

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: OCCUPANCY TAX COORDINATION

DATE: AUGUST 30, 2010

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS KENNY
BENTLEY
MCCOY
CONOVER

OTHERS PRESENT:

FRANK O'KEEFE, TREASURER
REPRESENTING THE TOURISM DEPARTMENT:
KATE JOHNSON, DIRECTOR
LEISA GRANT, PRINCIPAL ACCOUNT CLERK
JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

SUPERVISORS MERLINO
CHAMPAGNE
GOODSPEED

SUPERVISORS TAYLOR
STRAINER
THOMAS
LOEB

LYNN STANCLIFT, SISTER CITIES COMMITTEE OF GLENS FALLS
LUISA CRAIGE-SHERMAN, COUNCIL OF CHAMBERS/LAST OF THE
MOHICANS OUTDOOR DRAMA PRODUCTION
FRED AUSTIN, FORT WILLIAM HENRY
JOHN ROOT, VILLAGE OF LAKE GEORGE
DARLENE GUNTHER, VILLAGE OF LAKE GEORGE
BENNETT DRISCOLL, CITY OF GLENS FALLS & SISTER CITIES COMMITTEE
DON LEHMAN, *THE POST STAR*
THOM RANDALL, *ADIRONDACK JOURNAL*
JOANNE COLLINS, LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

Mr. Kenny called the meeting of the Occupancy Tax Coordination Committee to order at 11:33 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Bentley, seconded by Mr. Conover 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 Frank O'Keefe, County Treasurer, who presented the Warren County Occupancy Tax Revenues and Expenditures Report through July 31, 2010. He reported \$764,152 in total revenues collected through July 2010, and noted that receipts through mid-August reflect a 14% increase from the same period in 2009.

Mr. Kenny noted the purpose of the meeting was to discuss disbursement requests which included funding for the Lake George Visitor Center. In the absence of the full Committee, Mr. Kenny proceeded to explain the point system which he had created and which had been amended since its inception, a copy of which is included with the agenda. He cautioned that applicants could build their requests in a manner by which to gain full advantage of the point system and such an application strategy was not fully preventable. Messrs. Conover and McCoy concurred that it had been a good summer for the Towns of Bolton and Lake George. Mr. Kenny noted that Occupancy Tax Funding awards were based on the premise that Americade was the premier event with an award of \$50,000.

Discussion ensued with regard to the application process and Mr. Kenny stated that applications were reviewed on a first come, first served basis. The reason that specific application due dates had not been established was to allow for consideration of all applications for all events submitted within various time frames, such as fall

events for which funding may not be requested until June.

Responding to a question from Mr. Girard, Mr. Kenny stated that accountability of the award expenditure was the joint responsibility of Kate Johnson, Director of Tourism; Leisa Grant, Principal Account Clerk; and the Committee Chairperson. Ms. Grant stated that she tracked the awards for which an appropriate reimbursement was made following the event. Mr. Kenny pointed out that applications reflected estimated bed nights; therefore, he said, it was necessary for the Committee to do a full analysis and discuss the various possible outcomes.

Mr. Bentley pointed out that 4 points designated for both May and October was low as compared to 6 points for both June and September and the Committee members concurred. Mr. Kenny stated the Committee encouraged new events and also recognized the value of returning events which might warrant a discount with the exception of the premier events, such as Americade, and the annual Boys Basketball Tournament. Mr. McCoy asked what effect the reduction in tournament length to one weekend might have and Mr. Kenny stated that it would be evaluated by the Committee in December following receipt of the application.

Motion was made by Mr. McCoy, seconded by Mr. Conover and carried unanimously to approve the request to amend the Occupancy Tax Scoring System Guidelines to reflect 6 points for the months of May and October and the necessary resolution was authorized for the September 17, 2010 Board meeting. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

Mr. Kenny informed that Ms. Grant had created a report which summarized the 2010 Occupancy Tax Funding Awards, reflected event comparisons and the actual value to the County. Ms. Grant stated that she would distribute copies of the report to Committee members, and review the report at next month's meeting.

On behalf of Michael Consuelo, Special Events Coordinator, Luisa Craige-Sherman, Council of Chambers, offered to field questions regarding the report emailed by Mr. Consuelo to the Committee members.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Ben Driscoll, Glens Falls Fifth Ward Councilman, who introduced Lynn Stanclift, representing the Saga City Exchange Program, who distributed information packets to the Committee members. Ms. Stanclift extended her gratitude to Warren County for the support and enthusiasm shown to the visiting program participants which had included a superb overview of the County functions and a friendship tree planted on the Municipal Center grounds. She announced that the Saga City Balloon Team would present a large shaped balloon at this year's festival. Ms. Stanclift apprised that the packets included a brief overview of the programs' 22 year history; a report of the Exchange Program Expenses; 2009 and 2010 Financial Reports; information on two picnics; and pictures. She invited all Supervisors and other interested parties to join the Hot Air Balloon Team from Saga City, Japan at a picnic to be held on September 21st. She noted that the program participants from Saga City truly enjoyed and took full advantage of the offerings, sites and natural beauty of the Adirondack region.

Mr. Kenny explained that Occupancy Funds were derived from the Tourism Department budget from promotions and activities, as well as from special event funding. Ms. Stanclift urged all to attend the Balloon Festival event which was a bring-a-dish barbeque for which details were included in the packets.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Ms. Craige-Sherman, representing the Council of Chambers and the Last of the Mohicans Outdoor Drama. She reported all six showings were performed before a sold-out audience and final figures had not yet been calculated. She thanked the Committee for the support which contributed

to its success. Attendees, she said, came from many states and the online reservation site was highly utilized. Ms. Craige-Sherman asked to be placed on the September Committee meeting agenda to report the theater productions' results. As a new venue, she said, it was a great success and visitors had been seeking new activities for all ages within familiar vacation spots. Mr. Kenny added that the show appealed to a large variety of vacationers on many levels not limited to theater and history. Ms. Craige-Sherman also added that the Fort William Henry Museum and Museum Store observed increased sales, to the credit of the theatrical production held on site.

As there was no further business to come before the Committee, on motion made by Mr. McCoy and seconded by Mr. Bentley, Mr. Kenny adjourned the meeting at 12:02 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Joanne Collins, Legislative Office Specialist