

## WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

DATE: **April 30, 2007**

**Committee Members Present:**

Supervisors Monroe  
Stec  
Mason  
Champagne  
F. Thomas  
Girard  
Sokol

**Others Present:**

Representing Warren County Economic  
Development Corporation:  
Peter Wohl, Vice President, EDC  
John Wheatley, Project Manager, Queensbury  
Industrial Park  
Jeff Farley, Director, Adirondack Regional  
Business Incubator  
Hal Payne, Commissioner of Administrative &  
Fiscal Services  
Joan Sady, Clerk of the Board  
William H. Thomas Chairman  
Nicholas Caimano, Budget Officer  
Supervisor Gabriels  
Supervisor Belden  
Supervisor Geraghty  
Debra L. Schreiber, Legislative Office Specialist

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Mr. Monroe called the meeting to order at 11:18 p.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Mason, seconded by Mr. F. Thomas, and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the March 26, 2007 meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk.

Privilege of the floor was extended to John Wheatley, who distributed copies of the Economic Development Corporation (EDC) Agenda packet to members of the Committee, a copy of which is on file with the minutes.

Commencing with the first item on the Agenda, John Wheatley, Project Manager, Queensbury Industrial Park, (QIP) announced the EDA (Economic Development Agency) grant relating to the Queensbury Industrial Park had been approved and he wished to thank everyone who was involved, including the legislators, for their assistance in this lengthy endeavor.

Mr. Wheatley reported a meeting was recently held with the National Guard relative to the timetables for the Readiness Center, road construction, as well as the installation of the utility services. He said EDC was coordinating the details of the construction and bidding process with the National Guard and had projected road construction to commence in July 2007. In addition, he noted, the bid documents for the construction of the road would be advertised on Friday, May 4, 2007. Mr. Wheatley distributed a copy of a Conceptual Plan, completed by the LA Group, depicting the location of the National Guard, as well as other potential buildings in the QIP.

Mr. Champagne entered the meeting at 11:20 a.m.

Continuing on with the second item of the Agenda, privilege of the floor was extended to Peter Wohl, Director, Adirondack Regional Business Incubator (ARBI), who stated they had previously

discussed the relaunching and redesign of the Economic Development Corporation website. He noted the old website was outdated from both an informational and content standpoint, as well as how people currently utilized the internet. For the past four to six months, Mr. Wohl said there was a collaborative effort between existing partners, co-workers and individuals, both inside and outside government, to develop an effective website for the Economic Development Corporation - Warren County.

Mr. Wohl briefly reviewed the content of the new EDC website, emphasizing the importance of attracting and keeping people interested in visiting the site. While Warren County had a few industrial parks and the necessary infrastructure, he said, there were other prerequisites that entrepreneurs attempted to achieve when relocating their business. He stated the new site demonstrated that Warren County had endless opportunities for those individuals who were visiting, conducting business or relocating.

Mr. Wohl noted some of the highlights on the EDC website included the following:

- ◆ some flash navigational bars;
- ◆ hot buttons to shovel-ready sites;
- ◆ related links to NYS or other people involved with the program;
- ◆ site selection consultants with answers to the FAQ's (frequently asked questions);
- ◆ membership drive;
- ◆ blueprint for growth relating to community development, workforce development and economic development;
- ◆ database of available buildings and sites;
- ◆ regional attributes (location, transportation, economy); and
- ◆ events and profiles of the area.

Mr. W. Thomas entered the meeting at 11:35 a.m.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Caimano, Mr. Wohl advised their Department conducted a competitive bid process that identified the specifications and scope of the website. He said the firm that was awarded the contract was CRSR Design located in Kingston, New York. This firm had interesting concepts, as well as experience designing economic development websites specifically related to empire zones, added Mr. Wohl. Mr. Wohl stated this firm charged approximately \$25,000; however, he said, a majority of the cost was covered by a grant through Assemblywoman Teresa Sayward's office.

Mr. Geraghty exited the meeting at 11:38 a.m.

