

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: ECONOMIC GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

DATE: MARCH 24, 2011

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS TAYLOR
CONOVER
MONROE
CHAMPAGNE

COMMITTEE MEMBER ABSENT:

SUPERVISOR GOODSPEED

OTHERS PRESENT:

REPRESENTING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION:

MIKE BORGOS, CHAIRMAN OF THE EDC BOARD
JOHN WHEATLEY, VICE PRESIDENT
JENNIFER SWITZER, DIRECTOR OF FINANCE
JACK BIENIEK, EDC BOARD MEMBER
CHARLES BARTON, EDC BOARD MEMBER

DANIEL STEC, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
PAUL DUSEK, COUNTY ATTORNEY/ADMINISTRATOR
JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD

SUPERVISORS GIRARD

LOEB
MCDEVITT
STRAINER
THOMAS
VANNESS

BUD YORK, WARREN COUNTY SHERIFF

DON LEHMAN, *THE POST STAR*

CHARLENE DiRESTA, SR. LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

Mr. Taylor called the meeting of the Economic Growth & Development Committee to order at 10:12 a.m.

Commencing with the Municipal Shared Services portion of the Committee meeting, Mr. Taylor noted there was a pending item to discuss the proposal received from the City of Glens Falls suggesting that Warren County assume 911 dispatch services. He advised that representatives for the City of Glens Falls had requested an evening meeting and he asked if that would be acceptable to the Committee members. It was the consensus of the Committee to authorize Mr. Taylor to contact Jack Diamond, Mayor of the City of Glens Falls, in order to schedule an evening Economic Growth & Development Committee meeting.

Mr. Taylor apprised that he and Sheriff York had met with Mayor Diamond last November to discuss the possibility of shared 911 dispatch services. At that time, he continued, Sheriff York had estimated the cost of assuming the 911 dispatch duties for the City of Glens Falls to be approximately \$280,000 annually. Sheriff York interjected that estimate included the cost of shift differential and the assumption that the four current City of Glens Falls 911 Dispatchers would become employees of the Warren County 911 Center.

Mr. Loeb stated that he had recently toured the 911 Center and one of the issues that had been brought to his attention was the volume of non-emergency calls that were handled. He said he was in favor of shared dispatching services; however, he added, he wanted to develop a way to ensure non-emergency calls were not handled by the 911 Dispatchers. Mr. Taylor apprised that non-emergency calls, such as the example given by Mr. Loeb of requests for overnight parking, would be handled by employees of the City of Glens Falls.

Mr. Monroe suggested the criteria for embarking on a shared dispatching program should be that the County would be reimbursed for any additional costs incurred. Mr. Taylor advised there was concern among the Common Council that the City of Glens Falls would incur a cost for police protection while other communities received the service at no cost. Mr. Champagne countered that the Town of Queensbury had transferred the services provided by the Queensbury Police Department to the Warren County Sheriff's Office and had paid a predetermined amount over a period of time. Mr. Monroe informed that when the Sheriff's Office assumed the responsibility of police protection in the Town of Lake George there had been a similar agreement.

Mr. Taylor stated he had spoken with Chairman Stec at the beginning of the year pertaining to elevating economic development to another level. He said he had suggested a separate Economic Development Committee and Chairman Stec had complied with his request by forming the Economic Growth & Development Committee. Mr. Taylor opined the Committee was aptly named as it expressed that one of the purposes of the Committee was to develop existing businesses.

This concluded the Municipal Shared Services portion of the Committee meeting and the Economic Development portion of the meeting commenced at 10:21 a.m.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Mike Borgos, Chairman of the Economic Development Corporation (EDC) Board, who distributed copies of the agenda to the Committee members; *a copy of the agenda is on file with the minutes*. Mr. Borgos introduced EDC staff and Board members, as follows:

- ▶ John Wheatley, Vice President;
- ▶ Jennifer Switzer, Director of Finance;
- ▶ Jack Bieniek, EDC Board Member; and
- ▶ Charles Barton, EDC Board Member.

Mr. Borgos reminded the Committee that Len Fosbrook, former President of the EDC, had retired at the end of 2010. He informed a nationwide search had been conducted to find a replacement for Mr. Fosbrook and the candidates had been narrowed down to two finalists. Mr. Borgos stated there had been two rounds of interviews and the final interviews would be held on April 6, 2011. He said the new EDC President would be announced at the May 6, 2011 EDC Annual Luncheon.

