

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: TOURISM

DATE: JULY 30, 2008

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS TESSIER
KENNY
SHEEHAN
MERLINO
SIMMES
STRAINER

COMMITTEE MEMBER ABSENT:

SUPERVISOR BELDEN

OTHERS PRESENT:

REPRESENTING THE TOURISM DEPARTMENT:
KATE JOHNSON, DIRECTOR
LINDA WOHLERS, CREATIVE DIRECTOR
KATE OSTERHAUT, SAWCHUK BROWN ASSOCIATES
HAL PAYNE, COMMISSIONER OF ADMINISTRATIVE & FISCAL
SERVICES
JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD
SUPERVISOR HASKELL
SUPERVISOR GIRARD
SUPERVISOR STEC
TODD LUNT, DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES
FRED AUSTIN, FORT WILLIAM HENRY
SARAH MCLENITHAN, LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

Mr. Tessier called the meeting of the Tourism Committee to order at 9:30 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Kenny, seconded by Mrs. Simmes and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the May 28, 2008 Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

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

Ms. Johnson referred the Committee to her first item, a request for a new contract with Quad Graphics Inc., for the printing of the 2009 Warren County Travel Guides commencing September 22, 2008 and terminating October 31, 2008, for an amount not to exceed \$84,599.98. Ms. Johnson added that 250,000 copies would be printed and the publication would be seventy-six pages, not including the cover.

Motion was made by Mr. Kenny, seconded by Mr. Sheehan and carried unanimously to authorize the request for a new contract with Quad Graphics Inc., to print the 2009 Warren County Travel Guide as outlined above and the necessary resolution was authorized for the August 15, 2008 Board meeting. *A copy of the request is on file with the minutes.*

The next agenda item Ms. Johnson noted, was a request for a new contract with Amsterdam Printing to print the 2009 Warren County Group Tour Planner commencing September 25, 2008 and terminating October 31, 2008, for an amount not to exceed \$3,150. She added that 5,000 copies would be printed.

Motion made by Mrs. Simmes, seconded by Mr. Strainer and carried unanimously to authorize the request for a new contract with Amsterdam Printing for the printing of the 2009 Warren County

Group Tour Planner as outlined above and the necessary resolution was authorized for the August 15, 2008 Board meeting. *A copy of the request is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Johnson remarked there were two separate requests to amend the 2008 County Budget, the first to increase estimated revenues and appropriations in the amount of \$71,195 to reflect receipt of funds received for the 2009 Warren County Travel Guide and the second request was to increase estimated revenues and appropriations in the amount of \$5,224 to reflect receipt of funds received for the 2009 Warren County Group Tour Guide.

Motion was made by Mr. Sheehan, seconded by Mr. Kenny and carried unanimously to authorize the requests to amend the 2008 County Budget to increase estimated revenues and appropriations in the amounts of \$71,195 and \$5,224 as outlined above and to forward same to the Finance Committee. *Copies of the requests to amend the County Budget are on file with the minutes.*

Mr. Kenny questioned if there had been any difference in the number of advertisers this year as opposed to the prior year, to which Ms. Johnson responded that two large advertisers, one being the Queensbury Hotel and the other the Hampton Inn, had opted not to advertise in the 2009 Tour Guide. Linda Wohlers, Creative Director, noted that this could be due to the increased public use of the Tourism website.

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

Ms. Johnson stated the next agenda item consisted of a request to authorize the submission of a grant application to the New York State Department of Economic Development for matching funds for promotion of tourism.

Motion was made by Mrs. Simmes, seconded by Mr. Strainer and carried unanimously to authorize the submission of a grant application to the New York State Department of Economic Development as outlined above and the necessary resolution was authorized for the August 15, 2008 Board meeting. *A copy of the resolution is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Johnson then addressed an item that was not included on the agenda, which was a request to ratify the actions taken to award the contract for printing of the 2008 Warren County Fall brochure to Benchmark Printing, Inc., for an amount not to exceed \$5,912 commencing July 21, 2008 and terminating August 22, 2008. Ms. Johnson reported that Benchmark Printing had been the low bidder for the contract and would produce 75,000 copies of the 2008 Fall Brochure.

Motion was made by Mr. Strainer, seconded by Mr. Sheehan and carried unanimously to ratify the actions taken in awarding the contract to Benchmark Printing, Inc. as outlined above and the necessary resolution was authorized for the August 15, 2008 Board meeting. *A copy of the request form is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Johnson mentioned that the Tourism Department would like to plant a tree in front of their office window in memory of Julie Bovair, Senior Tourism Specialist. She added that Julie had been a loyal County employee for twenty-eight years and she thanked Todd Lunt, Human Resources Director and the Employee Assistance Program for their support during the difficult time of her passing.

Moving along, Ms. Johnson commented that she had received approval to fill the vacancy of Tourism Specialist. She added that she had received several applications and had decided to hire Annie McMahon, who she felt was a great addition to the Tourism Department staff.

Ms. Johnson commented that she, Mr. Lunt and Mr. Tessier would begin conducting interviews for the Creative Director position shortly and would keep the Committee apprised of their progress. She also noted that she would like to recognize Leisa Grant, Principal Account Clerk, for finishing up on the 2009 Tourism Budget which was submitted later that day.

Ms. Johnson notified the Committee that she had been in contact with the Adirondack Regional Tourism Council (ARTC), which acted as a Beacon Town Welcome Center located southbound on Interstate 87 between exits 41 and 42. She said she had been advised the ARTC had asked their patrons to complete a survey on their destination, the majority of which had indicated the Adirondacks or New York City. She stated that these individuals had responded that within the Adirondack Region, Lake George was their number one destination.

