

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: TOURISM

DATE: JUNE 27, 2007

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS TESSIER
 BELDEN
 GABRIELS
 KENNY
 SHEEHAN
 STEC
 MERLINO

OTHERS PRESENT:

REPRESENTING THE TOURISM DEPARTMENT:
 KATE JOHNSON, DIRECTOR
REPRESENTING SAWCHUCK BROWN ASSOCIATES:
 KATE OSTERHOUT, ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE
 HAL PAYNE, COMMISSIONER OF ADMINISTRATIVE &
 FISCAL SERVICES
 JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD
 SUPERVISOR F. THOMAS
 SUPERVISOR VANNESS
 SUPERVISOR MASON
 FRED AUSTIN, BUILDING PROJECT COORDINATOR
 ROB HOSFORD, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
 CHARLENE DiRESTA, LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

Mr. Tessier called the meeting of the Tourism Committee to order at 10:35 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Belden, seconded by Mr. Kenny and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the May 30, 2007 Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

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

Ms. Johnson expounded that Item No. 1 under Action Items on the Agenda was a request for a new contract with Offset House for the printing of three Handbook Brochures, which were as follows: the Group Tour Handbook, the Convention and Meeting Handbook and the Student and Youth Handbook. She stated that Offset House had been the low bidder for this project and the contract would commence on July 23, 2007 and terminate on August 31, 2007, for a lump sum amount of \$2,996. *Copies of samples of the three handbooks are on file with the minutes.*

Motion was made by Mr. Belden, seconded by Mr. Sheehan and carried unanimously to authorize a new contract with Offset House for the printing of three handbook brochures, commencing July 23, 2007 and terminating August 31, 2007, for a lump sum amount of \$2,996, to be paid upon completion of the

project. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the July 20, 2007 Board meeting.*

Ms. Johnson apprised that Item No. 2 under Action Items on the Agenda was a request to amend the 2007 County budget to increase estimated revenues and appropriations in the amount of \$4,850. She stated that this was to reflect revenue not originally budgeted in the amounts of \$4,600 from the New York State Winter Travel/Ski Guide and \$250 from the Summer TV Coupon Blitz.

Motion was made by Mr. Kenny, seconded by Mr. Stec and carried unanimously to amend the 2007 County budget as outlined above and to refer same to the Finance Committee. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Johnson stated that Item No. 3A on the Agenda was a refund from the Paul Kaza Associates for \$10,500. She apprised that the funds had been collected from the Summer Coupon Program and added that \$4,000 from 2005 and \$6,500 from 2006 had been placed in an escrow account and had mistakenly not been put back into the appropriate account. She said that a check had been sent from Paul Kaza Associates to the County Treasurer and further added that the funds would be considered a refund of prior years' expenses and would be placed in revenue code A. 2701. She noted the Treasurer's Office would set up an account and assign it to the Tourism Department, which would be included in the Occupancy Tax reserve balance at the end of the year.

Ms. Johnson apprised that Rob Hosford, of the Information Technology Department, was at the meeting to help her today and she thanked him for his assistance. She stated that the radio commercial had been recorded and edited in a studio in Albany; she then played an audio recording of the 60-second radio commercial. Mr. Belden asked if Ms. Johnson had considered using the radio station 98.9, which broadcasted in the Rutland, Vermont area. Ms. Johnson responded that at the present time the radio commercial would be broadcast in the Hudson Valley region and would possibly be broadcast to the Metro New York area by this winter. She added that the radio commercial had been paid for with approximately \$20,000 out of the television advertising budget.

Ms. Johnson stated she had some online promotions to share with the Committee, the first of which was weather.com. She noted that weather.com was the website for *The Weather Channel* and therefore, was quite popular. She further added that the promotion would be on the website for approximately two months and was geared towards the Metro New York area.

Mr. Mason entered the meeting at 10:42 a.m.

Ms. Johnson next showed the online promotion on discoverboating.com, which she noted was supposed to be up this week; however, it was not up as of this morning. She added that discoverboating.com was in the middle of a very large campaign this year. She stated that there was no charge to be highlighted on this website. She said that while on discoverboating.com, she discovered another website, takemefishing.org, which had also given the Tourism Department an opportunity for free advertising.