Mr. Borgos stated the EDC Executive Committee had made it a priority to re-think the direction of the EDC and to that end had established several new sub-committees. He said one of the goals was to raise the awareness of the EDC in the community. He advised that one of the sub-committees would organize a forum on energy issues to assist the manufacturing and commercial business sector. Another sub-committee was formed, he continued, to discuss positive forward thinking pertaining to planning board approvals and ways in which the length of time necessary to complete the zoning process could be reduced. Mr. Borgos explained that continuing education requirements existed for these boards and the EDC would look into bringing in speakers to assist in filling those requirements. The hope, he said, was to find ways to offer a fast tracked approval process. He added an expedited planning and zoning board approval process would distinguish Warren County from neighboring counties.

Mr. Borgos pointed out that several of the Supervisors had been attending the Economic Forums organized by the ARCC (Adirondack Regional Chambers of Commerce). He said an MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) had circulated pertaining to the Economic Forum and the EDC was prepared to sign the MOU. He explained the MOU was a collaborative memorandum stating the EDC would work together with all of the regional economic development groups.

Mr. Monroe asked if the EDC had been in contact with the leaders of the new Adirondack Partnership that recently applied for \$180,000 in grant funds. He added the Adirondack Partnership had the support of many State officials, several counties and towns and he noted Warren County would also be supporting their efforts. Brief discussion ensued.

Continuing, Mr. Borgos announced the EDC Annual Luncheon would be held on Friday, May 6, 2011 with the keynote speaker being Congressman Chris Gibson. He advised the Annual Luncheon was one of the best networking luncheons of the year. Jennifer Switzer, Director of Finance for the EDC, noted there was additional information pertaining to the EDC Annual Luncheon in the agenda packet, as well as a registration form. She invited all of the members of the Board of Supervisors to attend the luncheon as guests of the EDC.

Mr. Champagne said some emphasis had been placed on the issue of gifts to elected officials and he asked if an invitation to the luncheon would be considered as a gift. Paul Dusek, County Attorney/Administrator, explained that the Supervisors attendance at the EDC Annual Luncheon was as political representatives of the County government. He continued by saying the Supervisors were performing a service in that capacity by attending. Secondly, he added, the Ethics Law provided for a \$75 limitation on gifts and the cost of the luncheon was \$45 for EDC members and \$65 for non-members. He further added the EDC was a not-for-profit group and there was a long history of Warren County's involvement with the organization. He expressed his opinion that the invitation was not a gift as it was important for the Supervisors to attend. Mr. Dusek asked Mr. Borgos if he paid the registration fee to attend the luncheon as Chairman of the EDC Board. Mr. Borgos replied that the EDC Board members paid the registration fee to attend and they usually sponsored a table, as well. Based on the fact that the EDC Board members paid the registration fee to attend the luncheon, Mr. Dusek reversed his decision and advised the cost of attendance for the Supervisors would be invoiced.

Moving on, Mr. Borgos explained the EDC sent out a weekly newsletter by email entitled *The Insider*. He said he hoped all of the Supervisors were currently receiving *The Insider*, as their email addresses had been added to the database in January 2011 when the first issue of the newsletter was distributed. He apprised the newsletter was an outreach effort to release pertinent information and its receipt was important for the Supervisors to stay informed between Committee meetings. He advised that every issue of *The Insider* invited feedback from the recipients.

Pertaining to a new Professionals Group, Mr. Borgos informed there had been discussions with Peter Aust, of ARCC, about capturing talent in Warren County. He advised the EDC could benefit from members of the business community who had certain skills or contacts. He said the system would include executives who were retired or had the ability to donate their time to act as mentors for start up businesses.

John Wheatley, Vice President of the EDC, reviewed the EDC 2011 Internet Marketing Planning Summary and the Business Attraction Marketing Plan Outline which were included in the agenda packet; *a copy of both are on file with the minutes*. He outlined the industry sectors that had been identified by the EDC as potential strategic targets for business attraction and investment in Warren County, as follows:

- ▶ semiconductors and suppliers;
- ▶ microelectromechanical systems (MEMS);and
- ▶ medical devices.

Mr. Wheatley said the Business Attraction Marketing Plan Outline highlighted the marketing strategies which would be implemented and he noted that networking would be a large part of the strategy. Since it had been almost five years since the EDC website was updated, he continued, website enhancement was vital in highlighting the assets of the County. He reported the EDC was using social media, such as LinkedIn and they continued to evaluate the use of Facebook and Twitter. He advised a list of trade shows, events and meetings that EDC staff members would attend was included on the Business Attraction Marketing Plan Outline.

