

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: **EXECUTIVE HOST**

DATE: JANUARY 31, 2006

Committee Members Present:

Supervisor Caimano
Supervisor Wm. Thomas
Supervisor Tessier
Supervisor Barody
Mayor Robert Blais, Village of Lake George
Pamela Morin, Group Tour/Convention Promoter
Leonard Fosbrook, President, Warren County Economic Development Corp.

Others Present:

Joan Parsons, Administrator/Clerk
Paul Dusek, County Attorney
Kate Johnson, Tourism Coordinator
William Kenny, Supervisor
Eugene Merlino, Supervisor
Representing NYS Association of Fire Chiefs:
Tom LaBelle, Executive Director
Paul Schonewolf, 1st Vice-President
Natalie Whitton, Site Solutions Worldwide
Fred Austin, Fort William Henry Corp.
Lois Robinson, Convention and Visitors Bureau
Carlene A. Ramsey, Sr. Legislative Office Specialist

Mr. Caimano called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Ms. Morin distributed copies of the Agenda packet to the committee members, and a copy of same is on file with the minutes.

Mr. Caimano welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted today's goal was to review the details and ensure that all the planning aspects were on track. He noted the Clear Span Structure Purchase was detailed on the Agenda and the balance due was \$142,083.33 for 2006.

Mr. Caimano stated he would like to begin with a report on sponsorships as he directed attention to Agenda Item F.I.R.E 2006. Privilege of the floor was extended to Tom LaBelle, Executive Director of NYS Association of Fire Chiefs.

Mrs. Parsons entered the meeting at 10:05 a.m.

Mr. LaBelle explained that Site Solutions has been instrumental in setting up meetings with representatives from Americade, the Elvis Festival and the Tow-truck Operators, and they were very close to finalizing a joint agreement with all four organizations. The groups, he noted, were developing a Package Sponsorship and he distributed the proposal to each of the Committee members. A copy is on file with the minutes.

Mr. LaBelle indicated the County Attorney, Paul Dusek, was currently reviewing the outline for the cost-sharing agreement. Mr. LaBelle clarified, at this point, the largest

percentage (of the net proceeds of any sponsorships) would belong to the County. He explained there were costs involved with each sponsorship, such as advertisements on both the outside and inside of the structures. In addition, he said, there was the cost of the program guide, free tickets for the sponsors; and advertisement commissions to the selling agent (10%) and the County (40%). The partnership with the four groups, he noted, has allowed them to offer amenities such as attendee bags and on radio and television advertisement, statewide.

Continuing, Mr. LaBelle reported, he had 4 or 5 Fortune 500 companies just waiting for the amount to be set so they could finalize their sponsorship. He said he felt it was important to state the advertisements and sponsorship were being offered as an attempt to *recoup at least some of the costs* of hosting the event. He cautioned, his firm had never committed to being able to recoup all of the costs.

Mr. Caimano stated he had a clear recollection that the County had been told "if you do certain things then the money will come back to you." Mr. LaBelle pointed out the County had a bill for \$225,000; and the County's 40% of the proceeds may equal the \$225,000, or may only come to \$150,00; that was yet to be determined. He said his main concern was the "net" was difficult to estimate since the actual expenses have yet to be determined. However, he ventured a very cautious estimate that at least 50% of the expenses could be covered by sponsorships.

Returning to Agenda review concerning Site Solutions, privilege of the floor was extended to Ms. Whitton, who explained the sponsorship proposal a bit further. She noted the first 3 levels were considered the group sponsorship, for all 4 events (gold at \$100,000, silver at \$75,000 and bronze at \$45,000). In addition, she stated individual sponsorships could be arranged for specific events.

Mrs. Parsons left the meeting at 10:15 a.m.

Ms. Whitton observed each facility could accommodate up to 4 silver package sponsors as compared to just 1 of the gold package. Therefore, she stated, the silver package was their target product.

Discussion ensued regarding potential sponsor companies.

Mr. Barody entered the meeting at 10:20 a.m.

Mr. LaBelle commented there were a few cross-over companies, such as Honda, who would be part of the fire-fighters, the tow-truck group, and the tour bikes.

