

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: OCCUPANCY TAX COORDINATION

DATE: MARCH 30, 2015

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS KENNY
MERLINO
CONOVER
DICKINSON
FRASIER
SIMPSON
STROUGH

OTHERS PRESENT:

LEISA GRANT, PRINCIPAL ACCOUNT CLERK, TOURISM
MICHAEL R. SWAN, COUNTY TREASURER
REPRESENTING THE ADIRONDACK CIVIC CENTER COALITION:
BEN PRATT, COUNCIL FOR THE COALITION
DOUG KENYON, BOARD MEMBER
CLAY ASHWORTH, BOARD MEMBER
JOEL (JACK) WALTER, MANAGER OF THE GLENS FALLS CIVIC CENTER
JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD
SUPERVISORS BEATY
BROCK
MCDEVITT
SEEBER
TAYLOR
VANSELOW
WOOD
DAVID STRAINER, TOWN OF QUEENSBURY RESIDENT
DON LEHMAN, *THE POST STAR*
THOM RANDALL, *ADIRONDACK JOURNAL*
CHARLENE DiRESTA, SR. LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

Mr. Kenny called the meeting of the Occupancy Tax Coordination Committee to order at 10:01 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Conover, 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.

Copies of the agenda were distributed to the Committee members; *a copy of the agenda is on file with the minutes.*

Mr. Kenny said the first item on the agenda was a report from the Adirondack Civic Center Coalition (ACCC) on the first quarter events. Doug Kenyon, Board Member of the ACCC, introduced his fellow Board Member, Clay Ashworth, as well as Jack Walter, Manager of the Glens Falls Civic Center (GFCC), and Ben Pratt, Council for the ACCC.

Mr. Pratt explained that over the last month there had been several changes at the GFCC; he noted that Global Spectrum would no longer be managing the GFCC and the ACCC would assume that responsibility effective April 1st. He commented the ACCC had reached an agreement with Global Spectrum to buy out the existing contract to allow the ACCC to manage the facility on their own. He advised their main contact from Global Spectrum had already transferred to St. Louis to assume his new duties on behalf of the company. He informed the ACCC had been working with Brian Petrovich, President of the Adirondack Flames, to assist in an understanding of the operation of the GFCC; however, he continued, for a variety of different reasons the ACCC had been unable to continue working with Mr. Petrovich. In the last 10 days, Mr. Pratt explained, Mr. Walter had agreed to assume the position of Manager of the GFCC. As a result of all of these changes, he apprised, the ACCC did not have the required information to provide to the Occupancy Tax Coordination Committee and they were requesting the ability to present the detailed information for the first

quarter of 2015 at the next Committee meeting. He distributed a list of the events held at the GFCC during the first quarter of 2015 with the information which was available to the Committee members; *a copy of the list is on file with the minutes*. He explained the list covered the events held in January, February and March, as well as the number of attendees, the marketing efforts for the events and the total cost to the ACCC for each event. He pointed out a couple of days of the Section 2 Wrestling Championships had been lost due to the issues with the GFCC facade. He said they did not currently have the detailed information required and he reiterated his request to present this information at the next Committee meeting; Mr. Kenny said that would be acceptable. A brief discussion ensued.

Ms. Seeber apprised that the possibility of using college interns to collect the necessary data from attendees of events had been discussed at the previous Committee meeting. She said she had discussed the concept with Dr. Kristine Duffy, President of SUNY (State University of New York) Adirondack, and she had called Nicholas Caimano, Board Member of the ACCC, regarding same. She asked if the Board had considered the use of college interns and Mr. Pratt responded that the Board had discussed the possibility and were in favor of it; he said they would contact SUNY Adirondack to work out the details. Mr. Strough informed the Adirondack Regional Chambers of Commerce were coordinating their internships through SUNY Adirondack and their involvement might be helpful, as well. Mr. Brock pointed out that when he had been a member of the Glens Falls Common Council they had been concerned with keeping certain financial information confidential in order to ensure their ability to compete with other venues for events. He continued by saying that if competing venues were aware of the costs and revenues of certain events it would allow them to scale their bids to attract these events in the future. Mr. Pratt said this issue had not occurred to him but the ACCC might need to find a way to provide the Board of Supervisors with confidential trade secret information in a confidential manner so that the information would not be subject to FOIL (Freedom of Information Law) requests.