Ms. Johnson informed them that she had received a call from the New York State Governor's Office of Motion Picture and Television Development regarding the interest of a Los Angeles, California film production company seeking to film a low budget movie in Lake George entitled "The Darkness Within". She added that the films budget required lodging, large office space and various locations throughout Lake George. She noted that filming would commence in September and terminate at the end of October, requiring two months of room usage at local facilities.

Ms. Johnson mentioned that the New York City subway posters had been posted at thirteen different subway stations in Manhattan and they could continue to be viewed until August 1, 2008.

Ms. Johnson announced that at the next Committee meeting Susan Stratton, of Stratton Partners Advertising, would be reporting on the record breaking summer television campaign. She added she would also be reviewing the fall television ad campaign with the Committee.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Kate Osterhaut, of Sawchuk Brown Associates, who updated the Committee on the marketing her company had been developing since the last time she met with the Committee at the end of April. She informed the Committee that three press releases were completed, one pertaining to the Americade, one pertaining to RV Trips to Warren County and one on Lake George and all of the activities available to tourists on the lake. She noted that the RV Press release had been limited to RV publications and it focused on traveling to Lake George in an RV during the fall and that in August they would redistribute the press release to their local regional drive publications, which included Canada.

Ms. Osterhaut noted a press release based on Lake George aided Kristy Gustafson, of the *Times Union*, in the writing of her article "Near & Far" that had been published in the *Times Union* Sunday, July 6, 2008. She added that in using Ms. Wohlers concept, they had been successful in getting a writer, Paul Grondahl of the *Times Union*, to write an article on second homes in Lake George. She noted that this article had been printed in the *Times Union* on July 27, 2008. Ms. Wohlers advised that the article had been picked up by a commodities syndication, creating an upscale image of Lake George.

Ms. Osterhaut mentioned that Sawchuk Brown Associates was working with the "I Love New York"

public relations firm on a seasonal activities campaign for the fall. She added that an article enticing people to honeymoon in Lake George would be featured in the *Daily Gazette* bridal section this fall.

Mr. Merlino entered the meeting at 9:39 a.m.

Pertaining to media relations, Ms. Osterhaut noted that they had been working on several ProfNets advertisement articles since April, Girl Getaways, Women's vacations, Father/son trips being some of the subject matter. She added that they were currently working on a marketing plan for Forbes Traveler.com dealing with learning vacations for kids.

Ms. Osterhaut said that Sawchuk Brown Associates had been contacted by several different writers from different publications for their FAM Tour visits. She pointed out they had just completed one of these tours for Jackie Perrin of "Moms on the Move", for whom they obtained lodging at the Sagamore for a reduced rate. She said that they were in the process of completing four more of these tours with different writers. She advised that when the Fall Travel Brochure was completed, they would be centering a press release to maintain the same feel of the brochure, making sure to put an emphasis on the fall activities available to tourists traveling to Warren County.

This concluded Ms. Osterhaut's presentation to the Committee.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Ms. Wohlers, who informed the Committee that her daughter, who was employed by a large tourism public relations firm in Manhattan, had received a request for information regarding ballooning over lakes. In response to the request, Ms. Wohlers said her daughter had written an article about Lake George which had drawn the attention of a gentlemen from a radio station in Atlanta, Georgia. She added that he traveled to Lake George and took the balloon ride over Lake George and upon returning to his position, the gentlemen had talked about his experience during an on-air interview.

Ms. Wohlers commented that the goal of the Tourism Department was to direct people to their website. She added that in an effort to bring visitors out of their hotel rooms and draw them to the other Villages and Towns in Warren County, they were in the process of putting together a brochure which directs people to the website feature "road tripping through the countryside". She pointed out that for each Town or Village the restaurants and lodgings available were highlighted, as well as, the history of each Town or Village and places of interest and things to do in each location. She also noted that this included places where tourists would see the best views, and places for hiking and swimming. She added the website would include google maps on each location with the GPS coordinates, preventing the visitors from getting lost.

Ms. Wohlers noted that on the back of the brochures they had changed the format displaying events in order to highlight the larger one's and grouping smaller events occurring on the same weekend. As an example, she referenced Halloween weekend events were grouped together to define a weekends worth of activities centered around Halloween. She stated that they had contacted area Chambers of Commerce and suggested that they encourage area events to be scheduled in the same manner, giving visitors more reasons to stay for an entire weekend, instead of making day trips.

Ms. Johnson interjected that she wanted to commend Alice Grether, Director of Tourism for the City of Glens Falls, on the outstanding work she did in providing the Tourism Department with all of the

different events that were being put on in the City of Glens Falls for this publication.

Ms. Wohler added that recently an ad had been run by the Tourism Department in the dining guide for a route to the Black Hole in Johnsbury, which she had visited with her children. She said that as they were pulling up they saw several cars with New Jersey plates and she noted that people were reading the ads.

Fred Austin, of the Fort William Henry apprised the Committee that starting Friday night the Fort William Henry would be conducting tours of areas in the Village of Lake George associated with paranormal activity. He also noted that Linda Lee Macon, the writer of Adirondack Ghosts Volumes 1 & 2, was currently working on a third Volume, which she had decided to name "Ghosts of Lake George" because there was more than enough material to write the whole book in reference to paranormal activity in Lake George.

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 10:15 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah McLenithan, Legislative Office Specialist

