

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: TOURISM

DATE: OCTOBER 29, 2008

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS TESSIER
 BELDEN
 KENNY
 SHEEHAN
 MERLINO
 SIMMES
 STRAINER

OTHERS PRESENT:

REPRESENTING THE TOURISM DEPARTMENT:
 KATE JOHNSON, DIRECTOR
 PETER GIRARD, CREATIVE DIRECTOR
REPRESENTING ERIC MOWER AND ASSOCIATES:
 BRENDAN KENNEDY, NEW MEDIA PROJECT MANAGER
 HAL PAYNE, COMMISSIONER OF ADMINISTRATIVE & FISCAL
 SERVICES
 JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD
 SUPERVISOR GOODSPEED
 LUISA CRAIGE-SHERMAN, WARREN COUNTY COUNCIL OF
 CHAMBERS
 CHARLENE DiRESTA, SR. LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

Mr. Tessier called the meeting of the Tourism Committee to order at 10:15 a.m.

Motion was made by Mrs. Simmes, seconded by Mr. Sheehan and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the August 27, 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 introduced Peter Girard, the newly hired Creative Director in the Tourism Department, and Brendan Kennedy, New Media Project Manager for Eric Mower and Associates (formerly Sawchuk Brown Associates).

Ms. Johnson requested authorization for a contract with Dodge Printing LLC for printing 60,000 copies of the 2009 Whitewater Rafting brochure, commencing November 24, 2008 and terminating December 31, 2008, for an amount not to exceed \$5,500. She advised that Dodge Printing had been the lowest bidder.

Motion was made by Mrs. Simmes, seconded by Mr. Merlino and carried unanimously to authorize the contract with Dodge Printing LLC, as outlined above. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the November 21, 2008 Board meeting.*

Ms. Johnson requested amendments to Resolution Nos. 539 and 622 of 2008, which had amended the 2008 County budget. She explained that in each instance a portion

of the funds should have been allocated to the appropriations code for Motorcoach (A.6417.2096). She explained that the requests had been properly presented at the Committee meetings; however, she added, the resolution request forms did not have the correct account codes listed.

Motion was made by Mr. Sheehan, seconded by Mr. Merlino and carried unanimously to amend Resolution Nos. 539 and 622 of 2008. (*Subsequent to the meeting it was determined that a resolution was not necessary to execute the requested changes and a Clerk's correction would be made by the Office of the Clerk of the Board.*)

Ms. Johnson requested transfers of funds in the amount of \$800 from the Salaries-Sick Leave Incentive Code (A.6417 140) to the Office Supplies Code (A.6417 410) and in the amount of \$110 from the Equipment Code (A.6417 220) to the Office Supplies Code (A.6417 410). She said that the funds would primarily be used to cover the cost of purchasing mailing labels.

Motion was made by Mrs. Simmes, seconded by Mr. Merlino and carried unanimously to approve the request for the transfers of funds, as outlined above and to refer the same to the Finance Committee. *A copy of the request for Transfer of Funds is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Johnson requested to amend the 2008 County budget to increase estimated revenues and appropriations, as follows:

- ▶ in the amount of \$962, to reflect revenues received from the 2009 Warren County Group Tour Planner;
- ▶ in the amount of \$2,275, to reflect revenues received from the 2009 White Water Rafting brochure; and
- ▶ in the amount of \$235, to reflect revenues received from the 2008 Consumer Shows brochure distribution.

Motion was made by Mr. Strainer, seconded by Mr. Sheehan and carried unanimously to amend the 2008 County budget, as outlined above and to forward same to the Finance Committee. *Copies of the resolution request forms are on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Johnson apprised that the Department had budgeted the anticipated revenue for the 2009 County budget; however, she said, the revenue had been received and the 2008 County budget needed to be amended in order to accept it.

