

Finance & Rules Committee

May 28, 2019

Minutes

Members Present: Committee Chair Michael Montigelli, Legislators Robert Cantwell, William Johnson, Allen Drake, Daniel McBride, James Nabywaniec, Carolyn Fitzpatrick, and Board Chair Scott Gray

Others Present: Legislator Anthony Doldo, County Administrator Robert Hagemann, Deputy Administrator Sarah Baldwin, County Attorney David Paulsen, Conf. Asst. For Fiscal Affairs and Information Technology Director Greg Hudson, Human Resources Director Valerie Nugent, Watertown Daily Times Reporter Abraham Kenmore, Confidential Secretary Jill Jones

Chairman Montigelli called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and introduced Jordan Walker-Rodriguez, Jefferson County Historical Society Executive Director for a presentation.

Ms. Walker-Rodriguez advised that the Jefferson County Historical Society is located in the Paddock Mansion on Washington Street in Watertown. They are a museum, archive and repository to receive and record Jefferson County's history and document our local history. They have been a historical society since 1886 and became a museum in 1922; since that time they have gathered over 100,000 artifacts and it is an ongoing and growing collection. She said a large part of what they do is to present Jefferson County history, and they have standing displays as well as exhibits that they rotate every three to six months, and they partner with other organizations for special exhibits. Their property includes a historic barn, a log cabin from the 1600s that was moved to the property from Rosiere, and a school house that was moved to the property from Theresa. They have an Educator through BOCES and she uses the older buildings often as interactivity is a big part of their program. To sustain their income they also offer the property for weddings, receptions, haunted experiences, and people can rent the facility to hold events or use it for meetings. They also hold a number of events throughout the year, almost every other month, from a History and Geneology Fair to a Charles Dickens Event, a Teddy Bear Tea Party, a Brookside Cemetery Tour, etc. She felt it important that even though they do try to make additional income at these events, they also have cultural events that are free to the public; they try to have every other event free.

Ms. Walker-Rodriguez said their income sources include: memberships, donations, events, event rentals, grants, and admissions. They have received \$1.1 million in grants over the past year and a half and they are all for renovations that will hopefully allow them to come up with a more sustainable model so they don't have to beg for money every year. The grant funds will allow them to put on a new roof, install a new elevator, and Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) grant funds will allow them to install new exhibit technology in the museum. All these renovations will take until the end of 2020 to complete and then they will have a new museum with a new interior and a completely interactive experience. These funds also present an opportunity to leverage more partnerships and a lot more income, but they have to do it slowly and with a strategic plan so it is done the right way, she envisions this change taking place within

3-5 years. In response to questions from legislators she said she noticed that much of what they did was in and around Watertown, so a big goal of theirs is to start serving as a location for other museums throughout Jefferson County to turn to for information on resources and development. In terms of print brochures they have tried to leverage social media to save on printing costs, but they do print 20,000 brochures through a partnership with the St. Lawrence River Valley that are distributed down the I-81 corridor, but she agreed they should put more brochures out locally.

Chairman Montigelli introduced Pam Shelmidine, Jefferson County Fair Manager, and Ms. Shelmidine introduced Treasurer Larry Burnett, and Fair President Robert Simpson who were in attendance, and said Mr. Simpson will be giving the presentation. Mr. Simpson thanked the Board for the continued support they have received over the past 200+ years, as without the support from the County, there would be no Fair. He said the mission of a County Fair is to showcase agriculture, how they do that has changed some over the years, but it is still their basic function. Jefferson County has about double the number of animal exhibits of other local fairs and it has been that way for a number of years. He said fairs are governed by the Rules of the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets as to what they can and can not do; and almost every New York State regulatory agency inspects different aspects of the Fair and requires various permits in order for the Fair to operate. The Jefferson County Agricultural Society is a not-for-profit in the true sense of the word. Their goal is not to raise money for the advancement of the organization, but to take in enough money every year to put on a successful, enjoyable and entertaining Fair for not only the agricultural departments, but for all of their exhibitors and the 60,000+ attendees that visit each year, and end up in the black. One of their challenges is that they have to make enough money at the Fair to sustain them throughout the rest of the year.

