

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: BUDGET - PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

DATE: AUGUST 24, 2009

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS GERAGHTY  
BELDEN  
O'CONNOR  
CHAMPAGNE  
KENNY  
SHEEHAN  
MERLINO  
TAYLOR

OTHERS PRESENT:

FREDERICK MONROE, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
HAL PAYNE, COMMISSIONER OF ADMINISTRATIVE & FISCAL SERVICES  
JOANN MCKINSTRY, DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OF ADMINISTRATIVE & FISCAL SERVICES  
JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD  
SUPERVISORS STRAINER  
THOMAS  
VANNESS

COMMITTEE MEMBER ABSENT:

SUPERVISOR STEC

REPRESENTING PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:

PAT TATICH, DIRECTOR  
WAYNE LAMOTHE, DEPUTY DIRECTOR

REPRESENTING THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (EDC):

LEN FOSBROOK, PRESIDENT  
JENNIFER SWITZER, DIRECTOR OF FINANCE/EMPIRE ZONE SPECIALIST  
JEFFERY BYRNE, EDC BOARD MEMBER  
JOHN DAVIDSON, EDC BOARD MEMBER  
DAVE MOYNEHAN, EDC BOARD MEMBER  
JACK BIENIEK, EDC BOARD MEMBER  
DAVE CAPRON, EDC BOARD MEMBER  
AMANDA ALLEN, SR. LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

Vice-Chairman Belden called the meeting of the Budget Committee to order at 1:30 p.m.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Pat Tatich, Director of Planning & Community Development, who distributed copies of the 2010 budget proposal for her Department to the Committee members; *a copy of the budget proposal is also on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Tatich began by noting that the Planning & Community Development budget consisted of four program areas including the County Planning Board, Planning Department, GIS (Geographic Information System) and the Local Waterfront Redevelopment Program. She advised that the overall 2010 Departmental Request reflected a decrease of \$44,604.94 from the 2009 Budget, reflective of a salary adjustment for the GIS Coordinator position and decreases in worker's compensation and operating expenses. Estimated revenues for 2010 had increased by \$24,551 over the 2009 Appropriation, Ms. Tatich noted, due to existing administrative funding from grant awards and revenues from local communities and agencies for GIS services anticipated in 2010. She pointed out that the cumulative request of \$1,600 had been included for the equipment budget in response to a recommendation from the Information Technology Department for replacement of the GIS server and networking upgrades associated with the Department's move to the Human Services Building. Furthermore, Ms. Tatich said they would need to upgrade selective cabinetry for security purposes related to the financial access codes and documents associated with Block Grant awards on both a State and Federal level.

Commencing with the review of the 2010 budget proposal, Ms. Tatich presented the Planning, Code A.8020, section which reflected a 2010 Request of \$3,379 as compared to the 2009 Appropriation of \$3,880, a decrease of

\$501. She noted that this budget represented the County Planning Board and she apprised that ongoing discussions were being held with the County Attorney's Office respective to alternate approaches to complete the duties of the Planning Board. If an alternate method could be developed, Ms. Tatich added, the County Planning Board could be abolished, thereby eliminating the accompanying budget.

Ms. Tatich then presented the Planning & Community Development budget, Code A.8021, proposal which consisted of a \$342,769 Request for 2010 as compared to the 2009 Appropriation of \$344,029, a decrease of \$1,260. She noted that this portion of the budget included the bulk of the costs related to the Planning Department, as well as all staff costs aside from the GIS Coordinator position. Ms. Tatich said supply purchases had been limited in 2009 as per the direction of Hal Payne, Commissioner of Administrative & Fiscal Services, but noted that a number of purchases would have to be made during the fall season to replenish the stock that had been used. Referring to Code A.8021 444, Travel/Education/Conference, she pointed out that a \$1,000 request had been included, identical to the 2009 Appropriation, which would be used primarily for in-State conferences and classes. Ms. Tatich apprised the largest reduction in this portion of the budget was for worker's compensation costs. She then directed the Committee members to page nine of the budget which included a salary chart and she pointed out that \$900 in overtime costs had been included in the budget request for assistance to the County Planning Board.

Moving on, Ms. Tatich addressed the Planning GIS Program, Code A.8022, budget which included a 2010 Request of \$59,304 as opposed to the 2009 Appropriation of \$77,597, a decrease of \$18,293. She reminded the Committee that the decrease in the budget was attributed to changes in the GIS Coordinator position salary and increased revenues based on anticipated income from local communities and agencies for GIS services, as per the resolution adopted by the Board of Supervisors.

Mr. Belden questioned how many entities had committed in writing to contribute funds for GIS services and Ms. Tatich replied that this was not necessary as the Board resolution stated that each entity would be billed for the GIS services rendered.

Ms. Tatich stated that the final portion of the budget to be addressed was Planning-Local Waterfront, Code A.8029, consisting of a 2010 Request of \$25,000 which was identical to the 2009 Appropriation of the same amount. Wayne LaMothe, Deputy Director of Planning & Community Development, apprised that this budget was responsible for funding the Local Share for grants submitted in 2007 and 2008 which totaled \$763,000.

Mr. Belden summarized that the total budget request for all Planning & Community Development divisions reflected an 11% decrease from the previous year's appropriation and he questioned whether the Committee desired to approve the budget request as presented.

Motion was made by Mr. Merlino, seconded by Mr. Kenny and carried unanimously to approve the 2010 budget request as presented and pass it on to the Budget Officer for further review.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Len Fosbrook, President of the Economic Development Corporation (EDC), to discuss the amount requested for the 2010 EDC contract. Mr. Fosbrook announced that several members of the EDC Board of Directors were present, each wishing to address the Committee with respect to the positive attributes and effects of the EDC on the surrounding Community.

