office, it would be pursuant to Section 108(3) of the Public Officer's Law concerning exemption for any matter made confidential by Federal or State law which specifically includes attorney/client communications, but executive session would be limited to legal opinions and legal advice from the County Attorney to the Committee as well as answering the Committee's questions.

Motion was made by Mr. Patchett, seconded by Mr. Merlino and carried by a unanimous vote of those present (*Ms. Gilligan absent*) to enter into executive session pursuant to Section 108(3) of the Public Officer's Law for the purposes outlined above.

Executive session was held from 10:56 a.m. until 11:33 a.m.

Upon reconvening, Mr. Crocitto announced that no action had been taken during the executive session.

Motion was made by Mr. Thomas and seconded by Ms. Runyon to approve the request as presented; following discussion, Mr. Crocitto called the question and the motion was carried by a majority vote of those present (*Ms. Gilligan absent*), with Ms. Runyon and Messrs. Etu, Thomas and Merlino voting in favor, and Messrs. Crocitto and Patchett opposing. The necessary resolution was authorized for the February 10th Special Board meeting, which was held immediately following the adjournment of the Occupancy Tax Coordination Committee meeting. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

Privilege of the floor and public comment were called for, but there was no one wishing to speak.

As there was no further business to come before the Occupancy Tax Coordination Committee, on motion made by Mr. Etu, seconded by Mr. Thomas and carried by a unanimous vote of those present (*Ms. Gilligan absent*), Mr. Crocitto adjourned the meeting at 11:49 a.m.

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