

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: MUNICIPAL SHARED SERVICES

DATE: DECEMBER 18, 2006

Members Present:

Supervisors O'Connor
Mason
VanNess
Sheehan
Belden
Tessier
Merlino

Others Present:

Roy Akins, City of Glens Falls Mayor
William Thomas, Chairman
Joan Parsons, Commissioner of Administrative and
Fiscal Services
JoAnn McKinstry, Confidential Secretary to the
Commissioner of Administrative and Fiscal
Services
Nicole Livingston, Deputy Clerk
Supervisor Gabriels
Supervisor Bentley
Supervisor Girard
Supervisor Kenny
Supervisor Stec
Supervisor Caimano
Supervisor Geraghty
Supervisor F. Thomas
Supervisor Haskell
Supervisor Sokol
Maury Thompson, *The Post-Star*
Mark Mahoney, *The Post-Star*
David Cederstrom, *The Chronicle*
See Sign-In Sheet for additional guests
Carlene A. Ramsey, Sr. Legislative Office Specialist

William Thomas, as Chairman of the Board of Supervisors, called the meeting to order at 9:33 a.m. He explained the meeting of the Municipal Shared Services Committee had been called for the sole purpose of discussing the Civic Center in the City of Glens Falls.

Mr. Thomas explained that invitations had been sent to representatives from the neighboring Counties in hopes of gaining insight on the Civic Center's impact in their communities. He welcomed the various guests in attendance, including New York State Senator Little, Assembly Representative, 113th District, Teresa Sayward and Assembly Representative, 112th District, Roy McDonald. He also thanked the Supervisors from Washington County (James Lindsey, Supervisor for the Town of Kingsbury; and JoAnne Trinkle, Chair of Washington County Board of Supervisors and Supervisor for the Town of Cambridge) for their interest, as well. He further noted that Marilyn Pulver, Supervisor for the Town of Fort Edward, had been unable to attend today's meeting.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Committee Chairman, Michael O'Connor, who

reported that he was a City of Glens Falls Supervisor for the 4th Ward. He said he felt everyone's attendance today demonstrated a willingness to cooperate, regardless of party affiliation, which would enable far more to be accomplished.

Mr. Gabriels entered the meeting at 9:34 a.m.

Mr. O'Connor said he would allow comments on any and all topics today, provided that each person waited to be recognized before speaking.

Messrs. Bentley and Dusek entered the meeting at 9:35 a.m.

Mr. O'Connor explained there was no formal agenda today, although the County Attorney had been asked to report on what formal organizations were already in existence, regarding the Glens Falls Civic Center. He said he wanted to clarify what had been established, what its responsibilities were and what parties should, could or would "sit on it."

Privilege of the floor was extended to Paul Dusek, County Attorney, who reported the City of Glens Falls had created a Public Authority in 1981, with the approval of the New York State Legislature. He noted the Authority was assigned the responsibilities of "operating and maintaining the Glens Falls Civic Center, the Civic Center Plaza, and all facilities in connection therewith." In addition, he said the Authority was "to conduct its affairs in a fiscally prudent manor designed to maximize income and minimize expenses...to assist the city in paying off bond indebtedness incurred at the time of construction... to operate and maintain such other cultural and sports-related facilities over which it is given jurisdiction by the Common Council...to promote and develop the Glens Falls Civic Center and any other facility the Authority was given control of." Mr. Dusek further noted the NYS Legislature had provided that this Authority would terminate at the end of 27 years (1981 - 2008). At such time, he said, the facility was to be turned over to the City of Glens Falls.

Mr. Dusek explained the membership of the Authority was to be a nine member Board, with at least five Glens Falls residents and up to four non-residents; along with the Mayor (or a designee) as an ex-officio and non-voting member. He noted the appointments/removals were to be made by the Mayor, with consent of at least four members of the Common Council; and every third year, the Chairman of the Board was to be a City resident. Excluded from the Board, he noted, were political office holders and government employees.

Continuing, Mr. Dusek reported the Authority had the power to acquire or lease property from the City of Glens Falls, and all of the standard powers an Authority might have as a separate legal entity. He further stated the monies of the Authority were to be paid to the City if there was an excess at the end of each year; the City could audit their records; any bonds and notes had to be approved by the Common Council; and employees were to be hired following the Civil Service function of Warren County. In addition, the recent laws passed by the NYS Legislature would also apply to this Authority, he said.