John Davidson, Chairman of the EDC Board of Directors, was the first to speak and he noted that the EDC consisted of far more than just the paid EDC staff but was also supported by the business people who served on the EDC Board of Directors and put forth a considerable effort to advance economic development in Warren County.

He then proceeded to introduce the other EDC Board members present, including Jeff Byrne, of ORDA (Olympic Regional Development Authority); David Moynehan, of Riverside Gas & Oil; Jack Bieniek, of Cool Insuring and Dave Capron, of Navilyst Medical. Mr. Davidson stated that as a whole, the members of the EDC Board of Directors represented approximately 3,000 area employees; therefore, he said, economic development was of the utmost importance to the Board of Directors which was comprised of volunteer members.

Mr. Bieniek apprised that he had been a member of the EDC Board of Directors for the past three years and during the prior year had been named as Treasurer for the Board. He stated that he spent approximately 60 hours per year working on behalf of the EDC which he considered to be a donation of his time and he said that he believed the other volunteer Board members felt the same, leading to a fair amount of intellectual capital begun invested in the organization. Mr. Bieniek advised that during the prior year, the Board of Directors had began a strategic planning scenario which included the development of funding ideas for the EDC through the year 2014. During this process he said a goal had been established which would allow for consistency in financial resources and budgets that could be relied on, the primary goal being to gain \$500,000 per year beginning in 2009 with that figure growing accordingly with the Consumer Price Index, thereby allowing the EDC to grow and expand. Mr. Bieniek noted that one of the primary focuses of the EDC was job creation and retention, as well as capital investment. He added that although he was cognizant of the fact that the Committee was seeking to reduce budgets during these trying economic times, it was important to remember that it would be very difficult for the EDC to maintain programs at the level to which they had become accustomed with reduced funding.

In an effort to reach the established goal, Mr. Bieniek proposed that a formula based approach be used to determine the amount of County funding provided to the EDC. He noted that the County raised approximately \$36 million annually in property tax revenues and he suggested that 1% of this total be allocated to the EDC, allowing \$360,000 per year for programming. Mr. Bieniek asked the Committee to think of the request in terms of business and with the understanding that every business spends money on self promotion to increase revenues. He brought up the analogy of Six Flags Great Escape, which had recently filed for Chapter 11 Bankruptcy due to decreasing attendance and he noted that they invested considerably less in advertisement than the prior owner of the park, Charles Wood. Mr. Bieniek stated that Six Flags was reporting attendance figures of roughly 500,000 people per season while under the management and ownership of Mr. Wood, Great Escape had received close to 1 million visitors per season which directly correlated to the advertising efforts implemented. He asked the Committee to keep this analogy in mind and to consider implementing the 1% appropriation suggested in an effort to reinvest in the capital development supported by the EDC.

Mr. Capron stated that he was also a member of the Glens Falls Civic Center Foundation and he advised that the EDC had funded a study on behalf of the City of Glens Falls relative to the best uses for the Civic Center. He noted that the study had been very helpful in determining the future of the facility, as well as in bringing the AHL (American Hockey League) back to the Civic Center venue. Mr. Capron cautioned the Committee that if EDC funding was reduced, they may not be able to provide these valuable services in the future.

Mr. Byrne read a pro-forma which outlined the expansion of Gore Mountain ski center through the assistance of the EDC. He apprised that a large scale project had been undertaken to re-develop the ski bowl at Gore Mountain which had been partially funded by the Small Cities Grant gained with EDC assistance. Mr. Byrne said that the EDC had also been instrumental in attaining a \$1.3 million grant for the construction of a new lodge at the facility; he added that through these efforts, Gore Mountain would become the sixth largest ski area in the northeast, which was a huge asset not only to the Town of Johnsburg and Village of North Creek, but to the entire County. Mr. Byrne concluded that the ORDA, for which he served as Senior Vice President, was very supportive of EDC operations and appreciated any financial support the County was able to provide.

Mr. Champagne stated that although he was certainly supportive of the EDC and the benefits they provided, it was a very tough budget year for the County and they had to reduce funding wherever they were able in order to alleviate the situation.

Mr. Belden presented a copy of Resolution No. 420 of 2009 which stated that the County would only provide funding in the amount of \$270,000 to the EDC for 2010. He said that because this resolution had been previously adopted by the Board of Supervisors, he felt this was the total amount that could be attributed to the EDC contract.

Mr. Fosbrook apprised that although it was not stated in the resolution, a total of \$315,000 had actually been pledged to fund two separate contracts, \$270,000 for EDC and \$45,000 for the Empire Zone. He said that if this was the amount the Committee wished to maintain, he would suggest the establishment of one contract totaling \$315,000 to fund both the EDC and the Empire Zone, rather than approving two separate contracts as had been done in the past. *Note: Subsequent to the meeting it was determined that Resolution No. 420 of 2009 would be amended to increase funding for the EDC to \$315,000, as outlined by Mr. Fosbrook.*

Following, further discussion on the matter, motion was made by Mr. Kenny, seconded by Mr. Taylor and carried unanimously to approve a contract with the EDC for a total of \$315,000 to support both the EDC and the Empire Zone as outlined above and refer same to the Budget Officer for further review.

As there was no further business to come before the Budget Committee, on motion made by Mr. Kenny and seconded by Mr. Taylor, Mr. Belden adjourned the meeting at 2:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Amanda Allen, Sr. Legislative Office Specialist