Mr. Simpson said major costs for the Fair are entertainment, advertising and operating expenses consisting of: insurance (general liability and worker's compensation), prizes (ribbons and cash premiums partially reimbursed by the State) for the over 100 competitions in both the open class and the junior class (mainly 4-H), as well as all of the other divisions (animals, arts and crafts, flowers, vegetables, etc.), payroll, tent rentals, utilities, and trash. Revenues include: Commissions from carnival ride ticket sales, vendor space rental, sponsorships and advertising in their Fair publication, funding from Jefferson County and the Towns of Leray and Watertown, and seasonal rental from their Exhibition Hall. He said the Fair has a huge economic impact on the Watertown area in terms of money spent by the carnival company, attendees, and others in terms of hotels, meals, etc., and by the vendors, carnival company, and others for the goods and services they need at the Fair. He again thanked Jefferson County for their support, not only the monetary support, but also for support, assistance and services from County: Administration, Highway, Sheriff's Office, Fire & Emergency Management, Airport, Public Health, and Jefferson Community College. Mr. Simpson answered questions of legislators related to Fair operations.

Chairman Montigelli introduced Corey Fram, Thousand Islands International Tourism Council Executive Director for a presentation. Mr. Fram advised that he started in the Executive Director position in December, and for 10 years before that he was in charge of doing much of the marketing programs. He said his philosophy is that the role of the TIITC is to support the work being done by the tourism businesses in the region with expertise and experience, and be a coordinator.

He said they want to inspire people to make Jefferson County part of their life story, and do it cost effectively. Their budget for 2019 is a little under \$1.4 million and they are in the bottom half for what a typical regional tourism office has in New York State. According to Tourism Economics, who does a report for New York State annually concerning the 11 vacation regions, the tourism value in Jefferson County in 2017 (the latest available figures) was \$260 million. Through research to identify people who would visit here and their behaviors, TIITC attracts people by advertising to targeted markets through broadcast televisions spots, including through in app TV spots (Hulu, Roku, CBS app, etc.), and digital advertising (in many forms). A study came out at the end of 2018 that said in America 90% of people plan their trips according to their electronic device, so they have to make sure information is available there. For many years they have used a New York State matching funds program that uses seed money from Jefferson County to leverage New York State dollars and private investment to the benefit of everyone to cover some of the ads. They also do print advertising, but it is mostly niche advertising: fishing, boating, etc. They promote the region through travel and vacation vendor shows, they are the contact for Empire State Development for the I ♥ NY Program for various promotions from our region to be shown mostly in New York City, and they supplement the leisure promotions with group business for the non-seasonal gaps. They create publications such as the Regional Guide (all but 1% head to areas outside the County), they also do niche publications for fishing, hunting, agriculture events and a few others. They maintain a website with free listings for tourism businesses, and they maintain a few other websites (Watertown Airport, meeting planners, tours, etc.). They also create a lot of video content. They use publicity with established media, they host them and keep a library of photos should the need arise. Such as when NY Times called and was doing an insert in the Sunday travel section on island travel and Jefferson County photos ended up on the cover and two ½ pages on the inside, and also was used with a Car & Travel AAA magazine; this is free advertising that is out of our range to pay for. They also work with non-traditional media such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and email marketing.

Mr. Fram said in terms of economic drivers tourism provides employment as according to 2017 Tourism Economics 3,200 people from Jefferson County were employed in travel and tourism jobs, and when you include indirect employment related to tourism those numbers jump up to over 4,500. It provides taxes, as businesses paid over \$18.5 million in local taxes for 2017, and tourism and travel gives local residents a greater quality of life. He said their three funding sources are Jefferson County, the Thousand Islands Bridge Authority and the Federal Bridge Corporation. None of the support they give to the tourism businesses could be done without the support from Jefferson County. Mr. Fram answered questions of legislators related to programming, marketing and services provided.

