

STEBEN COUNTY AGRICULTURE, INDUSTRY AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

Wednesday, July 1, 2020

9:30 a.m.

2nd Floor Conference Rooms, Annex Building
Bath, New York

****MINUTES****

COMMITTEE:	Robin K. Lattimer, Chair Aaron I. Mullen	K. Michael Hanna, Vice Chair Paul E. Van Caesele	Hilda T. Lando
STAFF:	Jack K. Wheeler Jennifer Prossick	Christopher Brewer Tammy Hurd-Harvey	Brenda Mori Amy Dlugos
LEGISLATORS:	Scott J. Van Etten Jeffrey P. Horton Frederick G. Potter	Carol A. Ferratella Steven P. Maio Gary D. Roush	Kelly H. Fitzpatrick John V. Malter Gary D. Swackhamer
OTHERS:	James Johnson, Executive Director, Steuben County Industrial Development Agency Tess McKinley, Executive Director, Cornell Cooperative Extension Mary Perham		

I. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Lattimer called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. and asked Mr. Wheeler to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: APPROVING THE MINUTES OF THE JUNE 3, 2020, MEETING MADE BY MR. HANNA. SECONDED BY MRS. LANDO. ALL BEING IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIES 5-0.

III. DEPARTMENTAL REQUESTS

A. Planning

1. **Approving the Addition of Agricultural Lands to Certified Agricultural Districts** – Mrs. Dlugos stated this is our annual resolution to approval the addition of lands to certified agricultural districts. She stated this year she is requesting the additional of lands to Agriculture Districts No. 1, No. 3 and No. 6.

MOTION: APPROVING THE ADDITION OF AGRICULTURAL LANDS TO CERTIFIED AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS MADE BY MR. MULLEN. SECONDED BY MR. VAN CAESELE. ALL BEING IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIES 5-0. Resolution Required.

IV. OUTSIDE AGENCIES

A. Cornell Cooperative Extension

1. **Activity Update** – Ms. McKinley stated they have been busy supporting farms. We are also providing free sanitizer and masks to any agribusiness which includes farms, wineries, breweries, distilleries, etc. We have a stockpile, so please let your communities know.

Mrs. Lando asked are the farmers markets open? Ms. McKinley replied some of the farmers markets are open.

Ms. McKinley stated the County Fair is special to our 4-Her's and this year will be done in a different format. It is looking like we will have an online, virtual event as well as a drive-thru event. Mrs. Lando asked will it still count as being held? Ms. McKinley replied yes, but it will be very restricted. Mrs. Lando asked will you be doing the livestock auction online? Ms. McKinley replied we are hoping to, but may not be able to. We will still

do exhibits at the 4-H building and just have the kids drop them off. The 4-H cake auction is one of their biggest fundraisers and we will see what we can do with that. This is tough on the kids, but we will make it work.

B. Steuben County Industrial Development Agency

1. **Activities Update/Business Reopening Update** – Mr. Johnson stated I just want to thank Mr. Wheeler because throughout this entire process he has done a wonderful job for the community. He has been there, hand in hand with us at the IDA and has been very forthcoming with information. We have been communicating with businesses in partnership and I just wanted to thank him for everything he has done and continues to do. Because of his work, the businesses understand the rules and expectations of reopening. Mr. Wheeler stated thank you; Mr. Johnson has done great and this is a team effort. Everyone is trying to communicate information. We, Mr. Johnson, me and Mr. Brewer, are on the phone all day, every day trying to figure out what things mean. Everyone is doing a great job.

Mr. Johnson stated I thought it was important to give the Legislature an opportunity to hear where things are and the efforts that are underway. Under Phase IV, most businesses are open. There are some unhappy gym owners and others that have not yet gotten the go ahead. The Governor is relying on a team of scientists to make these decisions. For the most part, it seems that the businesses are trying to figure this out. What we have done and continue to do, is communicate the changes as they come along. We are reaching out to the businesses in each phase; we are giving them two to three weeks before we reach out to touch base with them.

Mr. Johnson stated we have been communicating with our manufacturers on a regular basis and have been checking to see how things are going. Things seem to be going very well; some because they have gone through the inventory and there is demand in the market. If it is sustainable is yet to be seen. A week ago, when the Governor came out with his travel restrictions, that caused some angst among the manufacturers. There is a lot of concern about how that will be regulated and implemented, as well as how quickly the list will change. There is an essential worker exemption, but there is really fear in the manufacturing market that this will have an impact on how business will operate; both large and small. There is also fear in the tourism market.

