

**WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

**COMMITTEE: OCCUPANCY TAX COORDINATION**

**DATE: APRIL 1, 2009**

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**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

SUPERVISORS KENNY  
TESSIER  
MERLINO  
CHAMPAGNE  
SIMMES  
GOODSPEED

**COMMITTEE MEMBER ABSENT:**

SUPERVISOR BENTLEY

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

REPRESENTING THE COUNTY TREASURER'S OFFICE:

FRANCIS O'KEEFE, TREASURER

KRISTEN SHAW, JUNIOR ACCOUNTANT

REPRESENTING THE TOURISM DEPARTMENT:

KATE JOHNSON, DIRECTOR

LEISA GRANT, PRINCIPAL ACCOUNT CLERK

HAL PAYNE, COMMISSIONER OF ADMINISTRATIVE &

FISCAL SERVICES

JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD

SUPERVISORS GERAGHTY

TAYLOR

BELDEN

PITKIN

Thom Randall, *The Adirondack Journal*

SARAH MCLENITHAN, LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

*PLEASE SEE THE ATTACHED SIGN-IN SHEET FOR ADDITIONAL  
ATTENDEES*

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Mr. Kenny called the meeting of the Occupancy Tax Coordination Committee to order at 11:06 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Goodspeed, seconded by Mr. Tessier and carried unanimously to approve the minutes from the February 26, 2009 Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Copies of the meeting agenda were distributed to the Committee members, a copy of which is on file with the minutes.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Francis O'Keefe, County Treasurer, who reviewed the Report of Information on Revenues from the County Treasurer's Office with the Committee. He advised that the total occupancy tax collection for 2008 was \$3,302,214 which had decreased by 5% from the prior year. Mr. O'Keefe estimated that an additional \$45,000 of occupancy tax funds would be received from the few businesses that had not remitted their 2008 occupancy tax collections.

Mr. Kenny noted that considering the inclement state of the economy the total amount collected was not unreasonable. He apprised that the Smith Travel Report stated that occupancy tax collection in neighboring counties had decreased on average between 10 and 12 percent every week which, he noted, was similar to Warren County. He advised that the decrease would be reflected in establishing the Tourism Budget for 2010, as well as effecting the distribution to the municipalities and

Special Event funding.

Mrs. Simmes questioned when the Treasurer expected to receive the past due payments and Mr. O'Keefe said it may be a month or more before the funds were received. He advised that the businesses had been notified by letter and he would be placing collection calls to them subsequent to the meeting.

Mr. Kenny apprised that the Request for Proposals (RFP) pertaining to the Special Event Coordinator position and the First Wilderness Heritage Event Coordinator position were scheduled to be issued on April 4, 2009. Mr. Champagne questioned what the salary would be for the Special Events Coordinator and Mr. Kenny stated that the salaries were negotiable.

Kate Johnson, Director of Tourism, questioned how the Committee would like to review the proposals. Mr. Kenny suggested forming a Subcommittee or scheduling a special Committee meeting. Mr. Tessier suggested scheduling a special Committee meeting as there were only seven Committee members and he did not think a Subcommittee was necessary.

It was the consensus of the Committee to schedule a special meeting to review the proposals after April 14, 2009, when the RFP's were due.

Mr. Kenny advised that prior to adjourning to a workshop session, a public comment period would be held and he asked that each speaker keep their presentation brief.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Bob Jackson, who was present representing the Lake George Blues Blast. Mr. Jackson questioned whether some funds that had been awarded were being returned to the County due to the cancellation of the event and Ms. Johnson responded that some funds had been returned due to cancellation. Mr. Jackson advised that he had requested \$8,000 in funding and was awarded \$2,000 for the event this year; however, he stated additional funding was necessary to cover the expenditures for the event. He apprised that he had invested more of his own money than he had received for funding the event; therefore, he said an additional \$3,000 in funds was being requested.

Mr. Jackson apprised that the Lake George Blues Blast attracted approximately 3,000 visitors per day to the area and he noted, when the Gaslight Village Property was available to use he would be able to charge admission and attract an estimated 35,000 people per day. Mr. Kenny queried when the event was scheduled and Mr. Jackson responded on October 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Belden stated that the Gaslight Village probably should be available for use by those dates and Mr. Jackson replied that he had scheduled the event for Shepards Park because he was unsure whether the property would be available.

Mr. Tessier questioned what Mr. Jackson would use the Gaslight Village property for and Mr. Jackson responded that since Gaslight Village was a gated property he could charge an admission, as well as receive more sponsors and vendors. He noted that he would be able to attract a higher level

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of entertainment, as well. In response to a question by Mr. Tessier, Mr. Jackson stated that although he had toured the property he had not been able to view the Cavalcade of Cars building. Mr. Tessier suggested that Mr. Jackson make an appointment to tour the Cavalcade of Cars building and determine if he would be interested in using the building for his event in the future.

Mr. Kenny informed Mr. Jackson that the Committee would consider his request for an additional \$3,000; however, he stated, the Committee had to consider another group requesting additional funding, as well as reviewing several new applications.