Ms. Johnson requested authorization to extend four existing contracts for 2009, as follows:

- ▶ with Production Equipment, Inc. for videography services, commencing January 1, 2009 and terminating December 31, 2009, for a total amount not to exceed \$15,000;
- ▶ with Cotton Hill Studios, Inc. for sound/audio production services, commencing January 1, 2009 and terminating December 31, 2009, for a total amount not to exceed \$5,000;

- ▶ with Stratton Partners for broadcast media buying services, commencing January 1, 2009 and terminating December 31, 2009, for a total amount not to exceed \$40,000 (5% commission percentage fee for up to \$800,000 of broadcast media purchased by the contractor); and
- ▶ with Working Pictures, Inc. for post-production and online editing services, commencing January 1, 2009 and terminating December 31, 2009, for a total amount not to exceed \$7,500.

Motion was made by Mr. Merlino, seconded by Mr. Strainer and carried unanimously to authorize the extension of the four contracts, as outlined above. *Copies of the resolution request forms are on file with the minutes and the necessary resolutions were authorized for the November 21, 2008 Board meeting.*

Ms. Johnson stated that a Group Tour and Meeting/Convention Update, which had been prepared by Tanya Brand, Group Tour Promoter, had been included in the agenda packet. She said that Ms. Brand was currently attending the Quebec Bus Owners Association Conference in Montreal, Canada. She noted that one of the pages of the handout was an advertisement, paid for with funding that was secured by Supervisor Kenny, which highlighted the fact that there was an incentive to hold an event in the area. She said that Warren County was always looking for new events and some of the previous events would no longer be eligible for Occupancy Tax funding.

Ms. Johnson pointed out that the Committee members had all received copies of the new Winter Activities and Events brochure, the 2009 Travel Guide and the Winter Activities and Events placemat; *copies of which are on file with the minutes.* She noted that there were additional copies available in the Tourism Office that could be distributed to local businesses and restaurants. She advised that there had been a press release on the Winter Activities and Events brochure, as well as the Travel Guide which had been distributed to local media; *a copy of the press release is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Johnson apprised that there were copies of two letters in the agenda packet which complimented the Tourism Department on the 2009 Travel Guide; one from Robert Blais, Mayor of the Village of Lake George and one from Philip Jackson, of Adirondack Balloon Flights.

Ms. Johnson stated that the lease with the New York State Department of Transportation for the Information Center between Exits 17 and 18 on I-87 Northbound would expire on March 1, 2009, as well as the sub-lease with Ha-Pe-De, Inc. She advised that she had spoken with Kathy Barrie, of Ha-Pe-De, Inc., who expressed her opinion that since the State paid for the cost of utilities, it would be preferable for Ha-Pe-De, Inc. to contract directly with the State.

Ms. Johnson apprised that the house list of email subscribers had increased to 94,698 which was 8,281 higher than in May of 2008. She stated that they had sent an email to all subscribers encouraging them to enter the Fall Romantic Giveaway, which had included a night at the Holiday Inn with dinner and breakfast. She noted that there had

been 5,608 entries, which was a response rate of 5.92%. She added that any response rate in excess of 2% was considered excellent. She advised that the Department had conducted their third conversion survey, which was an online questionnaire that had asked the recipients of information if they had liked what was received and if they had visited the area. She said that 18,328 surveys had been emailed and the deadline for responses was November 3, 2008. She apprised that this was the time of year when the Occupancy Survey of local lodging, camping and attractions was completed and this year was the first time the survey was completed online. She advised that the deadline was October 31, 2008 and added that they were not receiving an adequate response from the online survey. She said that if an appropriate response was not received by the deadline they would mail the survey to those businesses that had not responded.

Ms. Johnson stated that due to her vacation, Leisa Grant, Principal Account Clerk for the Tourism Department, would conduct next month's Committee meeting. She said that Ms. Grant would make resolution requests for the 2009 contracts. She added that Susan Stratton, of Stratton Partners Advertising, would present an update on the media buying.

Brendan Kennedy, New Media Project Manager for Eric Mower and Associates, explained that Sawchuk Brown Associates had been acquired by Eric Mower and Associates which was based in Syracuse, New York. He advised that he was very familiar with the area as he had been raised in Albany, New York.