Mr. Champagne queried how tax abatement was handled for a pilot program. Mr. Wohl responded they attempted to detail every benefit on the website and direct them to the appropriate individual within the EDC organization. He stated the website had links to the Warren-Washington County IDA (Industrial Development Agency) site, the Warren County Local Development Corporation (LDC) or the Glens Falls IDA. Mr. Champagne stated at a recent Adirondack Community College (ACC) Committee Meeting, he asked why a bigger emphasis was not placed upon the math and science curriculums so kids could become more analytical. When developing the website, Mr. Wohl said he noticed two or three entities within the region working on separate projects but having the same end result; therefore, he recommended coordinating their efforts and improving the dialog between the agencies to achieve greater success.

With respect to Item III on the Agenda, Mr. Wohl noted that through the Center for Economic Growth (CEG), the EDC was receiving significant promotional web exposure. Mr. Wheatley apprised that the Economic Development Corporation - Warren County was listed with five other partners on the New York State Nanotechnology website. In addition, he advised that he and Mr. Wohl were scheduled to attend a trade show in Boston, Massachusetts from May 6 through May 9, 2007.

Mr. Wohl apprised that many exciting things had transpired since their last meeting relative to the Adirondack Regional Business Incubator (ARBI). He stated that as Executive Director of the ARBI, he split his time between EDC and ARBI. However, within the last nine or ten months, he said, the framework for the ARBI had been developed, renovation of the site had occurred and they were approximately two to three months from launching the ARBI program. He noted it was particularly important that the program be defined separately from the site, as neither were required from an operational standpoint. Mr. Wohl acknowledged the program would occupy a significant amount of his time; therefore, he said he was resigning as Executive Director of the Adirondack Regional Business Incubator but would continue to serve as President on the ARBI Board of Directors.

Mr. Wohl introduced Jeff Farley as the new Executive Director of the Adirondack Regional Business Incubator. He apprised that Mr. Farley moved to Warren County a few years ago but was the founder and principal owner of Churchill Associates Consulting Services, providing various forms of management and business consulting services to clients of all sizes. He noted the distinguished career of Mr. Farley that included: Vice President of Human Resources at Revlon; American Brands and Castrol North America. He said he was able to transition from a VP to HR position and ultimately became the CEO (chief executive officer) for Castrol North America. When the opportunity arose for Warren County to engage a person with a lifetime of experience that was significant to the path of the ARBI program, as well as imparting the knowledge and experience to those needing the services, he said, it felt like a natural transition. Mr. Wohl noted that he and Mr. Farley have had numerous communications over the past six months that involved the development process of the ARBI program.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Jeff Farley, who reported he was excited, honored, passionate and convinced that the ARBI would be a significant contributor to the economic growth of Warren County. He stated there was a need within the business community to assist new businesses with the unfamiliar process of entrepreneurialism; thereby, decreasing the failure rates. The ARBI would support these new emerging organizations from a technical, educational and funding perspective of an evolving successful business within the region, Mr. Farley added.

Mr. Farley stated he had a 60 day vision to develop a strong padre of the best and brightest in Warren County, contributing either from a marketing, financial or educational perspective to bring about a contributing entity. He stated many of these incubators were relatively new and he welcomed the opportunity to make this program a mecca of business excellence in Warren County.

While he acknowledged the ARBI site location in Glens Falls, Mr. Farley noted the location was not the heart and soul of the business; that is, education, support and everything else that the incubator does supply. In addition, the tenants would be the tenants; however, he said, he saw an affiliate type of membership regardless of whether they became a tenant of the building. Mr. Farley stated he had a vision of the ARBI becoming self-funded in an effort to attract people by hosting seminars

and guest speakers with the desire of developing and increasing their business as an affiliate member. He said he would like to improve the relationship and communication with Adirondack Community College (ACC) by bringing the two significant members of the ACC Management Executive Team, currently on the ARBI Board of Directors, closer together in the way of the faculty and funding to offer internships and entrepreneurial flair.

Mr. Farley reiterated the passion and excitement he felt when he accepted the position as Director of the ARBI knowing he had an opportunity to build a program utilizing the ingredients from his prior work experience. He anticipated commencing the seminar programs within the next couple of weeks and, thereafter, aggressively promoting affiliate memberships for this organization (including tenant memberships). Mr. Monroe congratulated Mr. Farley on his new position and the vision he had planned for the ARBI.

