

STEBEN COUNTY AGRICULTURE, INDUSTRY AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

Wednesday, March 6, 2019

9:50 a.m.

*Legislative Committee Room
Steuben County Office Building
Bath, New York*

****MINUTES****

COMMITTEE: Robin K. Lattimer, Chair
Thomas J. Ryan
Hilda T. Lando
Aaron I. Mullen

STAFF: Jack K. Wheeler
Matt Sousa
Craig Patrick

LEGISLATORS: Carol A. Ferratella
Frederick G. Potter
Kelly H. Fitzpatrick
John V. Malter

ABSENT: K. Michael Hanna, Vice Chair

OTHERS: James Johnson, Executive Director, Steuben County Industrial Development Agency
Fred Arcuri, Workforce Development Director
Larkin Podsiedlik, Executive Director, Cornell Cooperative Extension
Alison Hunt
Mary Perham

I. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Lattimer called the meeting to order at 9:50 a.m. and asked Mr. Ryan to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: APPROVING THE MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 6, 2019, MEETING MADE BY MR. MULLEN. SECONDED BY MR. RYAN. ALL BEING IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIES 4-0.

III. DEPARTMENTAL REQUESTS

A. Planning

1. **Request for Public Hearing** – Mr. Sousa informed the committee that when applying for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) grant funds, they are required to hold a public hearing. He requested authorization to hold a public hearing for this purpose.

MOTION: AUTHORIZING THE DIRECTOR OF THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT TO HOLD A PUBLIC HEARING TO APPLY FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) FUNDS MADE BY MR. MULLEN. SECONDED BY MRS. LANDO. ALL BEING IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIES 4-0.
Resolution Required.

2. **Authorizing Submission of Application to New York State Homes & Community Renewal** – Mr. Sousa requested authorization to submit an application to New York State Homes & Community Renewal for a Community Development Block Grant for well and septic replacements.

MOTION: AUTHORIZING THE DIRECTOR OF THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT TO SUBMIT AN APPLICATION TO NEW YORK STATE HOMES & COMMUNITY RENEWAL FOR A COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) FOR WELL AND SEPTIC REPLACEMENTS MADE BY MRS. LANDO. SECONDED BY MR. RYAN. ALL BEING IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIES 4-0. Resolution Required.

IV. OUTSIDE AGENCIES

A. Steuben County Industrial Development Agency

1. **Introduction** – Mr. Johnson introduced Fred Arcuri who is the new Workforce Development Director for the I-86 Innovation Corridor Workforce Development Initiative.

2. **Activities Update**

a. *Phillips Building* – Mr. Johnson informed the committee that the sale of the building is going through an auction process. Phillips did not put any indemnification of environmental issues in the original documents. Those documents have been updated with indemnification and they have extended the dates for submission of bids until March 18 – 20th. Interest in this property has peaked substantially and they would like to close thirty days after the auction.

b. *Bath Industrial Park* – Mr. Johnson stated we are looking at two projects; both of which are not seeking incentives. He commented they are looking at the parcels along Route 54.

c. *Wayland Industrial Park* – Mr. Malter asked if there was anything happening with the industrial park in Wayland? Mr. Johnson replied no, however, there is also nothing happening statewide. With what happened with Amazon, that will set us back for a number of years. Additionally, the State is talking about prevailing wage legislation which would apply to any projects that receive economic development assistance or state funding. Mr. Wheeler commented if that legislation passes, you will see an increase of about 30 percent in the cost of projects. Mr. Johnson stated it is not a favorable climate in New York State right now. We keep promoting the Wayland Industrial park, but there has been no activity.

d. *Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) Projects* – Mr. Johnson announced the next round of funding is coming up. Some of the current projects that are using CFA funds are the manufacturing facility in Lindley and the Village of Hammondspport public sewer project.

e. *Renewable Energy* – Mr. Johnson informed the committee that the Baron Wind Projects and the Eight Point Wind Project are expecting to receive their approvals in April and May respectively. They will want to start construction immediately after they are approved. This will result in a total investment of \$400 million into Steuben County. The total amount of energy that will be produced is 150 – 180 megawatts.

Mr. Johnson stated they are seeing an uptick in solar energy and there is a proposed project that will take place in the next couple of months in Dansville. The solar economics are much different and the environmental impact is different. This project is expected to generate 300 megawatts and will take up several hundred acres.

Mr. Wheeler stated this has been discussed in Public Works and we have met with a solar developer. We will be coming to the Public Works Committee and the Legislature next month with a recommendation for solar development at the Landfill.

Mr. Johnson explained with PILOTS for wind projects you can expect a base payment per megawatt of \$5,300. The community impact payment is typically between \$2,500 - \$3,000. With a solar project; a small scale project you are looking at a base payment of \$4,200 per megawatt with no community payment. For a larger solar project, that payment drops down to \$2,500. Mr. Wheeler commented with

regard to the Landfill, it is still a good project. Mr. Johnson stated he thinks we need to relay to the community that the revenue from a solar project is much less.

Mr. Malter commented with the Landfill that is not a problem. With available property on the tax roll, what will that do to the towns? Mr. Johnson replied that is something we have to assess. With wind projects, they are still paying property taxes. With solar projects, there is a potential that they will be taking 300 – 400 acres off the tax rolls. If, however, they are leasing the land, then it will remain on the rolls, however, if it is under a PILOT, then it will come off. Most of the land being targeted for solar is already under some sort of agricultural exemption anyway and is not generating a lot of tax income. We do need to assess that.