Mayor Blais pointed out that by marketing the area through 4 events, Warren County would be reaching a much larger audience. He pointed out that the Fire Chief's Association had taken the lead on the 4-event marketing, and Warren County had provided the money up front for the tents. In his opinion, he said, when the proceeds'

percentages were being negotiated, he wanted to be sure the Fire Chiefs and the County would remain in the foreground as the lead entities.

Responding to Mr. Caimano's question regarding vendors critique of the tent structures, Mr. LaBelle stated there were only 4 booth spaces left available. Those in attendance responded with a round of applause.

Mr. Fosbrook, President of Warren County Economic Development Corp., stated the vendors had requested a little extra set up and tear down time. Therefore, the Committee learned that by leaving the tents up for a longer period of time, there would actually be a \$50,000 savings on the rental. He remarked the collaborative effort between the 4 groups was truly remarkable.

Moving on, Ms. Whitton presented a map of the area which illustrated the hotels who had come on board for inclusion with the shuttle service. She said she planned to sit down with the Greater Glens Falls Transit folks to work out the details. So far, she stated the 82 hotels could accommodate 22,000 guests.

Mr. LaBelle observed that most of the Fire Chiefs would have been sworn in during the month of January and he felt registrations would be following soon. He apprised that a major competitor had learned the Convention in Lake George conflicted with an event scheduled for Atlantic City and the competitor elected to reschedule the Atlantic City event. Therefore, he said, he was optimistic the Lake George venue site would be a major draw. In the recent past, he commented the attendance level had been between 15,000 to 20,000.

Mr. Fosbrook observed the response to the event was evidence of a viable convention corridor between Glens Falls and Lake George.

Ms. Whitton mentioned there were also several hundred guests who were camping at the Lake George Escape and the Lake George RV parks.

Discussion turned to Designated Parking areas and Ms. Whitton stated, the guests staying at the outlying areas would need to know where to park to catch a shuttle bus into the convention area.

Mr. LaBelle indicated he would be happy to contact the various local fire departments to see if they would be interested in providing parking space as a fund raiser.

Mr. Tessier, as the Town of Lake George Supervisor, and Mayor Blais, for the Village of Lake George, both agreed to meet with Ms. Whitton and Mr. LaBelle and review the various sites available.

Mr. LaBelle pointed out the visitors from the Hudson Valley Group were being viewed as a whole separate group and were not included in the hotel accommodations for this

area. He suggested certain counties could be directed to a certain color coded parking area, with color coded shuttle service.

Mr. Caimano directed Mr. LaBelle to keep Sheriff Cleveland apprised of the parking situation, as well. Ms. Whitton suggested the parking coordination could be solved by March 1st. She stated that full-term Convention attendees would be issued a wrist band for identification purposes. Specifically, a black foam wrist band from the National Foam Fire Fighters Foundation, and they would consult with Mr. Sopczyk of Greater Glens Falls Transit regarding the coordination.

An extensive discussion ensued regarding the shortage of qualified drivers for all of the shuttle buses. It was the consensus of the Committee to reach out to the DPW (Department of Public Works) crews from the outlying areas for potential candidates.

Returning to the Agenda review regarding the Hotel Shuttle Route, Ms. Whitton pointed out the participating hotels would be requested to hang a banner welcoming the Fire Chiefs. In addition, she apprised that Northern Distributors, n/k/a Saratoga Eagle, has offered to make "I love NY Fire Chiefs" signs for the restaurants and bars, at no charge. She said the bars will also be handing out pint glasses with "I Love NY Fire Chiefs."

Kate Johnson, Tourism Coordinator, reported a prototype souvenir pin had been prepared, using the new logo. She circulated the pin to the Committee members, and she said she felt, the black ink for the trees and "NYS Fire Chiefs" would give better clarity. For the order of 13,000 pins, she said the cost would be \$7,150.

It was the consensus of the Committee the souvenir pins were approved, with the changes indicated.

Mr. LaBelle clarified the intention was to reward the early arrivals and keep people wanting (wishing they had gotten there sooner). He also noted that part of expenses built into the promotion package did include the cost of the banners the County had originally been responsible for.

