

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: OCCUPANCY TAX COORDINATION

DATE: August 31, 2009

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS KENNY
TESSIER
MERLINO
BENTLEY
CHAMPAGNE
GOODSPEED

OTHERS PRESENT:

FRANK O'KEEFE, TREASURER
KATE JOHNSON, DIRECTOR OF TOURISM
LEISA GRANT, PRINCIPAL ACCOUNT CLERK
TANYA BRAND, GROUP TOUR PROMOTER
MICHAEL CONSUELO, SPECIAL EVENTS COORDINATOR
FREDERICK MONROE, CHAIRMAN
HAL PAYNE, COMMISSIONER OF ADMINISTRATIVE & FISCAL SERVICES

COMMITTEE MEMBER ABSENT:

SUPERVISOR SIMMES

JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD
KEVIN GERAGHTY, BUDGET OFFICER
SUPERVISOR BELDEN
SUPERVISOR STRAINER
SUPERVISOR TAYLOR
LUIA CRAIGE-SHERMAN, WARREN COUNTY COUNCIL OF CHAMBERS
DON LEHMAN, *THE POST STAR*
JOANNE COLLINS, LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

Mr. Kenny called the meeting of the Occupancy Tax Coordination Committee to order at 11:00 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Champagne, seconded by Mr. Merlino and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the previous Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Michael Consuelo, Special Events Coordinator, who distributed copies of his report. In reference to solicitation efforts, he stated that August had been quiet as many sales contacts were on vacation thereby prompting a mailing which included follow-up materials. He said he was preparing for September and had planned to attend a show with Tanya Brand, Group Tour Promoter.

Mr. Consuelo informed that the United Church of God requested a proposal for the Lake George Forum to be used as a meeting venue. He said that he had met with Luisa Craige-Sherman, Warren County Council of Chambers, and Ralph Macchio, owner of the Lake George Forum, to discuss plans to prepare the facility for meetings and conventions. Looking to 2010, Mr. Consuelo stated that he had pursued opportunities to promote the Forum and the former Gaslight Village property for the Universal Cheerleading Association event. Another lead, he added, was an opportunity to host a ski group which would include overnight stays in area

hotels.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Frank O'Keefe, Treasurer, who distributed copies of his report. He reported that \$991,814 in revenue was collected through August 28, 2009 compared to \$1,081,450 in 2008, which showed 2009 to be down approximately \$90,000 or 9%. He noted the quarter would end on September 20, 2009.

As a result of routine inquiries from the media, Mr. Kenny requested that the Treasurer apprise him, on a quarterly basis, of the date that the quarterly figures would be available. Mr. O'Keefe stated that the date of release for the next quarterly update would be September 26, 2009 and stated that he would email Mr. Kenny with same.

Responding to an inquiry from Mr. Champagne, Mr. O'Keefe stated that sales tax collections were down by approximately 6%. Mr. Monroe pointed out that September 20th was the deadline for businesses to report sales tax; therefore, he said, the total third quarter figures were yet to be reported.

In agreement, Mr. O'Keefe stated that an effort had been made to obtain the updated figures from the New York State Sales Tax Division; however, he stated, there were many delays. He forecast that sales tax figures would rise as more current data became available.

Mr. Kenny commented that the Occupancy Tax figures from the Treasurer's Office were in close agreement with the reportings found in the Smith Travel Reports.

Hal Payne, Commissioner of Administrative & Fiscal Services stated that the last three months were slightly below the same period last year. Mr. Kenny noted that the comparison was the same across the eastern seaboard.

Joan Sady, Clerk of the Board, presented a request to rescind resolution No. 308 of 2009, Authorizing Provisions For Agreement With The Adirondack Balloon Festival. She stated that the request had no impact on occupancy tax funding but was not necessary as the Balloon Festival was paying the cost of the items listed.

Motion was made by Mr. Tessier, seconded by Mr. Champagne and carried unanimously to rescind Resolution No. 308 of 2009 and the necessary resolution was authorized for the September 18, 2009 Board meeting. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

Mr. Kenny presented an application for contract funding for the 2010 Glens Falls Hometown Holiday Celebration which was originally planned as a week long event, and would be a two-day event. Under the original appropriation, he expounded, \$10,000 had been requested for the week long event which was awarded \$2,000 in funding. Mr. Kenny queried if the Committee wished to consider the funding amount in light of the fact that the duration of the event had been reduced from a week to two days.

A discussion ensued.

Consensus of the Committee was to support the previous award of \$2,000 in Occupancy Tax Funding for the 2010 Annual Glens Falls Hometown Holiday Celebration.

Mr. Kenny noted that the Lake George Blues Blast which was to be held on October 3 -4, 2009 had been cancelled. He noted the \$4,000 allocated for same would be added back into the total Occupancy Tax Fund, which brought the total amount available for event funding to approximately \$12,000.

Mr. Tessier stated that subsequent to conversations with local business owners, business in Lake George had improved in August. Mr. Kenny added that bookings at the Sagamore Resort were boosted by the Today Show's local filming. He forecast that the economic recovery would make a very gradual upward climb.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Luisa Craige-Sherman, Warren County Council of Chambers, who announced that Lake George Restaurant Week would take place from September 13 - 19, 2009. She said there would be nineteen participating restaurants this year which was a record number. She further noted that although she was unable to recruit any restaurants in Glens Falls or Queensbury, Bolton and Warrensburg were participating. She said a flier was available for distribution to the towns.

As there was no further business to come before the Occupancy Tax Coordination Committee, on motion made by Mr. Champagne and seconded by Mr. Tessier, Mr. Kenny adjourned the meeting at 11:22 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joanne Collins, Legislative Office Specialist