Chairman Montigelli offered privilege of the floor, however no one present wished to address the Board. The Committee approved the minutes of the April Committee meeting, as written.

Chairman Montigelli introduced a resolution authorizing the vacating of judgment of foreclosure for owners of certain parcels of real property and discontinuance of foreclosure proceeding and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator

Nabywaniec seconded by Legislator Johnson and there being no discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented.

Chairman Montigelli introduced a resolution authorizing the sale of certain tax foreclosure property in the town of Theresa to Gerald Bartlett and Rosemary Bartlett and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator McBride and seconded by Legislator Cantwell. Legislator Drake advised that the Bartlett family subdivided a large piece of property many years ago that resulted in about 10 new homes. They currently own the property at the front of the road and the back of the road, and the Town of Theresa Planning Board is requiring that they own the whole road for right of way purposes if any more subdivision is to be done and that is why they want this property. There being no discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented.

Chairman Montigelli introduced a resolution concurring in settlement of tax certiorari proceedings and authorizing refund of taxes in connection therewith (WGS Clayton Housing Associates, LLC), and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator Nabywaniec seconded by Legislator Cantwell and there being no discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented.

Chairman Montigelli introduced a resolution approving Mortgage Tax report and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator McBride seconded by Legislator Johnson and there being no discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented.

Chairman Montigelli introduced a resolution setting time and place for public hearing on tentative 2019-2020 Jefferson Community College Budget and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator Drake and seconded by Legislator Johnson. Mr. Hagemann advised that this resolution needs to be modified as there is a conflict with the meeting schedule and other community events scheduled that evening. He said Board members can discuss what is best for everyone's schedule and modify the resolution at the Board Session next week. There being no discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented with the understanding that it will be changed at the June Board Session.

Chairman Montigelli introduced a resolution authorizing appointments to the Jefferson-Lewis Workforce Development Board and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator Fitzpatrick seconded by Legislator McBride and there being no discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented.

Chairman Montigelli introduced a resolution authorizing agreements for provision of mental hygiene services and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator Cantwell seconded by Legislator Johnson and there being no discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented.

Chairman Montigelli introduced a resolution accepting funding for NYS Health Building Healthy Communities Conference scholarships and amending the 2019 County Budget in

relation thereto and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator McBride seconded by Legislator Drake and there being no discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented.

Chairman Montigelli introduced a resolution accepting donation on behalf of the Department of Social Services and amending the 2019 County Budget and entertained a motion for consideration. A motion was duly made by Legislator Johnson seconded by Legislator Drake and there being no discussion, the Committee agreed to sponsor the resolution as presented.

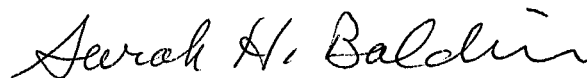
The Committee approved the following General Services Committee sponsored resolutions on a motion by Legislator Cantwell seconded by Legislators McBride, Fitzpatrick and Nabywaniec, and unanimously carried:

- ✓ Amending the 2019 County Budget in Relation to the Probation Department Vehicle
- ✓ Authorizing FY 2018 Operation Stonegarden Grant Agreement and Amending the 2019 County Budget in Relation Thereto

Chairman Montigelli entertained a motion to go into executive session to discuss labor negotiations. Such motion was made by Legislator Johnson seconded by Legislator Drake and unanimously carried, the Committee moved into entered executive session at 7:05 p.m. On a motion by Legislator Johnson seconded by Legislator Drake and unanimously carried, the Committee returned to open session at 7:25 p.m.

There being no further business of the Committee, on a motion by Legislator Nabywaniec seconded by Legislator McBride and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Sarah H. Baldwin
Deputy Clerk of the Board