

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: **EXECUTIVE HOST**

DATE: MARCH 24, 2006

Committee Members Present:

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

Members Absent:

Supervisor Barody

Others Present:

Joan Parsons, Commissioner of Administrative and Fiscal Services
Joan Sady, Clerk
Paul Dusek, County Attorney
Kate Johnson, Tourism Coordinator
Supervisor Kenny
Supervisor Merlino
Scott Sopczyk, Director of Greater Glens Falls Transit Transportation
Representing NYS Association of Fire Chiefs:
Thomas LaBelle, Executive Director
Natalie Whitton, Site Solutions Worldwide
Fred Austin, Fort William Henry Corp.
Scott Johnson, Chestertown
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 learn how rich the County was, from all of the sponsorship sales.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Thomas LaBelle, Executive Director of the NYS Association of Fire Chiefs. Mr. LaBelle explained he was continuing to meet with different potential sponsors for the event and he distributed a copy of the sponsorship package brochure entitled Lake George June Events Coalition. He also reported promotions of the Lake George area would run on WGNA, WRGB and 14 billboards during June. He noted the anticipated sponsors seemed most interested in the Bronze Package (NEXTEL, Gateway, Motorola, and Honda). Since the fiscal calendar year for most of the sponsors was already underway, he commented that some of them may need to make their payments in installments. He said the maximum time frame would extend to the end of the calendar year, with final payments made by November or December.

Mr. Caimano queried how much revenue had been collected to-date, to offset the 1/4 of a million dollars Warren County had already expended on the tent structures.

Mr. Dusek entered the meeting at 10:05 a.m.

Mr. LaBelle clarified that no revenue had been collected thus far; no contracts have been signed thus far; and no confirmations had been received either by e-mail or verbal communications, thus far. He said he thought the County would end up with some contracts, although he did not feel any of the money would be received prior to June.

Mr. Caimano queried if Mr. LaBelle was *still very sure this was going to happen*.

Mr. LaBelle stated he *was still very sure that his staff was putting every effort into it*; his firm has put funding into it; it was certainly his intention to produce on this. He reported he would be meeting with the tow-truck manufacturers, later today, regarding this as well.

Regarding the "golf outing" Mr. LaBelle confirmed that several sponsors have been obtained, although most of the exhibitors were rather relaxed, until the trade show season starts in April. As for the Highland Golf Course, he commented that registration forms had already been sent out, and advertising for the tournament had already started.

County Attorney, Paul Dusek, reported there were two contracts that needed to be amended: 1) with the Fire Chiefs as to how the revenues from the sponsorships would be distributed. He said it was his understanding the revenue distribution would yield 50% to the involved organizations, 10% for commissions and 40% to the County. Mr. LaBelle concurred with Mr. Dusek's understanding of the revenue distribution. Mr. Dusek further stated the contract included a provision where the County would receive up to the amount paid to the Hudson River Local Development Corporation (HRLDC) and allowed the Fire Chief's Association to keep any excess revenue beyond said expense.

Mr. Dusek noted the contract with the HRLDC was the second outstanding agreement. He said the amendment was with regard to the HRLDC arranging for security services, in an amount not to exceed \$17,000.

Mr. Fosbrook, Director of the HRLDC, reported the hours for security services has been extended to include the periods in between events. Since the Economic Development Committee was scheduled to meet on Monday, March 27th, he said his goal was to have the final dollar amounts ready for his Committee to consider.

Returning to Agenda review concerning Tents, Mr. Fosbrook reported the time frame and set-up details had been finalized and the second of three payments had been processed. He said, it appeared that everything was on track, at this time.

Turning to Security issues, Mr. Fosbrook confirmed the HRLDC had been authorized to handle the security arrangements, as Mr. Dusek had previously reported. He explained representatives from the security firm had recently met with him to discuss the

responsibilities required of them. He reiterated the final security costs should be ready for the Economic Development Committee meeting on March 27, 2006.

Mr. Caimano resumed Agenda review concerning Transportation matters and he referred to a letter from Greater Glens Falls Transit (GGFT) and distributed copies to everyone in attendance. Mr. Sopczyk explained he had conducted a drive through tour of the Village of Lake George with Natalie Whitton of Site Solutions Worldwide. He said they had made note of the trolley service routes, the locations of the park and ride lots, and where the pick-up and drop-off sites would be located.

Mr. Sopczyk mentioned there had been some discussion regarding traffic flow along the Beach Road between Canada Street (Route 9) and West Brook Road.

Mayor Blais explained he understood that particular section of Beach Road would have the fire apparatus set up on the southern most lane, with traffic moving one-way, west bound, in the northern most lane of Beach Road. He said that section of Beach Road would serve as the "terminal," and the Village Water Station had an office available for the dispatchers.

Mr. Caimano stated he was concerned about the change in traffic patterns having an adverse impact on the businesses along this route. Mayor Blais said he understood a map would be drawn up and published in the local newspapers and he noted the County would need to post the proper signage regarding the detours, etc.