Mr. Mullen asked will they be looking for flat bottom land and maybe the Planning Department should be involved? Mr. Johnson replied most of the target areas are also prime agricultural lands. Mr. Arcuri commented linear lands are easier to connect. They can do solar panels on a slope, but they would need to be on a tiered slope. Mr. Johnson stated for the property owners, if they ask them to lease, the guaranteed revenue is a benefit to the property owner.

Mr. Potter asked if the community loses tax revenue in the process and they are using prime agricultural land, will the PILOT not pay as much? Mr. Johnson replied we have not looked at that calculation yet. We cannot reduce the property tax below what they currently are without discussing it with the tax entities, including the County. He stated he wanted to make the committee aware that the solar projects and wind projects are going to look different with regard to the PILOT.

3. **I-86 Innovation Corridor Workforce Development Initiative** – Mr. Johnson stated Mr. Arcuri has an extensive background in economic development and we are very excited to have him in our community to focus on workforce development.

Mr. Arcuri thanked the committee and stated if not for the County, he would not be here; you are a key funder. He stated that he takes public funds very seriously and knows the limitations that governments face. He stated that he will be here as much as you need him to be. The last thirteen years he worked for an economic development agency in Rome, NY. He was involved in the redevelopment of Griffiss Air Force Base. His main focus was business attraction and new business development.

Mr. Arcuri stated there are three key components to successful workforce development; education, economic development agencies and workforce development. All of these sectors are knocking it out of the park. My job is to help meet unmet industry and community needs. We will really focus on doing the things that are not necessarily already there or not already funds for. Daycare is a huge workforce issue, as well as housing. Those are barriers to attracting new employees and retaining them.

Mr. Arcuri stated there are a few key projects that he would like to focus on. First, he would like to pay for an economic research service; specifically the University of Buffalo Research Institute, to create a regional dashboard. Additionally, if there are things that are key important issues that you want him to address, he will do that. Another workforce issue is rural transportation and how it is under-utilized.

Mrs. Lando commented we have a plan. If you find deficiencies are you coming back to us? Mr. Arcuri replied no great plan is ever static. He stated he thinks the plan that you have is a good plan. The primary purpose and top task is to get everyone to play nice. He will come back and let you know about the data research and discussions with communities. The regional dashboard that he would like to create will be available to everyone.

Mr. Ryan asked where will you be working out of? Mr. Arcuri replied he will have an office at Three Rivers.

Mr. Nichols stated he thinks what you are doing is really good. His concern is getting workers to pass drug tests when you have a government that wants to legalize marijuana. Government is working against you. Mr. Arcuri

replied the Southern Tier has the lowest workforce participation rate in the State. They are tied with the North Country. He stated he does not buy into anything fully being an epidemic. Substance abuse, particularly in rural communities, has a long history. You already have services, you just need to get them focused into transitioning into the workforce. He stated his general position is that all work has dignity. Mr. Johnson commented this goes back to our first priority and getting everyone to gather and align resources.

Mr. Van Etten stated he used to work at Corning, Inc. They always had issues bringing in professional talent to the Southern Tier, but they have put so much money into the area to attract good talent. He does not believe they did the same types of things to attract laborers, etc. Labor and trades are a big issue in our area and they are starting to see that. Mr. Arcuri stated we need to look at what we are good at in the region. You need to target investment with what you already have.

Mrs. Ferratella commented she is concerned about the exodus of people leaving the State. How do we deal with that? Mr. Arcuri replied everyone has had a workforce issue in their life. The nature of the world now is that most college students will leave to go to epicenters. It just hurts now because we cannot afford to lose them. Young people want to journey out. Mr. Malter asked do you have numbers showing geographic areas of where the exodus is happening? Mr. Arcuri replied yes, they are mostly going to New York City. You have to be realistic about your expectations and grow within your means.

Ms. Lattimer stated on behalf of the committee, welcome. She stated she would really like to see you come before the Full Legislature after you get some real experiences. Mr. Arcuri stated he would like to look toward June. Ms. Lattimer stated we will look to try to schedule that for June.

V. OTHER BUSINESS

A. *Cornell Cooperative Extension* – Ms. Lattimer stated she would like to recognize Ms. Podsiedlik for the great job with programming on the multi-county effort. Ms. Podsiedlik stated we are interviewing a vegetable specialist and the Steuben County potato specialist next week and have two candidates. The Southwest Dairy Team positions have been filled.

Ms. Podsiedlik stated that she will be leaving Cornell Cooperative Extension, returning to her home area, and will be working for Central New York United Way in Syracuse. It has been an absolute honor to be here and thank you. The Deputy Director, Robert Shirley will be taking over temporarily. A search committee will be started and we should have the Director position filled in the next four to six months. Mrs. Lando stated Ms. Podsiedlik will be leaving at the end of March. Mr. Shirley is willing and able to fill in and will do a great job.

Ms. Lattimer stated Ms. Podsiedlik has really made Cornell Cooperative Extension more of a public group; people know what you are doing and recognize that you have done an outstanding job. We are sorry to see you go.

MOTION: TO ADJOURN MADE BY MR. RYAN. SECONDED BY MR. MULLEN. ALL BEING IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIES 4-0.

Respectfully Submitted by Amanda L. Chapman, Deputy Clerk, Steuben County Legislature

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

**Wednesday, April 3, 2019
Legislative Committee Room
9:30 a.m.**

**Please send agenda items to the Clerk of the Legislature's Office
NO LATER THAN NOON
Wednesday, March 27, 2019**