Mr. Kennedy announced that recent press releases had included the fall events release, the pets welcome in Warren County release and a release introducing Peter Girard as the new Creative Director in the Tourism Department. He added that there was a 6 page spread in *Vitality Magazine* which had been the result of a FAM (familiarization) Tour. He said that ProfNet queries had been done for girl getaways and luxury resort and hotel destinations. He advised that upcoming FAM Tours included one from Suzanne Moore, of *Press-Republican*, who would visit the area with her dog this winter and one from Wayne Bayliff, freelance writer for multiple travel magazines, in October 2009.

Mr. Kennedy apprised that his forte was various uses of the internet and added that increasing the number of visitors to the visitlakegeorge.com website was a priority. He said that he had submitted the commercials from the website to YouTube.com, which was a video search website. He added that social media sites like FaceBook.com and MySpace.com were free sites where a landing page could be created to direct visitors to the visitlakegeorge.com website.

Ms. Johnson said that *Vitality Magazine* was a free publication in Cape Cod, Massachusetts. She added that the article had been written by a husband and wife team who visited throughout the County.

Mr. Kennedy exited the meeting at 10:32 a.m.

Mr. Girard apprised that he had been working for Warren County Tourism for five weeks and everyone had been a joy to work with. He said that when he began he had been given a laundry list of work to accomplish. He advised that one of the first things he had accomplished was the re-design of the logo to make it more accessible to news print. He advised that the 'betcha we can make you smile' tagline and the smile icon of the logo were removed. He said that the font of the logo had been made bolder and a scenic landscape design had been added to the 'O' in the word George.

Mr. Girard explained that he had organized the computer files in the Office so that files and images would be more accessible. He added that anyone in the Office would be able to access the data on the server. He advised that the Whitewater Rafting brochure had been redesigned to look more cutting edge and trendy.

Mr. Girard apprised that the Time Warner Video on Demand and the commercials had been revised so that a letterbox was added to the top of the screen that contained information such as the website and phone number. He added that since most cable stations had the remote control information box on the bottom of the screen, the letterbox was placed on the top of the screen to avoid obstruction.

Mr. Girard stated that he had been working with Jacob Hume, of the Information Technology Department, on re-development of the website. He added that he wanted to streamline the navigation of the website to make it more accessible.

Mr. Girard explained that he had participated in a Department to Department cooperative effort with the Planning & Community Development Department. He said that he had assisted in the design of the Warren County GIS (Geographic Information System) logo which had incorporated the types of mapping and a compass icon.

Mr. Goodspeed entered the meeting at 10:45 a.m.

Luisa Craige-Sherman, of the Warren County Council of Chambers, advised that the Council had held meetings in September and October which had been summarized in a handout; a copy of the handout is on file with the minutes. She noted that the Council had discussed a different meeting schedule; however, she added, due to feedback from the Supervisors they had decided to continue with the current schedule. She said at the October meeting Supervisor Merlino had given a synopsis of the County's efforts towards promoting Tourism. Ms. Johnson advised that Mr. Girard would be happy to attend an upcoming Council of Chambers meeting. Ms. Craige-Sherman stated that she would like Mr. Girard to give a presentation on the use of social media. She added that each of the Chambers had their own website.

Ms. Craige-Sherman reported on the activities of the members of the Warren County Council of Chambers. She advised that the Fall Festival in the Town of Bolton had phenomenal results with greater attendance than the Fourth of July weekend. She said that the Town of North Warren had held their 9th Annual Pug Parade with over 200 dogs and noted that she had been one of the judges. She apprised that the Town of Hague was preparing for the winter and ice fishing season and the Town of Lake

Luzerne was preparing for snowmobile season. She added that the Town of Lake George was preparing for the Bed and Breakfast Tour, for which she had distributed a flyer; a copy of which is on file with the minutes. She said that the World's Largest Garage Sale in the Town of Warrensburg had been successful.

As there was no further business to come before the Tourism Committee, on motion made by Mr. Merlino and seconded by Mrs. Simmes, Mr. Tessier adjourned the meeting at 10:52 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Charlene DiResta, Sr. Legislative Office Specialist