Mr. Sopczyk reported that a curb-side drop-off point on Canada Street (in front of the Fort William Henry) would work very nicely if Beach Road were open for east bound traffic (in the northern most lane of Beach Road). He pointed out a second drop-off point could be designated somewhere on the median on Beach Road.

As for the specific hours of service, Mr. Sopczyk noted the original schedule called for service to begin at 6:00 a.m. Mr. LaBelle noted the convention attendees would probably want to arrive at the grounds by 8:30 a.m., yet the exhibitors may want to arrive by 7:30 a.m.

Mr. Caimano left the meeting at 10:25 a.m.

Mr. Sopczyk suggested the normal service could begin at 8:00 a.m. with one trolley running a half-an-hour earlier for the exhibitors. Ms. Whitton noted she could provide a list of the exhibitors' accommodations for the early trolley route.

Mr. Sopczyk noted the bus service was currently scheduled to end at 11:00 p.m.

Mr. LaBelle commented that the vast majority of hotels inside the Village would not be impacted by the trolley stopping at 11:00 p.m. However, he was concerned with the

guests staying outside the Village periphery who may want to stay in the Village beyond 11:00 p.m., yet they would have no way to return to their hotels.

Mr. Caimano re-entered the meeting at 10:27 a.m.

Mr. Caimano stated that some type of late night transportation would be necessary to accommodate the other businesses in the area.

Mayor Blais suggested that perhaps a Coach, rather than a Trolley, could run once every hour to deliver the guests.

General discussion ensued regarding concerns with designated drivers and late night driving on unfamiliar country roads.

Mrs. Morin pointed out the courtesy coaches were currently scheduled to run between Super 8 at Exit 18 in Queensbury, the Copperfield Inn in North Creek, and the Sagamore Hotel in Bolton. She queried exactly how far the route should be extended. She explained the service routes needed to be specified for the RFP (request for proposal) that was to be issued within the next few days.

Ms. Johnson said she felt that three coach runs would be needed to service the sites located at the extreme ends of the hotel accommodations corridor (in Queensbury, North Creek and Bolton).

Mrs. Parsons queried whether or not it would be more cost effective to keep the Trolley service into the late hours, rather than switching to the coach service. Mr. Sopczyk explained the extended late hours would require additional drivers. He noted he had recruited a number of school bus drivers to help with the Trolley service, yet he did not have the personnel to cover the extra hours.

Mr. Caimano pointed out that several of the towns had employees who may have the appropriate licenses and bus driver certification. Mr. Sopczyk stated he would prepare a list of requirements for distribution by the County Administrator's Office.

Mr. LaBelle clarified that all communications with the attendees had been very clear that transportation would not be a problem for anyone who had registered at any of the "signed on hotels."

Mayor Blais pointed out the local cab companies could be invited to provide back up transportation service. He said he would ask them for a special rate in exchange for public relations services and a reserved parking spot on Canada Street.

Mr. Sopczyk said he planned to print up schedules: 1) for the north route up to Hearth Stone which would run trolleys at 15 minute intervals; 2) RV Park at Route 149 in 30

minute intervals; 3) Magic Forest north would be at 15 minute intervals. Ms. Whitton stated that Site Solutions would be able to distribute the printed trolley schedules in the welcome packets.

Mr. Sopczyk stated the costs were outlined in the memo previously distributed. He explained the costs were based on the daily number of passengers boarded, which helped his firm to qualify for State assistance. He clarified the County would be billed \$1.00 each for the first 4,000 passengers (who display the appropriate wristband), and \$0.50 for each passenger over the 4,000 count, for each day of the event. He said he expected the total 3-day event would cost between \$6,000 to \$7,000.

Mr. Caimano resumed Agenda review at Parking issues and he acknowledged receipt of Mayor Blais' memo dated March 10, 2006 (a copy is on file with the minutes).

Ms. Whitton mentioned that updated counts of hotel guests could be provided to GGFT which may help in scheduling the Trolley services.

Mr. Caimano observed the roster of volunteers would need to be compiled before the radios could be assigned appropriately. Mr. LaBelle suggested the volunteers could be grouped into various Sectors with one radio assigned to each Sector, rather than to each volunteer.

Ms. Johnson requested that Mr. LaBelle reserve a space for Warren County Tourism to have a booth to distribute information on the area.

In response, Mr. LaBelle stated that he felt Warren County Tourism may even want to have two separate booths. In addition, he suggested information could also be displayed at the Fire Chiefs' Association's retail store area and concession area.

Mr. LaBelle responded to questions from various Supervisors regarding the radio system. He explained the Association would bring in its own radio system, feeders and radios and then coordinate with the County 911 Center as to which frequencies would be available to them. He said he anticipated separate channels for code enforcement, fire, and police. Mr. Caimano confirmed the County would provide a Sector list of the volunteers for Thursday, Friday and Saturday and the hours of service required.

Returning to the Agenda review concerning Parking, Mayor Blais explained all of the parking areas will have staff on hand and will charge \$5 per car. Ms. Whitton noted the attendees would be informed as to which parking area to use, along with the Trolley schedule. She said she expected the lots closest to the Village to be full most of the time.