Responding to various questions, Roy Akins, as Mayor of the City of Glens Falls, explained the Authority had been put into effect, back in 1981. However, he stated, that once the arena was leased to the Olympia Stadiums (and the Red Wings hockey team) the Authority's role was minimized. Presently, he said the Authority's primary function was related to the bond commitments for the arena.

Mr. Thomas asked Senator Little to comment on how the East Field Recreational Facility may or may not play a role in this discussion.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Elizabeth Little, NYS Senator, and she pointed out that if the City were to lease East Field to the County, there would be a larger base for activities. She noted that if East Field was operated by the Warren County Parks, Recreation and Railroad Division of the Department of Public Works (DPW), she felt other high schools may opt to use the facilities for team events.

Mr. Wm. Thomas invited Mayor Akins to define the City's position with regards to East Field and the Civic Center.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Mayor Akins, who explained the Civic Center had been constructed in 1979 and 1980, as an economic tool for the entire region, even before the Albany area had such a facility. Therefore, when the Civic Center Manager, Ned Harkness, took the reins, and helped to bring hockey into Glens Falls, the Civic Center was established as a sports arena with a strong support base. He acknowledged the City of Albany soon followed suit and built its own sports arena, which captured a large portion of the Glens Falls' attendees.

Mayor Akins said he felt it was time for Glens Falls and all of Warren County to redefine who we are, what we are, what we need and where our visitors are coming from. He stated the area now had a year round resort (Six Flags' Great Escape Lodge) which had evolved from a seasonal resort (Storytown/Great Escape). He observed that tourists had been coming to the Lake George area for hundreds of years and in 1939, Warren County spent \$5,000 to attend the New York City World's Fair to tote the area as a destination.

Continuing, Mayor Akins reported, there were 11 vacation regions throughout New York State, and most of them had an Authority and/or Convention and Visitors' Bureaus, or Sports Authorities. He declared that Warren County was non-competitive at this particular time, with the absence of such a unified sales force to compete on our behalf, with the rest of the State. Following the 1980 Olympics and the development of ORDA (Olympic Regional Development Authority)which now includes the Gore Mountain Ski Resort, he recognized that progress had been made with the help of funding from New York State.

Mayor Akins declared that business from motor coach tours was a viable source of revenue, although the area needed to be "sold". As an example, he explained, that a Canadian firm had brought 110 motor coaches for a four-day tour of the area which included a Jim Nabors' concert at the Civic Center (two to three years ago). He commented that these motor coach tours move around the State, visiting different

areas, such as the Corning area which received 3,000 to 4,000 coaches each year. He continued to note that even small areas, such as Beck's Grove Dinner Theater in Blossvale, New York (near Rome, New York) received over 400 motor coaches each year. He stated this type of business could be attracted to this area, but the organizers need to be told about our region and what we offer.

Mayor Akins pointed out today's vacationers included those who traveled here by airplane, as well as by car. As another example, he noted, several decades ago Branson, Missouri focused in on the type of area it wanted to become. Today, he said, Branson has become an entertainment capital with 50% of its visitors who travel one full day to get there. He noted that 11% of its customer base lived within 100 miles while 60% lived at least 200 to 300 miles away.

Mayor Akins also pointed out the Civic Center could become a trade show center, and not just a sporting event arena.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Nicholas Caimano, Supervisor for the Town of Queensbury, who acknowledged the Civic Center could be renovated to accommodate meetings and trade shows, quite easily. He said he felt such renovations would be less expensive than building a whole new facility; the need was there; and the Warren County Tourism Department, as well as the City of Glens Falls, were already hard at work. He encouraged the Committee to take advantage of a great opportunity.

Mr. Wm. Thomas agreed that the region could draw the visitors, if the communities worked together and he urged the representatives from Washington and Saratoga Counties to offer their comments and suggestions.