Mr. Johnson stated our expectation is that after the holiday weekend, we will reach out more formally to the Phase III businesses just to see how things are going. We will contact our Phase IV businesses a couple of weeks from now to see how things are going. Many businesses are doing extremely well. Upstate Niagara is doing well and the economy is starting to turn.

Mr. Johnson stated our biggest concern with manufacturing is with the workforce. The CARES Act additional \$600 is expiring at the end of July. There is a shortage of workers with essential skills and talent. In addition, employers are stealing employees from other employers by offering more money. The other struggles are things related to understanding technology, remote working and doing more with less. We may find that we may not need that additional staff. I think as we get through this, we will see a definite difference around workforce development.

Mr. Johnson stated now we have to start thinking about what recovery will look like long-term. Some of the topics have centered on the workforce long-term and broadband. Do we have the ability as a region to attract talent and attract them from other areas where they may be working remotely. If an individual continues to work remotely long-term and can access broadband, we could suddenly become a location for talent that can work remotely. The investment in dark fiber is critical in being able to do that. We hope to be able to advance that as we go forward.

Mr. Johnson stated we are concerned about the State budget and our ability to attract new businesses as well as facilitate business growth. We have been told there is no grant money. If a business is looking for tax credits or loans, then we may be able to do something. We will need to be creative. The State has very little money to put toward that. It will be interesting to see how the State handles that going forward. He stated that he does not see any CFA's this year. Additionally, the upstate initiative money that was not spent will probably go away. The

Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) will likely not see any future rounds in the near term. This year will be a very tight year. We will need to be creative and look at other ways to accomplish what we do.

a. *Renewable Energy* - Mr. Johnson stated renewable energy has not missed a beat. We have closed on the Dansville and Bath projects. Final approval is in the works for two of three new projects that are on the docket and those are scheduled for fall construction.

b. *Dana Lyons School* – We have word from the State that this funding cycle for historical preservation tax credit will be expedited from October to September. They are working diligently on the design and application packet.

c. *Phillips* – Mr. Johnson stated this is looking good.

d. *Corelle Brand* – Corelle will start their manufacturing process back up next week and anticipate being back up to full capacity by the end of next week.

Mr. Johnson stated we will continue to monitor things. As we move forward we will see additional growth out of this. Unemployment in Steuben County is going down and is trending in the right direction. We still have a high unemployment rate, but it is lower than the State average. It will be a long time before we get back down to the 5 percent level. We hope to be back in the single digits by the end of the month.

Mr. Malter asked how is the revolving loan fund progressing? Mr. Johnson replied this is progressing nicely. He stated that he and Mr. Brewer sit on that committee. We have lent just over \$200,000 and I thought we would have lent more than we have. We had a long discussion last week with REDEC and we want to continue to maintain this program. This may become more critical in the fall. If the pandemic worsens, access to capital will continue to be critical and we will have to have a discussion on how to advance going forward. The money that has been lent has gone to a diverse group; an auto garage, a dentist, etc. Mr. Malter asked when does the repayment of the loan start? Mr. Johnson replied it is all timed differently. There is a six month moratorium on repayment, so for a loan taken out in March, the repayment would start September/October. For the ones we just did, they would start repayment in December/January.

Mr. Mullen asked can you give an update on Tyoga Container project? Mr. Johnson stated we have not heard anything from the State that says the funding is going away for those projects that have already received some level of allocation. The size and scope of this project could increase. We made that request and I don't think it will happen at the level they expect it to. We have not heard back from the State. There is opposition to this project and the Village will hold a public hearing in July. There is concern around traffic, which is not unexpected or unanticipated. A traffic study was done and shows that it can accommodate it. We are working with the Village on the recommended measures to mitigate and we hope to get that in place as the project comes on line once the final approval is given in August. This is a very limited site. It is an industrial site and is right at the intersection of two major interstates. Mr. Mullen asked how many jobs will this produce? Mr. Johnson replied there will be 70 jobs. With regard to the truck traffic, they will be doing two 8 hour shifts six days a week. That will equate to three trucks coming in and three trucks going out per hour. There will not be heavy, heavy truck users. For a 600,000 square foot facility that is a really small amount of traffic. This is a \$32 million investment.