Mr. Kenny queried whether there was anyone else that wanted to address the Committee before entering into the workshop session and Mr. Geraghty requested an additional \$5,000 on behalf of the Warrensburg Chamber of Commerce for the World's Largest Garage Sale Event. He stated that an estimated 400 sites were sold to vendors and he added, the event attracted approximately 50,000 visitors to the area.

Mr. Kenny advised that there was \$40,400 of occupancy tax funds remaining to fund special events. Mr. Belden requested on behalf of the Department of Public Works (DPW) for funds to pay for the overtime that was necessary for DPW employees during the Adirondack Balloon Festival. He explained that the overtime costs had been removed from the 2009 Budget and if the funds were not sought elsewhere the County would be unable to provide the necessary labor for the event.

Mr. Kenny apprised that the Adirondack Balloon Festival had requested \$10,000 in funds that they would use to make charitable contributions to non-profit organizations in exchange for their assistance in parking cars at the event. He explained that by receiving donations from the Adirondack Balloon Festival the non-profits groups would conduct the traffic operations that had been handled by the DPW in prior years.

Mr. Belden mentioned that the Adirondack Balloon Festival Committee had not taken into consideration the Sunday launch when they made their request. Mr. Kenny advised that this was not an appropriate topic for the Occupancy Tax Committee and should be discussed by the Public Works Committee. Hal Payne, Commissioner of Administrative and Fiscal Services, apprised that he had made a call to Mark Donahue, who completed the Adirondack Balloon Festival funding application, to schedule a joint meeting with the Balloon Festival Committee, the Public Works Committee and the Occupancy Tax Coordination Committee to discuss the Sunday launch.

Mr. Goodspeed suggested delaying a decision on whether to authorize \$10,000 for the Adirondack Balloon Festival until after the joint meeting. Mr. Kenny stated that he felt that the issue was between the DPW and the Balloon Festival Committee. He said that if the Adirondack Balloon Festival was awarded the funds today and they did not utilize them they would return the funds to the County. Mr. Goodspeed interjected that the explanation that was offered at the prior days Public Works Committee meeting was whether there was going to be a Sunday evening balloon launch. Mr. Kenny advised that they had not presented that in their request for funds. Mr. Goodspeed noted that there was a lack of support by the Public Works Committee for the Sunday afternoon balloon launch,

and pointed out that if the funding request was for the Sunday launch, then it was necessary to determine whether the launch would take place before the funds were awarded.

Mr. Kenny advised that the Adirondack Balloon Festival application for funds stated that the funds were for the Adirondack Balloon Festival which was taking place from September 24<sup>th</sup> through the 27<sup>th</sup> with an estimated annual budget of between \$90,000 and \$100,000. Mr. Kenny asked whether the Sunday afternoon balloon launch was scheduled for someplace other than the Airport and Joan Sady, Clerk of the Board, advised that the Adirondack Balloon Festival Committee had requested to use the Airport for the Sunday launch; however, she stated, the Public Works Committee did not support the Sunday launch at the Airport as there were no funds available for employee overtime that would be required.

Mr. Goodspeed stated that the Public Works Committee was advised that if the County would not authorize the Sunday launch then the Adirondack Balloon Festival did not want the \$10,000 they had requested. Mr. Champagne advised that the Public Works Committee had taken into consideration the revenues versus the expenditures of the Sunday launch and that was how they determined that they did not want to have the Sunday launch at the Airport.

Discussion ensued.

Pursuant to further discussion on the matter it was the consensus of the Occupancy Tax Coordination Committee that the \$10,000 intended for the Adirondack Balloon Festival would be reserved until the event schedule was finalized.

As there was no further public comment, Mr. Kenny announced that the Committee would adjourn to a workshop session at 10:29 a.m.

The Committee reconvened at 11:52 a.m., and Mr. Kenny advised that the Committee had authorized funding for the following events:

<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Funding Granted</b>
The Foundation for the Advancement of Developmentally Disabled Persons, Inc.	Truck Convoy- Show n' Shine Expo to benefit Prospect Child & Family Center	\$2,500
Last of the Mohicans Outdoor Drama, Inc.	Last of the Mohicans Outdoor Drama, Inc.	\$2,500
Mark Anthony Entertainment	Television Series: "Adirondack Haunts"	\$0

Glens Falls Family YMCA	2009 YMCA Regional Gymnastics Championships	\$5,000
City of Glens Falls	Glens Falls Western Weekend Festival	\$5,000
Adirondack Promotions, LLC.	Lake George's Got Talent	\$2,000
Lake George Blues Blast	Lake George Blues Blast	\$2,000
Upper Hudson Festivals Inc.	Music by the River Concert Series	\$2,000
Warrensburg Chamber of Commerce	Warrensburg Largest Garage Sale	\$2,500

As there was no further business to come before the Occupancy Tax Coordination Committee, on motion made by Mr. Tessier and seconded by Mr. Goodspeed, Mr. Kenny adjourned the meeting at 11:53 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah McLenithan, Legislative Office Specialist