Senator Little commented that she recently spoke with Lloyd Mott, of the New York State Public High School Athletic Association, who reported to her just how much his organization appreciated the Glens Falls Civic Center. She noted the NYSPHSAA viewed the basketball tournament (held in Glens Falls each year) as a major success. She further noted she spoke with a gentleman from Utica, New York (after a basketball game played at the Civic Center) and she said the man had perceived Glens Falls to be a huge area. During their conversation, she said, she explained the City itself had a small population of 14,354, and was actually surrounded by a number of communities.

However, Senator Little commented, the NYSPHSAA had also pointed out the importance of maintenance at the Civic Center. She explained that even though she had helped to secure \$750,000 towards the maintenance, she said she was disappointed the new seats had yet to be installed. She also acknowledged the need for some type of parking garage for the Center.

Privilege of the floor was extended to William Kenny, Supervisor for the City of Glens Falls, Fifth Ward. Mr. Kenny commented there were a number of guests at today's meeting and he suggested a round of introductions may be appropriate. Mr. O'Connor agreed, and introductions proceeded around the room (please see list of guests attached to the minutes). Mr. O'Connor pointed out which Supervisors were members

of the Municipal Shared Services Committee.

Mr. Caimano questioned Mr. Dusek as to what could be done within the parameters of the existing Civic Center Authority.

Mr. Dusek explained the NYS Legislature had granted permission to form the Authority for the purpose of the operation and maintenance of the Glens Falls Civic Center, related facilities, as well as to promote and develop said Civic Center. He also pointed out the legislation would need to be amended if the duration were to be extended beyond the original 27 years. Lastly, he said, the Civic Center really was run by the City of Glens Falls and the property and assets would return to the City upon expiration.

Mr. Dusek mentioned the existing legislation contained 17 clauses, with 9 of them very specific to the City of Glens Falls. Therefore, he said, any amendment would need to address at least those 9 clauses, and perhaps some of the other clauses should be updated and broadened, as well. Consequently, he noted, brand new legislation may be a more feasible route to take.

Responding to Senator Little's comments, Mr. Dusek said the recent legislation would certainly apply to this Authority and make it more open, accountable and transparent. He acknowledged the new legislation had been nicknamed the "transparency law" because it prohibited Authorities from conducting business "in the back room." He said reports were now required to be sent directly to the local representatives to ensure public knowledge.

Teresa Sayward, Representative to the New York State Assembly, questioned whether or not the Authorities were subject to FOIL (Freedom Of Information Law) requests. Senator Little responded affirmatively and further noted the legislation also required the municipality to pay any legal expenses if a FOIL request went to Court and the plaintiff won the case.

Mayor Akins urged the Committee to consider other assets in the region, such as the baseball stadium at the East Field Recreational Facility. He said he felt the Authority should have a broad scope to include the variety of programs the region has to offer.

Mr. O'Connor pointed out *The Chronicle* had recently quoted him as having said Warren County was not asking the neighboring communities to "pony up any dollars" but rather Warren County was seeking to use the surrounding areas as a "brain trust" of ideas, comments and suggestions. He said he felt that type of cooperation would help ensure the success of their efforts.

Mayor Akins concurred with Mr. O'Connor comments and he pointed out that events like the basketball tournaments actually fill the hotels and restaurants from Saratoga, north to Lake George and beyond.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Bernard Rahill, who asked if a theme for the Civic Center had been discussed. Mr. O'Connor observed that he was not aware of one

particular theme, but rather three or four different types of events had been discussed, such as rodeo, sports, and concerts. He said perhaps the theme of the area might be that of "Home Town, USA."

Mayor Akins suggested "Madison Square Garden, North" might be an appropriate theme. He said he felt the main idea was to keep the Center busy, and the restaurants and hotels will be filled. He commented that bringing tourists in from outside the general area would bring in "outside money" and provide a definite economic boost to the region.

Mr. Rahill stated "a great work of art is a marriage of form and matter" (Dante) and he urged the Committee to remember the local schools were an intrinsic part of the community. He said he attended a performance of the *Tempest* (by William Shakespeare) that was given by the Hudson River Shakespeare Theater Company at the Hudson Falls High School last year, where only 40 people had attended. He provided a brief history of how Mr. Shakespeare had come to write his plays and suggested that a children's theater company may be another untapped resource for the region to consider.

