

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: TOURISM

DATE: MAY 2, 2007

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: OTHERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS	TESSIER	REPRESENTING THE TOURISM DEPARTMENT:
	BELDEN	KATE JOHNSON, DIRECTOR
	GABRIELS	JOANNE CONLEY, ASSISTANT TOURISM
	KENNY	COORDINATOR
	SHEEHAN	REPRESENTING THE TREASURER'S OFFICE:
	STEC	FRANCIS X. O'KEEFE, TREASURER
COMMITTEE MEMBER ABSENT:		JOAN ANGELL, PRINCIPAL ACCOUNT CLERK
SUPERVISOR	MERLINO	KRISTEN MALETTE, ASSISTANT ACCOUNTANT
		REPRESENTING SAWCHUK BROWN ASSOCIATES:
		PENNY VAVURA, ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT
		JOANN MCKINSTRY, DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OF
		ADMINISTRATIVE AND FISCAL SERVICES
		JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD
		SUPERVISOR CAIMANO
		LUISA SHERMAN, WARREN COUNTY COUNCIL OF
		CHAMBERS
		FRED AUSTIN, FORT WILLIAM HENRY
		CHARLENE DIRESTA, LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

Mr. Tessier called the meeting of the Tourism Committee to order at 11:04 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Kenny, seconded by Mr. Belden and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the April 2, 2007 Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Francis O' Keefe, Treasurer, who gave a Power Point Presentation on Warren County Occupancy Tax-Revenues & Expenditures for the year ending 12/31/06 and a second Power Point Presentation on Warren County Occupancy Tax-Revenues & Expenditures for 1/1/07 - 3/31/07. *Copies of both Power Point Presentations are on file with the minutes.*

Mr. O' Keefe presented slides that outlined Occupancy Tax revenues by towns, as well as a three-year comparison on Occupancy Tax revenue. He stated that some revenue, although collected in 2006, would not show until 2007. Mr. O' Keefe also presented slides on expenditures, both by vendor and by object code, and

explained that the major portion of expenditures were for contracts and for tourism promotion.

In answer to a question concerning collection of Occupancy Tax, Mr. O' Keefe stated that prior to October of 2006, there were no stipulations regarding payments; the lodging properties could pay monthly, quarterly or at the end of the year. However, he added, they are now required to pay no less than quarterly.

Mr. Tessier asked Mr. O' Keefe how many hotels/motels were delinquent in the payment of their 2006 Occupancy Tax. Mr. O' Keefe responded that there were eleven that had not paid for 2006 and eight that had made partial payments for 2006. He added that letters were going out that afternoon stating that if the delinquent taxes were not paid within ten days, the issue would be referred to the County Attorney.

Mr. Caimano questioned if all of the 2006 Occupancy Tax had been collected, how would the final figure for 2006 be affected. Mr. O' Keefe replied that there would have been an additional \$100,000 in revenue.

Mr. Tessier asked if there were still delinquent taxes for 2005 and Mr. O' Keefe replied that they had been turned over to the County Attorney last year.

Mr. Belden thanked Mr. O' Keefe for breaking down the report into quarterly figures, as it was easier to understand. Mr. O' Keefe said that it was thanks to his staff that the report could be presented in such a manner. Mr. Kenny acknowledged that the County now had a benchmark for future comparisons.

Joan Angell and Kristen Malette exited the meeting at 11:20 a.m.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Kate Johnson, Director of Tourism, who distributed copies of her Agenda packet to the Committee members; *a copy of the Agenda packet is on file with the minutes.*

Regarding Item No. 2 on the Agenda, Action Items, Ms. Johnson explained that she had two resolution requests. She explained that the first request was to authorize a printing contract with Offset House, who was the low bidder for this job. She added that Offset House would be printing 80,000 copies of the Lake George Fishing and Boating Map for a lump sum amount of \$4,823, to be paid upon completion. Ms. Johnson added that the reprinting of this map had originally been budgeted for \$6,000, so this project would be under budget. *A copy of the Lake George Fishing and Boating Map is on file with the minutes.*

Motion was made by Mr. Kenny, seconded by Mr. Sheehan and carried unanimously to authorize a contract with Offset House to print 80,000 copies of the Lake George Fishing and Boating Map, commencing May 21, 2007 and terminating July 31, 2007, for a lump sum amount of \$4,823, to be paid upon completion of the project. *A copy of the resolution request is on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the May 18, 2007 Board meeting.*

Ms. Johnson stated that the second request was to amend the 2007 County budget to increase estimated revenues and appropriations in the amount of \$6,960 to reflect the receipt of advertising revenue. She added that the majority of the funds were obtained from the 26 participants of the Summer Savings coupons. She informed the Committee that one of the participants had not paid the fees; however, she was expecting to collect the fees next month. *A copy of the Summer Savings coupon sheets are on file with the minutes.*

Motion was made by Mr. Belden, seconded by Mr. Gabriels and carried unanimously to amend the 2007 County budget to increase estimated revenues and appropriations in the amount of \$6,960 to reflect the receipt of advertising revenue received from the Summer TV/Coupon Blitz and Better Homes & Gardens Co-op Advertising and to refer same to the Finance Committee. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minute.*

Regarding Item 2B on the Agenda, Ms. Johnson apprised that the County telephone system currently played music for callers who were put on hold, which was implemented in 2006. She added that she had spoken with Scott McLaughlin, Telecommunications Analyst, about the possibility of playing a voice over message of current tourist-related events within the County, as opposed to the music. Ms. Johnson said that Mr. McLaughlin had said that it could be done; however, he suggested that the message be seasonal in nature instead of listing current events, there by reducing the frequency of updates.