Mr. Champagne said if he understood Mr. Farley correctly, within the next six to nine months there would be tenants in the building and he responded affirmatively. While the Committee had previously been apprised of the cost of renovating the ARBI building, Mr. Wohl stated even if they were awarded the EDA grant, they would still require a \$1 million contribution in order to complete the building; therefore, he asked them (EDA) to consider some flexibility in the grant. He noted an alternative plan involved transferring ownership of the building upon the completion of the Brownfields work; leaving the renovation work under the auspices of a private developer; enter into a long-term lease; and allow the program to grow at its own pace. Mr. Champagne stated he was familiar with the incubator at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute of Technology and he was concerned about the involvement of a private developer and the potential idea of charging rent. Mr. Wohl responded he did not foresee Warren County funding the ARBI on an annual basis like RPI, but noted a majority of the incubators did assess a rental fee. In response to an inquiry by Mr. Champagne, Mr. Wohl advised that Michael Barody recently resigned from the ARBI Board of Directors.

Discussion ensued.

Mr. Wohl apprised the ARBI Board of Directors consisted of: Paul Mazur and William Long from Adirondack Community College (ACC); Dan Hazewski and Mayor LeRoy Akins, Local Development Corporation (LDC) and the City of Glens Falls; Todd Feigenbaum, Queensbury Economic Development Corporation (QUEDC); Bob Orlando; and Todd Shimkus. He further noted that Matthew Sokol was unofficially occupying the position for the Town of Queensbury/Warren County, which would necessitate an appearance before the Queensbury Town Board. In addition, Mr. Wohl said, he would replace Len Fosbrook as Chairman. Mr. Wohl stated he would like to compliment the current partnerships and their representation on the Board with business leaders from the community, either on a Committee or Board basis.

Discussion ensued.

Mr. Champagne queried why there were two representatives from Adirondack Community College. Mr. Farley responded according to the ARBI bylaws, one representative must be an employee of the college; however, Paul Mazur was the Dean of Students, and he anticipated connecting him with the entrepreneurship activity at the college. While ACC had good representation, he stated, they needed to play a stronger role than they had in the past.

Mr. Champagne suggested reviewing a time frame from a public and private sector standpoint, as well as exploring various funding options outside the private developer. Mr. Farley complimented Mr. Wohl on the direction he had undertaken because this process was not a "brick and mortar" mission, but rather economic development for the area. If this business venture became privately owned, Mr. Monroe queried what it would pay for County and Town taxes. Mr. Wohl stated they were exploring both options but reminded the Committee the restrictions placed upon government were greater than those for private developers. He added that no decisions would be made prior to the next Committee meeting.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Champagne, Mr. Wohl advised that in 2005 Warren County entered into an agreement with the ARBI in the amount of \$25,000; in 2006, \$75,000; and in 2007, he said, they wished to enter into that same agreement but amend the amount to \$50,000. He stated that he anticipated the ARBI program becoming self-sustainable while the building would continue to receive funding through the Local Development Corporation (LDC), Warren County Economic Development Corporation (WCEDC), and the Queensbury Economic Development Corporation (QUEDC).

Joan Sady, Clerk of the Board, stated the Committee needed to approve funding for the ARBI agreement for 2007, in the amount of \$50,000, prior to any funds being expended.

Motion was made by Mr. Mason, seconded by Mr. F. Thomas and carried unanimously approving the request to approve the funding for the agreement with Adirondack Regional Business Incubator for 2007, in the amount of \$50,000; and forward same to the Finance Committee for consideration. A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.

With respect to the last item on the Agenda, Mr. Wohl extended his thanks to all individuals who attended their Annual Luncheon held at The Hiland. He stated the impressive part of this event was watching it grow, receive great media exposure, as well as learning the value of the EDC organization. He said the event accommodated 240 people and was sold out the week before. Mr. Champagne suggested hosting the 2008 EDC Luncheon at the Great Escape.

Mr. Wohl distributed copies of their 2007 Annual Report.

There being no further business to come before the committee, on motion by Mr. Stec and seconded by Mr. Girard, Mr. Monroe adjourned the meeting at 12:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra L. Schreiber  
Legislative Office Specialist