Mr. Champagne inquired as to a possible strategy to entice school aged youths to pursue educational goals that would make them more marketable in the job market. He advised the EDC should solicit the involvement of members of the educational system. Mr. Borgos agreed and stated that one of the criteria businesses used when choosing a location was the availability of skilled workers. He announced that Dr. Ronald Heacock, President of SUNY (State University of New York) Adirondack, was a member of the EDC Board. He pointed out that Dr. Heacock was open to doing whatever was possible to use SUNY Adirondack as a vehicle to increase the number of skilled workers available.

Jack Bieniek, EDC Board Member, apprised that the EDC had invited approximately ten high school students to the Annual Luncheon for the last four years in order to show them how to convert their passion for math or science into a job career. Mr. Borgos stated there was much discussion in this country about the educational system and whether or not a four year degree was preferable. He noted the students generated large loans and the end result was there were no jobs available for them. He advised that if more technical education was available, a two year degree would give the students the skills necessary to obtain a job at a facility, such as GlobalFoundries. Brief discussion ensued.

Pertaining to the Queensbury Business Park, Jennifer Switzer, Director of Finance for the EDC, explained that the County had acquired the property a few years ago. At the time of acquisition, she continued, the Armory was in need of a new location and it was decided that it would be beneficial to have some type of business park in the Queensbury area. Ms. Switzer apprised that originally the Queensbury Economic Development Corporation (QEDC) was the driving force behind the search for the appropriate parcel and the completion of studies. She continued by saying that the EDC had taken over the role of administration and had entered into an agreement with the County for options on the property. She said the EDC currently had options on the remaining pieces of property, had exercised options on one piece of property and had acquired one piece of property that the QEDC had purchased to assist in the development of the infrastructure for the Armory. Ms. Switzer explained it had been decided to merge the QEDC into the LDC (Local Development Corporation) arm of the Hudson River Local Development Corporation (HRLDC). She said QEDC merged into HRLDC as of November 2010. She noted the Queensbury Business Park was a part of the EDC's strategy to attract new businesses to the County.

Mr. Borgos reported the EDC had commissioned a study by Chazen Engineering to evaluate the best options in developing the Airport region of the County. He noted the IDA (Industrial Development Agency) Park was up the road from the Queensbury Business Park. Mr. Borgos advised that Mr. Wheatley was currently completing an outreach to the individual Towns in order to let the constituents know they could contact the EDC. Mr. Borgos said Mr. Wheatley had contacted the Towns to set up a time to be available on a regular basis. He added if anyone wanted to meet with the EDC on an off schedule day, they would be happy to make the necessary arrangements.

Mr. Borgos apprised he and Mr. Wheatley had met with a representative from the College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering in January and had received a tour of the campus. He noted the

EDC was the only economic development entity in the region who had reached out to the College and as a result the College had given the EDC the authority to advertise the mutually beneficial relationship.

Pertaining to the website enhancements, Mr. Borgos said the EDC had been invited to meet with representative from the Tourism Department at the beginning of the year to explore ways to link the two websites and share web presence.

Mr. Borgos advised the EDC had a role in guiding infrastructure in Warren County. He said they had met with Brian LaFlure, Director of the Office of Emergency Services/Fire Coordinator, to discuss the infrastructure of the Fire Training Center. Mr. Borgos noted there was an opportunity to establish a connector road between Queensbury Avenue and the entrance to the new Walmart on Quaker Road. He opined the Fire Training Center was poorly named and needed to be marketed more effectively. He said the training was comprised of much more than just fire training and included EMT (emergency medical technician), search and rescue, and HAZMAT (hazardous materials) training. He added that SUNY Adirondack would offer certifications in the aforementioned training.

Mr. Borgos stated that the Broadband Initiative was one of the EDC's top priorities and they were working towards scheduling a forum with the developers from Keene Valley who had been successful in developing broadband in their region. He said that over a four year period, Keene Valley had developed their own ISP (internet service provider) which was utilized by over 90% of their population.

Mr. Bieniek expressed his excitement pertaining to the EDC's search for a new President and said it was an opportunity to advance the organization. He reported there had been 35 resumes received from various states.

In reference to the IDA Park, Mr. Taylor mentioned the parcels were full on the Warren County side of the park but there was remaining space available on the Washington County side. Brief discussion ensued.

Mr. Taylor stated the Economic Growth & Development Committee would not hold meetings on a monthly basis as meetings would be scheduled as necessary.

There being no further business to come before the Economic Growth & Development Committee, on motion made by Mr. Champagne and seconded by Mr. Conover, Mr. Taylor adjourned the meeting at 11:08 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Charlene DiResta, Sr. Legislative Office Specialist