Mr. Rahill acknowledged that today's society was deeply invested in entertainment through the television and movie theater. He suggested a children's theater group could help to develop future actors for both television and movie careers. He urged the Committee to develop the Civic Center into a cultural center for a multitude of events, rather than limit the region to only sporting events.

Mr. O'Connor said he felt Mr. Rahill's suggestions were a great example of the new ideas the Committee was looking for.

Mr. Kenny said he felt the transformation of the Civic Center would need to include a change in the public's perception. When it was idle, it was seen as a drain on just the City, and he observed, when it was busy, it was viewed as an asset to the whole region.

Mayor Akins pointed out the nano technology industry that was moving into Saratoga County may be a great way to bring high school competition in science and technology to the Civic Center, as well.

Mr. Wm. Thomas concurred and he said he felt the County needed to be ready for this new growth and the new residents looking for activities. He pointed out the Warren County Supervisors had historically been very supportive of the Civic Center and 18 of the 20 Supervisors were in attendance today.

Mayor Akins agreed and he acknowledged the County's demonstration of support through its annual contribution to the Civic Center's maintenance.

Daniel Girard, City of Glens Falls Supervisor for the First Ward, pointed out he joined the Board of Supervisors in January 2006. At that time, he said, the County was seriously considering a Regional Authority and the construction of a Convention Center

in the Lake George area. Since then, he mentioned, the Convention Center was found to be less profitable than originally thought, although the Regional Authority concept still moved forward. He said it was his understanding that Senator Little had urged the County to incorporate the Glens Falls Civic Center into the Regional Authority. From there, he noted the Municipal Shared Services Committee was reorganized, additional members were appointed and today's special meeting was convened. He said he appreciated Senator Little's suggestions, that helped focus everyone's attention on the fact that the Civic Center was a vital asset to the entire region. He asked what other suggestions Senator Little may have for the County.

Senator Little said she felt the County would be in a better position for State support by incorporating the Civic Center with a Regional Authority. She advised that when a municipality made a proposal (by way of a Board Resolution) legislation would be drafted for both the Senate and the Assembly in conjunction with the Town and/or County Attorneys. Once a Bill number had been assigned, the draft bill would be submitted to the municipality. The municipality then needed to pass a second Board Resolution which accepted the draft bill and reiterated the request for State Legislation. Once the bill was approved in both houses and was either signed by the Governor or allowed to stand approved for 10 days without a Governor's veto, then the bill became law.

Senator Little acknowledged the previous bill (Mr. Girard alluded to) had progressed well through the channels and was ready for legislation when the County decided the preliminary study did not warrant further consideration. She noted that the Senate and Assembly's agenda comes from the constituents.

Mr. Caimano said he felt that 18 of the 20 Supervisors were present today, from the realization that: Glens Falls was the downtown of Warren County, and like other river cities, had experienced the same fate most other river cities had experienced. He further noted when the Northway was constructed miles away from the City (in the 1960s) it only exacerbated the effects of urban sprawl. Today, he said, he felt there was an opportunity to help the Mayor and his Common Council to improve and restore the City of Glens Falls.

Mr. Caimano observed the Committee was named "Municipal Shared Services" and not the "Committee to Rescue the Civic Center," although he agreed the Civic Center needed to be rescued. He suggested that even if the Civic Center was not "saved" the City itself still needed to be financially improved. He said he felt if the County was going to be in this business, of working to improve the City, then the County needed to "have the guts to do what it takes to get it done."

Privilege of the floor was extended to Todd Shimkus, of the ARCC (Adirondack Regional Chamber of Commerce), who explained the discussion had prompted him to speak out. He declared the Civic Center was a "budget buster" for the City of Glens Falls and the increase in property taxes had only been contained by way of reducing the subsidy to the Civic Center. He pointed out that action meant less money for improvements, less money for sales and marketing, less money for hosting events, and complicated the management of the facility.

Mr. Shimkus commented that most of the discussion had so far been focused on marketing. He urged the Committee to first develop a business plan that defined where it would be in five or ten years and what was necessary to bring the plan into reality. He said, regardless of what name the Committee had, and regardless of who served on the Committee, a business plan would focus attention on the steps to be taken. Otherwise, he predicted that unless the "budget buster" was resolved, the companies that formed the major commercial base of the region would continue to pay outrageous property taxes. On behalf of the ARCC membership, he pledged the support of the private sector and their willingness to work with the County to develop this business plan.