Mayor Blais explained that Ms. Morin would be developing the RFP specifications for coach services and would need the information on which lots were planned for what

groups. He also stated the list of parking areas should be amended to include the Off Track Betting lot with 125 spaces and the Lake George Bowl with 100 spaces.

Ms. Morin pointed out once the bids on the RFP were received, a resolution would be needed to authorize a contract.

Mr. Caimano commented that once the actual figures were available, he would hold a special Occupancy Tax Committee meeting prior to the April Board meeting to address the situation.

Next, Mr. Caimano turned to the Agenda Item on Marketing issues, and Ms. Johnson reported the 13,000 souvenir pins would be delivered very soon and would remain in her office for the time being. (She passed a sample pin to the Committee members for their review.)

Ms. Johnson further noted the County's publicity campaign was on schedule, which included place mats for area restaurants, the new Rates and Dates brochure, ads prepared for the *Albany Times Union* and the *Lake George Mirror*. For the golf tournament, she pointed out the New York State Division of Tourism had provided 100 "I Love NY" golf bags and she circulated a sample amongst the Committee. She also reported the Hudson Valley Firemen's Association had asked to put a link from the Hudson Valley website to the Warren County website for lodging information, etc.

Mr. Caimano queried what had been decided regarding the clothing for volunteers. Following a brief discussion it was the consensus of the Committee that Ms. Johnson would obtain pricing for a polo shirt with a two-toned design, to be easily distinguished from the general public.

Ms. Whitton reported the hotels and restaurants have been ordering their banners quite steadily.

Ms. Morin suggested a series of press releases could run in April, May and June to raise awareness of the upcoming event. Mr. LaBelle stated the Fire Chiefs' Association intended to run press releases *during* the event.

Mr. Caimano concurred with Ms. Morin's idea to start the publicity *well in advance* of the event. He also pointed out the County's contract with Paul Kaza would include publicity for this event, and he suggested portions of the event could be video taped. Ms. Johnson stated this issue would be part of the Tourism Committee agenda for Monday, March 27th. Mr. LaBelle offered to assist with out-of-state publicity both before and after the event.

Discussion turned to what type of road signs were planned throughout the County. Mr. Sopczyk queried if color coded parking lots had been discussed any further. Ms.

Whitton explained those details should be available within the very near future.

Scott Johnson, of Chestertown, acknowledged the Lake George June Event Coalition and all of the work that has gone into the project. He queried what type of research had either been done or was planned, to track the economic impact from the June Events.

Mr. LaBelle responded that the Fire Chiefs' Association does not perform any research of that nature.

Mr. Johnson encouraged the Committee members to consider such research, in view of the proposed CVB, so as to better understand the economic impact and ensure the support was there in the future.

Mr. Caimano clarified the County Planning and Community Development Department and Tourism Department had collaborated to produce an impact report. He agreed to provide Mr. Johnson with a copy, after the meeting.

In addition, Mr. Caimano reported that Ms. Morin and Ms. Johnson had helped him to discover the "Urchin website" which presents a huge amount of economic data on the area. He conceded that a person would need to extrapolate information from the statistics presented and watch the numbers over a period of time in order to glean the significance of the data.

Ms. Johnson (Tourism Coordinator) explained the County currently subscribed to Smith Travel Research, and the Northern New York Tourism Research Data Center, located in Potsdam, also collects data on the area. However, she commented, she felt the County's report was much more accurate, and easier to read.

Mr. Caimano pointed out the Warren County market was such a small portion of the data collected by Smith Travel, it was very difficult to pinpoint the effects of one particular event.

Mr. Johnson stated, as a researcher himself, he felt the whole area was becoming a bigger entity and the accountability would also become a bigger issue. He said he felt this information was certainly one of the widgets missing in the areas Tourism Industry.

Mr. Caimano said he felt that if Mr. Johnson could provide the County with more microscopic information on the local market, he for one, would be more than happy to review such data. He pointed out the local area was relatively small when compared to the other markets (in the database) and therefore the specific numbers were not available.

Mr. Kenny noted the County was using the Occupancy Tax data to determine the yearly growth rate, yet it was difficult to break out the seasonal growth trends.

General discussion ensued.

As one final item of business, Ms. Whitton said it was not clear who would be responsible for installing the snow fence around the perimeter of the show.

In response to comments from various Committee members, Mr. LaBelle noted some of the perimeter was the Fort Wm Henry's property and some of it was the County's roadway. He said he was concerned with liability issues if an outside organization installed a snow fence on the median of a county roadway. Mr. Tessier, as Supervisor for the Town of Lake George, noted the Town had plenty of materials to install the fencing. Mr. LaBelle mentioned he had the footprint for the show area that could be provided to the appropriate party.

Mr. Caimano directed Mrs. Sady to select three possible dates during the 3rd week of April for the Committee members to meet one more time.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, on motion by Mr. Tessier and seconded by Mr. Blais, Mr. Caimano adjourned the meeting at 3:20 p.m.

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