

**WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

**COMMITTEE: OCCUPANCY TAX COORDINATION**

**DATE: JULY 15, 2020**

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**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

SUPERVISORS: DICKINSON  
MERLINO  
STROUGH  
BRAYMER  
BRUNO  
FRASIER  
GERAGHTY  
SEEBER

**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  
ROBERT TERWILLIGER, FIRST ASSISTANT COUNTY ATTORNEY  
SUPERVISORS BEATY  
DRISCOLL  
HOGAN  
WILD

**COMMITTEE MEMBER ABSENT:**

SUPERVISOR: LEGGETT

TAMMIE DELORENZO, ASSISTANT TO THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR  
SARAH MCLENITHAN, DEPUTY CLERK OF THE BOARD  
REPRESENTING THE LAKE GEORGE REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
AND CVB  
GINA MINTZER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
KRISTEN HANIFAN, SPECIAL EVENTS & CONVENTION SALES  
DIRECTOR  
REPRESENTING THE COOL INSURING ARENA  
JEFF MEAD, COOL INSURING ARENA MANAGER  
ELIZABETH MAHONEY, BOARD MEMBER  
DON LEHMAN, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS  
JEREMY SCRIME, SENIOR COMPUTER SYSTEMS ANALYST/PROGRAMMER  
SASHA PARDY, PRESIDENT & CO-OWNER ADIRONDACK WINERY  
MOLLY GANOTES-GLEASON, LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

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*Please note, the following contains a summarization of the July 15, 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/>*

*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 in attendance participated via video or teleconference except for Supervisors Geraghty and Merlino who were physically present.*

Mr. Dickinson called the meeting of the Occupancy Tax Coordination Committee to order at 10:35 a.m.

Motion was made by Ms. Seeber, 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.

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

Commencing the agenda review, Leisa Grant, *Principal Account Clerk*, advised that the County Treasurer had sent an email to the Committee stating the Occupancy Tax revenue was down 74% when comparing July 10, 2020 to July 10, 2019, noting that some hotels reported on a monthly basis while others reported quarterly. Mr. Strough remarked his calculation was 48%. Ms. Grant advised her comparison of June 2020 and June 2019 figures reflected a decline of 64%. Joanne Conley, *Director Tourism*, informed the STR (*Smith Travel Research*) indicated revenues for June were down 45%, Mr. Dickinson commented this was a significant loss of revenue.

Regarding Occupancy Tax distribution, Mr. Dickinson indicated his concern was for the contracts with the LGCVB (*Lake George Convention and Visitors Bureau*) and the Cool Insuring Arena. He said both parties had agreed to a reduced allocation and had provided proposals for a lesser amounts, both assuring him they would work within the reduced allocation. Jeff Mead, *Cool Insuring Arena Manager*, mentioned the Arena had been closed since March and their employees were placed on furlough, but they were well behind. He advised they were working to keep the business going and raise revenues, but noting they were. proposing reducing the County's allocations for the third and fourth quarters of 2020 to \$56,250.

Regarding the LGCVB, Gina Mintzer, *Executive Director*, expressed they had pivoted activities, paused advertising and trade shows and stopped payments, explaining many trade shows attracted individuals from all over the Country and the World. She reported the goal was to roll dollars over to next year. In regard to pivoting community effort, she said they had paused training programs and postponed or cancelled events. She advised they were looking for events that would attract small groups from a non-quarantined States.

Ms. Braymer indicated there needed to be changes in the language for the Cool Insuring Arena agreement. Ms. Grant advised under the reduced proposal they would receive \$56,250 for each of the third and fourth quarters. Mr. Dickinson mentioned the Tourism budget was reduced by 26% and they were doing well.

A motion was made by Ms. Braymer, seconded by Mr. Geraghty and carried unanimously to amend the current agreement with the Adirondack Civic Center Coalition, Inc. for the Cool Insuring Arena to reduce the total to \$237,500 ,and to amend the agreement with the Lake George Regional Chamber of and Convention and Visitors Bureau to reduce the total to \$400,000, and the necessary resolutions were authorized for the July 17, 2020 Board Meeting. *Copies of the resolution request forms are on file with the minutes.*

Mr. Geraghty suggested no longer providing events with funding because it was putting the Tourism Department Budget in jeopardy, adding they needed funds in budget for 2021. Mr. Dickinson noted Sasha Pardy, *President & Co. Business Owner, Adirondack Winery*, had already spent money for her event in September, indicating if the event was cancelled they would take a loss. Mr. Wild inquired what was being done about the Occupancy Tax spending mandated by a Local Law which required Towns to be allocated 25% of the total collection. Ryan Moore, *County Administrator*, responded they would have to change the Town allocations in the Local Law, reporting the other problem was the 2020 Spending Plan. Mr. Dickinson indicated the Spending Plan was above and beyond the 25% allocations. Ms. Grant stated they did not have the funds to pay the Towns, as these payments totaled over \$800,000 and they currently only had \$1.3 million on hand and they were required to carry a \$1 million balance. Mr. Merlino questioned Ms. Pardy's budget for her event and Ms. Pardy explained her budget and what money she had already spent. Mr. Dickinson informed the Adirondack Winery would receive the original amount allocated regardless if the event took place.

Although no motion was made to approve payment to the Adirondack Winery regardless of whether their event was held, Mr. Dickinson called the question and the Committee voted unanimously.

Ms. Seeber said they were never given information regarding the cost and revenue related to events. She asked for a detailed action report following an event, adding her desire to hold additional meetings to make changes to the Local Law.

As there was no further business to come before the Tourism Committee, on motion made by Mr. Strough, seconded by Ms. Braymer, and carried unanimously, Mr. Dickinson adjourned the meeting at 11:11 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Molly Ganotes-Gleason, Legislative Office Specialist