Mrs. Parsons entered the meeting at 10:25 a.m.

Mr. O'Connor thanked Mr. Shimkus for his comments, which he felt tied in with Mr. Dusek's overview of the existing Authority and what options were available for consideration. He also thanked Representative Roy McDonald, Representative Sayward and Senator Little for carving out time from their busy schedules to attend this meeting.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Representative McDonald who commended everyone in attendance for the strong commitment to solving a common problem. He stated, he was a banker by trade, and he appreciated Mr. Caimano's earlier comments regarding the financial implications and he agreed that it always came down to money. Although he did not live in Warren County, he said, he visited Storytown, USA as a child and was looking forward to bringing his grandson to the Six Flags Great Escape and Water Park this summer. He commented that the City of Saratoga Springs had wrestled with a similar situation 30 years ago. He said the City decided not to build a sports arena because Glens Falls already had one, but opted to build the convention center that helped turn the City's financial condition around.

Representative McDonald declared the City of Saratoga Springs did exactly what Mr. Shimkus had alluded to, and defined its mission and objectives. He said it came about as the result of reaching out, via surveys, to the public and the surrounding municipalities. He said when he served as the Town of Wilton Supervisor he was involved at the regional level to help define the goals, etc. He urged the Committee to define the ways to improve the revenue stream and he offered his assistance. He also suggested the Empire Zone credits may be a useful tool in that regard.

Representative McDonald mentioned, from a banker's perspective, he felt the Civic Center projected a weak credit report. He commented the money-making events needed to be increased which would create the revenue to venture into other forms of entertainment. He stated an improved revenue stream would strengthen the Senator and Assembly Representative's position when they asked for additional funds for the region. If Warren County assembled a team to develop a business plan, as Mr. Shimkus suggested, Representative McDonald offered his humble assistance in whatever way he could help.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Len Fosbrook, President of the Economic

Development Corporation, Warren County. He said he echoed Mr. Caimano's earlier comment that Glens Falls was the downtown of Warren County. He noted that everything his firm did regarding economic development, was influenced by the City of Glens Falls. The Empire Zone was administered through his organization and he said he felt they were well positioned to take on this type of project for the City. In fact, he stated, a tentative development plan had been assembled, as part of the Empire Zone requirements. He invited Mayor Akins and this Committee to include the EDC in this project.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Representative Sayward who said she felt today's meeting was critical to the entire region. She noted that Senator Little had spoken to a number of communities throughout the North Country to promote the concept of shared services. She agreed that high property taxes were hurting the commercial and residential property owners, which meant new revenues were needed, along with reduced costs. She declared a commitment to attend as many of these meetings as she could, and her partnership with Representative McDonald and Senator Little to assist in any way she could. She urged the Committee to continue the dialogue at regular intervals, to keep the momentum going.

Mr. Caimano left the meeting at 10:35 a.m.

Mr. O'Connor acknowledged the Civic Center's Business Manager, Suzanna Bernd, was in attendance today. He invited her to address the Committee.

Ms. Bernd recognized the private sector's support was already evident through the Glens Falls Civic Center Foundation, which was a 501c3 not-for-profit organization, established a few years ago (Chaired by Paul Pontiff, Vice Chair Fred Fields, Secretary Paul LaMay and Treasurer Dave DeMarco). She reported the Foundation had just been approved for \$100,000 of Empire Zone credit and TD Banknorth had pledged \$25,000 as sponsor of Section T (to be called Section TD Banknorth) for the next five years. Along that line, she mentioned, sponsors for other seating Sections were now being solicited amongst the business community.

Ms. Livingston left the meeting at 10:36 a.m.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Richard Mason, Supervisor for the City of Glens Falls, Third Ward, who pointed out that some of the issues listed today have been discussed for a number of years. He expressed his concern that no one issue had been put into motion, just yet. He said, it was his opinion, the conversion of East Field into the Municipal Shared Services concept seemed to have the most support and would therefore be the easiest project to start with.

