

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: **OCCUPANCY TAX COORDINATION**

DATE: AUGUST 29, 2006

Committee Members Present:

Supervisors Caimano
Tessier
Gabriels
Kenny
Merlino
W. Thomas
Haskell

Others Present:

Kate Johnson, Tourism Coordinator
Vonda Beattie, Sr. Account Clerk, Tourism Dept.
Joan Parsons, Commissioner of Administrative &
Fiscal Services
Joan Sady, Clerk of the Board
Supervisor Bentley
Supervisor Barody
Francis X. O'Keefe, Treasurer
Rick Murphy, Deputy Commissioner, Fiscal
Services
Fred Austin, Representative of Fort William Henry
Jason Sherry, General Manager, Lake George
Forum
Debra L. Schreiber, Legislative Office Specialist

Mr. Caimano called the Occupancy Tax Coordination Committee Meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Tessier, seconded by Mr. Haskell and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the previous meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk.

Vonda Beattie, Senior Account Clerk in the Tourism Department, distributed the meeting agenda to members of the committee, and a copy of same is on file with the minutes.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Mr. O'Keefe, County Treasurer, who reported that as of August 29, 2006, Warren County had collected \$876,033 and that did not include the revenues from the 2006 summer season. He further apprised that since the inception of the occupancy tax law in 2004, Warren County had received a total of \$6,266,351.78 in occupancy tax collections.

Jason Sherry, General Manager of the Lake George Forum, entered the meeting at 1:33 p.m.

Mr. Gabriels requested a cost analysis comparison by year and quarter for the Town of Bolton. Mr. Barody asked if the Treasurer would provide that same comparison for the other towns and Mr. O'Keefe responded that report was given out quarterly, but he would provide a town by town comparison for the same quarter in 2005 and 2006.

Mr. Caimano referred to Item 3 of the agenda and queried whether the committee thought new guidelines needed to be written for 2007. While he said he thought the guidelines would remain the same, it had been suggested that more emphasis be placed upon the applicant, and if they did not meet the criteria, then they need not apply. Mr. Kenny related the Occupancy Tax Coordination Committee made exceptions for the

firemen relative to application deadlines and funding amounts and therefore contradicted the guidelines.

Kate Johnson, Tourism Coordinator, entered the meeting at 1:40 p.m.

After a general discussion, the consensus of the committee was to amend the Occupancy Tax guidelines stating all rules would be in effect unless superceded by a 2/3s majority vote of the full Board of Supervisors.

Motion was made by Mr. W. Thomas, seconded by Mr. Haskell and carried unanimously to amend the Occupancy Tax guidelines as presented, and the necessary resolution was authorized for the August board meeting.

Fred Austin, a representative of the Fort William Henry, distributed copies of an Occupancy Analysis and Weekly Lodging Report of the surrounding five counties from Smith Travel Research. After consulting with Ms. Johnson and many supervisors, he recommended that Sam Luciano, Resort Manager of the Fort William Henry and professor for the Tourism Department at Adirondack Community College, give a power point presentation before the full Board of Supervisors based on these reports. In response to Mr. Kenny's inquiry, Mr. Austin responded RevPAR (revenue per available rental unit), determined the profits or losses for the hotel/motel industry.

Mr. Caimano commented the Occupancy Tax Coordination Committee did not have a department nor budget. Joan Parsons, Commissioner of Administrative & Fiscal Services, reported that 1% of the occupancy tax was distributed to the towns and 10% to participating vendors and pursuant to the Occupancy Tax contracts, allocated funds were spent more than once. With respect to particular expenses, she stated she was concerned about the accounting procedures and encouraged allocating funds more closely. Mr. Caimano asked the committee to consider how the Occupancy Tax Coordination Committee should function because as part of the Tourism Committee, they had many duties and responsibilities.

There being no further business to come before the committee, on motion by Mr. Kenny and seconded by Mr. Gabriels, Mr. Caimano adjourned the meeting at 2:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra L. Schreiber, Legislative Office Specialist