Ms. Lattimer asked what is the status on Gunlocke? Mr. Johnson replied I have not heard from them in about two weeks, however, I have been in consistent communication with them through this. One good thing that has come out of this for our organization is that we now have a group of contacts that we never had before. We had always communicated just with the plant manager, and now our list includes other individuals. HNI (Gunlocke) remains committed to this location. They will continue to operate and have ramped up operations again. I feel comfortable as we move through and come out of this, they will remain in Wayland. Their employment will ebb and flow based on the market.

Mr. Van Caesele asked in Phase IV they are not opening halls, movie theaters, gyms, etc. Has there been any work on a decision to move forward? Mr. Wheeler replied no. Every day we keep pressing and asking for them to set a date. We brought up specifically gyms/fitness centers, movie theaters and bowling alleys. We have been told that the State, specifically in regard to gyms, is working with the YMCA on developing guidelines. I have been talking to the Hornell YMCA and they do not have to do any of the filtration system upgrades that malls will have to do. We will let you know when we hear something.

Mr. Johnson commented with regard to malls/retail stores, there has been discussion in our economic development circles that a lot of the national chains will go away. Everyone is more accustomed to online shopping and curbside delivery. How that impacts our downtown and main street business remains to be seen. I think it will ultimately benefit our downtown and main street business as we move away from large, big box retail. A year from now when there are discussions about the recovery and retail, I don't know if people will come back. With movie theatres he doesn't know if there will be a big push on direct pay per view. There will be more fall-out over the next several months.

Mrs. Lando stated she and Mr. Hanna attended the SCCVB (Conference & Visitors' Bureau) board meeting and they discussed that CMOG (Corning Museum of Glass) will be opening today. The welcome center will be closed, but they will be running the shuttle. They will start with 150 people and will go slowly. They did a soft opening yesterday. Mr. Wheeler stated I went to the soft opening and have been working closely with Bill Gilbert who is their Operations Manager. They have it set up great and have a good process. They have limited the amphitheater to 50 right now. Mrs. Lando stated CMOG has not received matching funds from the State and they are cutting expenses as much as possible. They were hoping to purchase a mobile visitor center, but will put that off until next year.

Mrs. Lando stated that the SCCVB also reported that wineries are no longer requiring reservations and hotels are seeing an increase in rooms for local travel. The Best Western in Hammondsport is opening back up. Mr. Johnson commented individuals are traveling close to home. I am a member of the Board of Directors of Finger Lakes Wine Country and it is important to know that they spend a fairly significant amount on advertising and marketing which is more for the northeastern region of the United States. We have made the decision to bring all of the marketing budget within a two-hour radius. The feeling is that individuals are staying closer to home this year and we want to promote that we are a safe region and welcome visitors to come.

Mrs. Lando stated the offices for SCCVB are very small and they have concerns with the space. With the remote work they have been doing, that has solved some of those problems, but they will need to gear up for long-term remote work.

Mr. Hanna commented sales on the lake are pretty active. Inventory is low and they are moving quickly. The rental properties are very active this year. Usually you have to reserve a year ahead of time and we are getting calls from people looking last minute. The cost on those rentals is going up.

Mrs. Ferratella stated we have an agreement with Airbnb for room tax collections; what about the other rental groups? Mr. Wheeler replied he had reached out to NYSAC prior to COVID about this and he will follow up with them. Ms. Lattimer stated VRBO/Home Away is doing more rentals on Keuka. Mr. Van Etten stated Yates County has a pretty strict agreement with the Village of Penn Yan that if rentals are within the village the County gets a portion of the proceeds. When first instituted, the law was contentious. Now that is just part of the rental fee.

MOTION: TO ADJOURN MADE BY MR. MULLEN. SECONDED BY MRS. LANDO. ALL BEING IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIES 5-0.

Respectfully Submitted by

Amanda L. Chapman
Deputy Clerk
Steuben County Legislature

****NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED FOR****

Wednesday, August 5, 2020

9:30 a.m.

Please send agenda items to the Clerk of the Legislature's Office

NO LATER THAN NOON

Wednesday, July 29, 2020