Continuing, Mr. Mason noted that a number of City properties have been purchased, refurbished and put back onto the tax rolls, especially in the downtown area. He said, he felt the City was already headed in the right direction. He reiterated the suggestion that the City and County might start this Municipal Shared Services venture with the operation and maintenance of East Field.

Mr. Caimano re-entered the meeting at 10:38 a.m.

Mr. O'Connor concurred with Mr. Mason's comments, and suggested East Field may be an easier and less expensive project to "get our feet wet" on. He reiterated that everything was on the table for discussion today.

Mr. Rahill questioned whether or not any funding had been secured as "seed capital" to develop a plan for the Civic Center and/or the future goals for the region. In other words, he asked if private capital was coming in for that purpose.

In response, Mr. O'Connor explained the concept had not progressed that far down the road, just yet, and the purpose of today's meeting was not to search out a revenue stream. Mr. Caimano pointed out the Glens Falls Civic Center Foundation had been established and was bringing in outside money. Ms. Bernd noted those funds were being used for capital improvements to the Civic Center facility. Mr. Rahill suggested the Committee should consider special funding for the express purpose of developing a theme or business plan.

Mr. O'Connor invited the Washington County Chairwoman of the Board of Supervisors, JoAnne Trinkle, to address the Committee. She said Mr. Shimkus' suggestion for a business plan reminded her of Washington County's adoption of a two-year plan for the County's budget process. She agreed with the notion of developing a plan to define the direction you will take.

Ms. Trinkle mentioned that a common theme she heard from various Washington County Supervisors had to do with parking issues at the Civic Center. As an example, she stated, a couple of the Supervisors had attended a tool show at the Civic Center, purchased some tools and then had to figure out how to get the purchases back to their car. She said she felt Washington County could best help by simply reporting their observations.

Ms. Livingston re-entered the meeting at 10:42 a.m.

James Lindsey, Washington County Supervisor for the Town of Kingsbury, commented that in order to develop a business plan, the Committee first needed to figure out what types of events worked best at the Civic Center.

Mr. O'Connor concurred that a business plan was certainly something that should be a priority, as a sound business practice. He further agreed with Representative McDonald's earlier comments that it all comes down to money, although today's meeting was not to ask folks for money.

Senator Little acknowledged the number of comments made today with regards to the importance of a business plan. She suggested today's meeting might yield a group of individuals, representative of different sections, to work with Mayor Akins and Ms. Bernd to come up with a draft business plan. She surmised that Ms. Bernd would be aware of what types of events have been the most successful, or least successful. In addition, she said, cultural ideas could be developed in conjunction with the Wood

Theater, and other facilities. The key to a successful business plan, she mentioned, was to write the plan with input from the people most involved, in all sections. In her opinion, she said, someone hired from the outside would not write the best business plan and she urged the Committee to write it internally.

Mr. Haskell observed the meeting started out with discussions regarding a Glens Falls Public Authority that Mr. Dusek reported on. From there, he said, the conversation moved to some type of regional authority and now it seemed to have returned to just the Civic Center. He questioned if the regional authority would just be for East Field and the Civic Center, or if it would include facilities in Washington County and things like the Outdoor Drama Theater.

Mr. Wm. Thomas pointed out the Civic Center events were attended by people from all three counties, and although the Town of Johnsbury was in Warren County, some Towns in Washington and Saratoga Counties were physically closer to Glens Falls.

Mayor Akins acknowledged that Washington County had many great resources and an expanding agri-tourism industry.

Ms. Trinkle pointed out a new facility, called the Golden Goal, was being constructed in the Town of Fort Ann. She said it would be a training center for soccer and lacrosse athletes during the summer months.

Mr. O'Connor commented that following the last Municipal Shared Services Committee, the media picked up on the fact that an Authority was already in place. Therefore, he stated, he had asked the County Attorney to research the matter and report back to the Committee. He said that representatives from both Washington and Saratoga Counties had been invited, as neighbors of Warren County, who benefit financially from business that spills over across the county lines.

Mr. Wm. Thomas asked if Representative McDonald could explain how the influx of the nano technology industry might impact Warren County in the next ten years.