Ms. Johnson distributed a copy of the Lake George Area advertisement in the AAA publication, *New York State Travel Guide*, a copy of which is on file with the minutes. She noted that there had been an opportunity to send a personalized email message, which had gone out to 25,000 AAA members on Tuesday, June 26, 2007. She added that as a result of the email, the Tourism Department had already received 144 requests for information. *A copy of the personalized email is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Johnson stated that an activities email blast had been sent to 77,000 households. She added that of the people who had visited the website from the link in that email had spent an average of 4 minutes and 38 seconds on the Warren County Tourism website. *A copy of the email is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Johnson introduced Kate Osterhout, Account Executive for Sawchuk Brown Associates, who distributed copies of a Power Point Presentation to the Committee members. *A copy of the Power Point Presentation is on file with the minutes.* Ms. Osterhout said that she was having a lot of fun working on the Warren County Tourism account. She apprised that the largest project that she was currently working on was the Stewart's "Name the Ice Cream" Contest. She added that posters and entry cards for the contest were in each of the fourteen local Stewart's Shops. *A copy of the poster is on file with the minutes.* She noted that the flavor of the ice cream was vanilla with chocolate swirl and chocolate-covered almonds. She added that through the entry cards, Warren County would obtain contact information on the customers. She further added that entry forms were also available at visitlakegeorge.com. She said the contest would begin on June 25, 2007, with entries accepted through July 15, 2007 and a winner would be unveiled on August 1, 2007, at an event at the Bay Road Stewart's Shop in the Town of Queensbury. She added that the winning name should reflect summer vacation fun in the Lake George area. She noted that the ice cream would only be available at the dip counters of the fourteen participating Stewart's Shops in Warren County.

Ms. Osterhout stated that Sawchuk Brown Associates had sent out a press release prior to the contest. She said that phone calls had been made encouraging the

media to cover the contest. She added that a media advisory would be sent out inviting the press to attend the August 1, 2007 event at the Bay Road Stewart's Shop. She further added that following the event, there would be another press release to announce the winner.

Ms. Osterhout stated that Sawchuk Brown Associates had sent out media blasts to media and publications with information, such as rates and dates, the new tag line, the website homepage and white water rafting information. She added that media advisories were sent to announce the 'Swim Lake George' event. She said that there had been an email blast about the rising gas prices with a coupon offer. She advised that these emails were specialized to each area, calculating how much it would cost in gas to travel to Lake George from a specific area and then offering coupons that compensated for the cost of travel. She noted they had also put out a press release about the number of conventions, meetings and events that were held in the Lake George area.

Ms. Osterhout stated that she would attend the Committee meetings on August 1, 2007, August 29, 2007, October 31, 2007 and November 28, 2007, to give progress updates to the Committee. Mr. Belden stated that he felt that Sawchuk Brown Associates were doing a great job of promoting tourism in Warren County.

Mr. Tessier said that the State of New York was planning on upgrading the Exit 17 Rest Area on I-87. Mr. Belden said that the State was intending to help pay for the upgrades and he asked Hal Payne, Commissioner of Administrative and Fiscal Services, if he had received those details. Mr. Payne said that he had spoken to William Lamy, DPW Superintendent, who had spoken with a State representative and was advised that the State would split the costs with Warren County. He added that the proposed upgrades would cost \$330,000, therefore the County's share would be \$165,000. Mr. Belden asked if the State had given a time frame to start construction and Mr. Payne replied in the negative. *The proposed plans for the upgrade are on file with the minutes.*

Mr. Tessier questioned if all of the other rest areas that had been built by the State on the Northway, had been a 50/50 split between the Counties and the State. He further stated that he felt the project would need more research before the County would be willing to commit funding to it.

Mr. Tessier also questioned whose responsibility it would be to maintain the Rest Area. Mr. VanNess said that he was on the County Facilities Committee, which

had referred this issue to the Tourism Committee to see if they could obtain additional information. Mr. Tessier noted that there had been many problems in the past with that location and added that he would obtain more information from the State on the project. Mr. Belden stated that since the State owned the property, they should pay 100% of the cost. Ms. Johnson said that Warren County was missing out on the possibility of tourists stopping at Exit 17 to pick up information. Mr. Kenny apprised that in order to be effective there would need to be signage put up on both sides of the Northway indicating that the Warren County Information Center was at Exit 17, which he did not think the State would be willing to provide.

Ms. Johnson noted that there was one Pending Item, which was to explore options for the reprinting of the 250th Anniversary of the French and Indian War posters in a smaller size. She added that they had been reprinted and had already been distributed.

Mr. Belden asked if Pam Morin's position had been filled yet and Ms. Johnson replied that it had not and that tomorrow was Ms. Morin's last official day. She added that the exam for that position would be in September or October of this year. She stated that she would like to wait until after the exam rather than hire someone on a provisional basis.

As there was no further business to come before the Tourism Committee, on motion made by Mr. Belden and seconded by Mr. Kenny, Mr. Tessier adjourned the meeting at 11:13 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Charlene DiResta, Legislative Office Specialist