Mr. Walter distributed a list of anticipated events for the GFCC to the Committee members; *a copy of the list is on file with the minutes*. Mr. Conover commented that in reviewing the list it seemed the weekends were the premium time for events and most week days seemed to be available. He said he would be interested to see how the ACCC formulated a self sufficient business plan going forward based on this information. He mentioned that it might be necessary to lessen the overall expenses for week days when the GFCC was not hosting events and to maximize the revenue streams to the degree possible. Mr. Walter responded the ACCC had "a plan in place to put a plan in place". He said he had expended a considerable amount of time at the GFCC dealing with all the different disciplines that he would have to face. One of the problems with civic centers, he continued, was that they were a hybrid type organization with different profit centers than any other type of business. He stated that identifying the profit centers and developing a budget for them was key. He noted the GFCC had just reduced their overhead with the elimination of the Global Spectrum contract and the reduction of office staff. He pointed out that one of the problems faced at the GFCC was that it was necessary to have a cold environment for the production and maintenance of the ice and they were looking into more cost efficient ways to upgrade the building to reduce these costs. He commented the power and energy bill for the GFCC was about \$250,000 per year and they were looking into ways to reduce the energy bills, such as converting to LED lighting. He advised they were also looking into possibilities such as geothermal or solar energy. He commented they were looking into the possibility of having ice during the summer and had contacted local youth and men's hockey leagues to determine if there was an interest. Mr. Walter said they had been in contact with the organizer of Americade and with Michael Consuelo, Executive Director of the Lake George Regional Chamber of Commerce and Convention & Visitors Bureau, about the possibility of initiating an indoor bike show at the same time as the Americade event. He informed he had talked

to Dennis LaFountain, owner of Martha's Dandee Cream, about the possibility of offering their products for concession at the GFCC. He said he had contacted a representative from the Queensbury Hotel about events which were too large for that venue. He added the Queensbury Hotel would refer these events to the GFCC and in return would increase their ability to fill their hotel rooms.

Leisa Grant, Principal Account Clerk for the Tourism Department, requested Committee consent for Mr. Walter to sign the voucher for the first quarter payment and Committee consent was granted.

Mr. Conover stated the report from the members of the ACCC had been well presented. He said this was the kind of information that the Committee and the community should have going forward. Mr. Pratt commented the ACCC was trying to work with lots of local organizations to hold their functions and shows at the GFCC, such as LARAC (Lower Adirondack Regional Arts Council). He said the idea was to network the arts and culture events into the GFCC so it would be used for events other than sports and concerts. Mr. Kenyon commented the ACCC was hoping to utilize the services of Christina Curley, Special Events Coordinator for the Lake George Regional Chamber of Commerce and Convention & Visitors Bureau, to attract more events to the venue.

Michael R. Swan, County Treasurer, distributed copies of his Occupancy Tax Report to the Committee members; *a copy of same is on file with the minutes*. He commented the 2014 occupancy tax collections through March 21, 2015 reflected an increase of 2.32% compared to the same time period for 2013 collections. He noted the figure would change slightly because some of the last quarter and part of the first quarter collections had not yet been received. Mr. Swan apologized that the Report had not been amended yet due to some unforeseen problems in his Office. He said he would have the amended report available for the next Committee meeting which would better reflect the new accounting system for occupancy tax. Mr. Conover pointed out that he, Mr. Merlino and Mr. Kenny had met with Mr. Swan to discuss the changes to the occupancy tax report. He added the report would be on an annualized basis and would provide the kind of information desired from a management point of view.

As there was no further business to come before the Occupancy Tax Coordination Committee, on motion made by Mrs. Frasier and seconded by Mr. Dickinson, Mr. Kenny adjourned the meeting at 10:28 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Charlene DiResta, Sr. Legislative Office Specialist