Mr. Whitton reported that monthly newsletters were going out regularly to keep everyone informed. Mr. LaBelle noted the attendees, exhibitors, and potential attendees all receive a slightly different version of the monthly newsletter.

Ms. Morin circulated the Contact List (for the Fire Chiefs' Convention - 2006) and requested that any changes be indicated and returned to her.

Moving on to the question of security, Mayor Blais reported the McGill Agency has submitted a proposal to provide security for the Fire Chiefs, at a cost of \$16,128. He noted this was the same firm that provided security for the Elvis Festival and Americade. The coverage, he stated, would be provided from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

and 12:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. at each of the 3 tents.

Following a brief discussion, Len Fosbrook of Warren County Economic Development Corp., stated that his firm would enter into a contract with the McGill Agency to provide the security for the Fire Chiefs' Convention. He said, upon the County Attorney's approval, he would then clarify the details of the contract.

Turning to electricity requirements at each of the 3 tents, Ms. Morin queried whether or not the Beach Road site had a power source. Mayor Blais clarified that electricity was available on the Beach Road. However, he stated he was unsure what was available at the Fort William Henry site. Mr. LaBelle reported the original cost of \$225,000 for the 3 tents had included the cost of providing electrical hook-ups.

Returning to Agenda review concerning the Sheriff, Mr. Caimano explained the Committee would need to confirm what type of assistance would be available for parking and pedestrian crossings.

Under Old Business, Ms. Morin briefly explained, the volunteers and workers would need to be identified, somehow. Mayor Blais stated the concept for a central design (that incorporated all 4 events) had been discussed but never finalized.

Discussion developed regarding various choices for the proper attire.

It was the consensus of the Committee to support the idea of dressing the volunteers in such a way as to be easily recognizable to the general public. Mr. Caimano indicated he would discuss the specifics with Ms. Morin and "get that taken care of."

Messrs. Dusek and Barody left the meeting at 10:50 a.m.

Ms. Whitton apprised that a number of local companies had inquired about the opportunity to become a sponsor for the Fire Chiefs.

General discussion developed regarding various methods of marketing to the local businesses.

Mr. Fosbrook observed that the amount of work the entire Committee has accomplished in approximately one year's time was certainly something to be proud of. He said he remembered a phone call from Ms. Whitton, last year, indicating the Fire Chiefs were interested in holding a convention in the Lake George Area. He stated the one phone call had evolved into a full month of events, and he felt this would be an interesting model for future tourism endeavors.

Mr. Fosbrook pointed out his firm had signed a contract with the County relative to the financing for the 3 structures and he expected the contract with Regal to be finalized within the next day or so. However, he said the EDC's insurance carrier was required

a service provider agreement for liability insurance. He clarified the dates for the structures were May 30 through June 17, 2006.

Following a brief discussion, it was determined the structures would remain in place until June 18th through 6:00 p.m.

Mr. Caimano concurred with Mr. Fosbrook's earlier comments regarding the synergy that has occurred by tying in the 4 events. He said it has been absolutely wonderful to see it unfold.

Mr. Fosbrook confirmed the EDC would take the lead with the contracts for security services during the Fire Chiefs' convention.

Mr. Austin urged the Committee to be aware of the importance of sufficient shuttle service to each of the parking lots.

In response to questions from various Supervisors, Mr. LaBelle reiterated, the plan was to assign certain parking areas to certain counties. He clarified the group from Hudson Valley would also be advised as to which parking area they should utilize to minimize congestion.

Discussion ensued.

Mrs. Parsons stated she understood the structures would be up from May 30 through June 18th and she queried what period the aforementioned security contract would cover. Mayor Blais pointed out the Village of Lake George has contracted for security during the Elvis Festival. He said he would follow-up to ensure security was being provided for the entire period, and report back to the Committee.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, on motion by Mr. Barody, and seconded by Mr. Wm. Thomas, Mr. Caimano adjourned the meeting at 11:11 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Carlene A. Ramsey, Sr. Legislative Office Specialist