Ms. Johnson read the proposed telephone voice over message, *a copy of which is on file with the minutes.* Mr. Belden stated that he thought it was a great idea. Mr. Caimano asked if the message would start at the beginning for each caller and Ms. Johnson replied that it would not, it would be on a continuous play cycle.

Ms. Johnson questioned if the issue needed to be presented to another committee for approval and it was determined that it did not. It was the consensus of the Committee to switch to a continuous voice over announcement of seasonal events for the telephone system in the Municipal Center and other County buildings.

Regarding Item No. 3 on the Agenda, Tourism Department Update, Ms. Johnson

announced the Department was in full-swing summer mode. She added that the Warren County Tourism Department was a member of the NYS TPA Council (New York State Tourism Promotion Agency Council) and noted that the I Love New York Department of Tourism was partners with the NYS TPA Council. She displayed a number of magazines displaying current advertising for the Lake George area and the VisitLakeGeorge.com website.

Ms. Johnson expounded that the email broadcast had gone out Monday afternoon to over 77,000 email addresses, inviting recipients to visit the website and download coupons. She added that a postcard was sent to 5,000 households, who had responded as a result of a television advertisement in 2005. She further stated that an additional 5,500 households were sent a letter and a travel guide. *Copies of the email broadcast, postcard, letter and travel guide are on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Johnson announced that Family Fun Magazine, a Disney publication, featured an article entitled "Our Reader's Favorite Lake Getaways", in which Lake George was one of five featured lake areas. She added that the Tourism Department had received about 55 leads from the article, thus far. *A copy of a portion of the article is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Johnson said that the Tourism Department had sent a mailing to approximately 900 area businesses, requesting them to pick up copies of the travel guide, boating map, rates and dates brochure, etc.

Ms. Johnson announced that the New York State Winter Travel Guide had provided an opportunity for the Warren County Tourism Department to prepare a three-page advertisement, which would be a pull out from behind the front cover of the Guide. She stated that the 2006 Year In Review Binder had been distributed along with the Agenda packet, and she encouraged the Committee members to review the material. She added that Warren County was highlighted in the April 23, 2007 issue of the Legislative Gazette. *Copies of the 2006 Year In Review Binder and the Legislative Gazette article are on file with the minutes.*

Regarding Item No. 4 on the Agenda, Ms. Johnson introduced Penny Vavura, Assistant Vice President of Sawchuk Brown Associates. Ms. Vavura gave a Power Point Presentation explaining how their public relations firm would be beneficial to Warren County. *A copy of the Power Point Presentation is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Vavura explained that the reason Pamela Sawchuk Brown, Founder, President & Chief Executive Officer of Sawchuck Brown Associates, could not be at the meeting today was because she was meeting with Stewart's Shops Chief Executive Officer to explore the possibility of a specially named flavor of ice cream specific to the Lake George area. She added that Sawchuk Brown Associates would make a presentation to the Tourism Committee at the June 27, August 1, August 29, October 31 and November 28, 2007 Committee meetings.

Regarding Item No. 5 on the Agenda, Old Business, Ms. Johnson stated that the DPW (Department of Public Works) had recently reprinted the Warren County Highway Maps. Since the Tourism Department receives a lot of requests for the highway maps, she noted that she was in the process of receiving quotes for printing quantities of 5,000, 10,000, 15,000, 20,000 and 25,000. She further added that she would like to add a couple of things to the cover of the map, such as the Tourism website and address and phone number. *A copy of the cover of the Warren County Highway Map with the proposed additions is on file with the minutes.*

Mr. Tessier extended privilege of the floor to Luisa Sherman, of the Warren County Council of Chambers. Ms. Sherman informed the Committee that the Council of Chambers had their dinner meeting last week and she thanked Messrs. Kenny, Merlino and Belden for their attendance. She added that the guest speaker had been Michael Russo, District Director of the 20th Congressional District, who spoke on current tourism trends.

Ms. Sherman stated that the Council of Chambers was currently discussing the topic of extending cell phone coverage. She added that they were in the process of gathering information and putting together an official statement on the topic and would provide the Committee with the final report. She further added that she felt additional cell phone coverage was needed both from a safety standpoint and for a competitive edge.

Ms. Sherman stated that the Council of Chambers was having difficulty in obtaining a number of publications from the NYS DEC (New York State Department of Environmental Conservation). She added that the publication "Trails in the Lake George Region", published in 2005, was especially popular and was in high demand due to hiking in the spring and fall seasons. She further added that the Council of Chambers would be sending a letter to the NYS DEC requesting the reprint of these publications. She requested the Tourism Committee draft a letter of support. Mr. Tessier requested that Ms. Johnson also

prepare a letter to the NYS DEC for signature by he and Chairman Thomas.

Ms. Sherman stated that the Council of Chambers was working on membership recruitment. She noted that they had sent out letters to many different Chambers of Commerce and their goal was to have 100% of the Chambers as active members of the Council.

Lastly, Ms. Sherman announced that the next Council of Chambers dinner would be held on June 14, 2007, with Linda Wohlers, Creative Director of Warren County Tourism Department, as the guest speaker and The Town of Hague as the host Chamber. She added that the Committee and the Board of Supervisors were invited to attend. Mr. Belden suggested that the Committee go on record in support of the Council of Chambers. It was the consensus of the Committee to support the Council of Chambers.

As there was no further business to come before the Tourism Committee, on motion made by Mr. Kenny and seconded by Mr. Sheehan, Mr. Tessier adjourned the meeting at 11:55 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Charlene DiResta, Legislative Office Specialist