Representative McDonald pointed out the technology park was located in the center of his district, in the Town of Malta. He predicted that the impact would reach out, in a 50 to 75 mile radius, to the Towns that welcomed the influx. The new industry, he said, was expected to bring in thousands of new employees/residents who would undoubtedly enjoy high incomes and would be living in the surrounding communities. He noted the new residents would require all kinds of services and would have a variety of interests that ranged from sporting events, to Shakespeare, theme parks, etc.

Representative McDonald suggested the Saratoga Economic Development Corporation may be of assistance as the business plan was developed, regarding some of the benefits and ramifications that other communities have experienced throughout the country.

Following a brief discussion, Representative McDonald suggested that a presentation

could be arranged for the next Municipal Shared Services Committee meeting.

Mr. Rahill concurred with Representative McDonald's observation. He said he felt the Committee was actually planning a renaissance in Glens Falls that he felt was sure to impact the entire area.

Representative McDonald reported the City of Mechanicville was a community very similar to Glens Falls since it was located on the river, had lost industry and residents, and struggled to survive. He said he had worked with the Legislature and the City of Mechanicville to secure matching grant funds for the development of a master plan in response to the technology park in the Town of Malta. He suggested the communities could deal with the technology park in a multitude of ways, such as planning and zoning regulations, to attract the type of development the community wanted.

However, he said, each community had to realize it could not afford to just do nothing; to recognize some type of response was required. He pointed out that a number of small businesses would develop, as the result of the incoming industry, and not all of them would want to be located in a fancy, suburban office park. He noted the rural and small communities had an equal opportunity to attract some of these new businesses and new residents. He encouraged the Committee to plan for the future.

Mr. Belden said he was encouraged by Representative McDonald's comments and he offered his full support for the City of Glens Falls. He mentioned that regular meetings would help to keep the momentum going in the right direction.

Mr. O'Connor invited any further comments, before he wrapped up today's meeting.

Mr. VanNess mentioned he had recently watched the movie, *Polar Express*, with his grandson and he felt one part of the story was applicable to today's discussions. He explained that four of the main characters each received a train ticket with a special message, just for them. He said those messages encouraged them *to observe, be a leader, to believe, and have friends*. He said, he felt the Committee should embrace these simple concepts and recognize it had the leaders, believed in the concept, and would continue to observe, while it kept the friendship of the neighboring counties.

Mr. O'Connor concurred with Mr. VanNess's statements.

Mr. Kenny extended his appreciation to everyone who had attended today's meeting. He suggested this may be a historic moment, where all of these people were gathered together to discuss a regional problem. He observed the one point everyone seemed to agree on was the commitment to move forward.

Senator Little said the enthusiasm expressed here today was very encouraging to her. However, she suggested the next step would be for a group of individuals (from today's meeting) to sit down with the Mayor and put some ideas down on paper [regarding the infrastructure needs for East Field and the Civic Center; what type of Authority could be developed, etc.]. That way, she stated, at least the beginnings of a business plan would have been established before the next meeting.

Mayor Akins extended his appreciation to Committee Chairman O'Connor and Chairman Thomas for scheduling today's meeting. He reiterated the notion that the discussion today was about much more than a building or a field, and more about the entire tri-county region.

Mr. Wm. Thomas suggested a business plan could be developed with regards to Mr. Mason's suggestion to work on East Field first. He said he felt it was time to be a little more specific and work on something concrete. However, he observed the next meeting would not be convened until after the first of the year, in the second or third week of January 2007. He suggested this Committee may become a major focus for Warren County in 2007, with possibly monthly meetings to further the discussion.

Mr. Thomas repeated his earlier observation that 18 of the 20 Supervisors were in attendance today which underscored the County's commitment to the concept.

Senator Little reminded the Committee of the Governor's announcement last week regarding \$14 million worth of improvements that were planned for the Gore Mountain Ski Resort. She said that project would benefit the entire northern region of Warren County, which could easily happen at the southern end of Warren County.

Mr. Thomas pointed out the \$14 million came to Warren County thanks to the hard work of Senator Little and Representative Sayward. The Committee responded with a round of applause.

Donald Krebs, of Queensbury, commented that the \$14 million came "through those two women, but from the taxpayers of New York State." Everyone agreed.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, on motion by Mr. Belden and seconded by Mr. Mason, Mr. O'Connor adjourned the meeting at 11:06 a.m.

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