

Economic Development Committee Minutes
June 10, 2020 – 3:00 p.m.

Present: Chairman Jack Lawler; Committee Members Ed Kinowski, Dan Pemrick, Jean Raymond, Tom Richardson, Jon Schopf, Kevin Tollisen; Supervisors Thomas Wood, Sandra Winney, Mo Wright, Eric Connolly, Bill Peck, Tara Gaston, Phil Barrett; and Chairman of the Board Preston Allen; Spencer Hellwig, Chad Cooke, County Administrator; Steve Dorsey, County Attorney; Jason Kemper, Planning; Jenniffer McCloskey, Employment and Training; Shelby Schneider, SCPP; Charles Wait, Adirondack Trust; Todd Shimkus, Saratoga Chamber of Commerce.

Chairman Lawler called the meeting to order and welcomed all in attendance.

On a motion made by Mr. Pemrick, seconded by Mr. Kinowski, the minutes of the May 13, 2020 meeting were approved unanimously.

Mr. Lawler said the 2020 budget does include \$150,000 in funding for Economic Development Grants to each of the 21 municipalities represented on the Board. A one-page application form was made available to all Supervisors. There have been a few grant applications received. He asked Shelby Schneider from the Saratoga County Prosperity Partnership (SCPP) to present these applications. The SCPP was tasked with the administration function of this grant.

Ms. Schneider provided a spreadsheet of the program. This sheet contained the community, the project name, the purpose of the grant, and the dates of the projects. The spreadsheet is attached to these minutes and will be filed as part of this record. Ms. Schneider read what each town had applied to do with the grant funds requested. The total amount requested is \$66,600. Mr. Kinowski asked about the timing, as he had not submitted an application as he thought it had been postponed. His town will be submitting a request. He asked if there would be a later date that applications will be accepted. Mr. Lawler said the schedule was put out by this Committee to provide some guidelines for when the applications would be accepted. The idea was to complete the grant process this year. Due to COVID, the timeline was moved to July for the submission of grant requests. If grants were received by September, there would still be plenty of time to act on them in 2020. He said for applications from the municipalities that had not submitted, to do so in the next 60 days. He asked Mrs. Wright to send a reminder email to the municipalities that had not submitted an application. Mr. Lawler said the original grant application had a max of \$7,000. The revised amount is \$7,400. Any municipality that has submitted will receive the max amount allowed by the grant. Mrs. Raymond pointed out that the math on the spreadsheet does not work. Mr. Peck said the 21 municipalities should receive \$7,100 each not the \$7,400. Mr. Lawler said the max grant amount is \$7,100. On a motion by Mr. Richardson, seconded by Mr. Pemrick the committee approved the grant applications received to date and authorized the \$7,100 to each.

Mr. Kemper said, in the fall there was a slight delay on the Zim Smith Trail. The trail was supposed to be complete by November 2019. The Sewer District had to replace/reline their trunk line, which caused a delay in the project. As soon as the snow melted in spring, work got underway. He was happy to report the project is almost complete. The total project cost is about \$5.6M and has received about \$5.4M in funding.

Mr. Kemper said, he is asking for an extension of the agreement with Greenman Pedersen Engineering who are the onsite construction oversight/inspection company. The amount is \$45,500 and will get the project through the next few weeks of inspection work. This will also allow for the close out of the grants. Mr. Kemper thanked Mr. Rourke, Sewer District Commissioner and the Public Works Department for their coordinated efforts on this project. Mrs. Raymond asked if once this work is completed, is the Zim Smith Trail done. Mr. Kemper said the trail would be complete from Ballston Spa to the City of Mechanicville. Mr. Peck thanked Mr. Kemper on his hard work on this project.

A motion was made by Mrs. Raymond, seconded by Mr. Richardson, to authorize an amendment to the agreement with GPI in the amount of \$45,500 for additional engineering services related to improvements to the Zim Smith Trail. Unanimous.

Mr. Kemper said there is an existing contract with Peter Luizzi and Brother in the fall of 2018. The original plan was to end the trail at a parking lot in the City of Mechanicville and connect to the Mechanicville Schools. As part of that arrangement, the school district was going to do part of the paving as part of a bigger project. The school district went out to bid and the bids came in too high and therefore abandoned the whole project at least temporarily. There is roughly 700 feet that is rubble and/or poor asphalt surface that connects the trail into the City of Mechanicville. He spoke with the County Attorney about doing a change order as it is outside the scope of the project. The cost of the project is about \$75,000. The Town of Halfmoon has indicated they would help with the paving, as did the City of Mechanicville. The Public Works Department will be striping. Mr. Kemper added the change order committee that was set up for this project has a supervisor named to it that is no longer on the Board.

Mr. Lawler appointed Supervisors Raymond, Richardson and Tollisen as the change order committee. The supervisors named did agree to serve on this committee.

A motion was made by Mr. Richardson, seconded by Mr. Tollisen, to authorize an amendment to the agreement with Peter Luizzi and Brothers Construction in the amount of \$55,000. Unanimous.

Ms. McCloskey said she is asking for the acceptance of the program year funds for WIO training funds. She said this year there is an almost 20% decrease in funding so there will need to be a budget amendment to decrease the revenue lines in the amount of \$200,000.

Mrs. Raymond asked what was not going to be purchased because of this loss of revenue. Ms. McCloskey said part of that amount would have gone to Washington County and the loss will affect training. Mrs. Raymond asked if this would affect personnel. Mrs. McCloskey said there would be no effect on personnel.

A motion was made by Mr. Tollisen, seconded by Mr. Pemrick, to authorize an application for and acceptance of Federal Funds for the Workforce Innovation And Opportunity Act

Program for the 2020-2021 program year and amending the budget in relation thereto. Unanimous.

Mrs. McCloskey said the contract for J. J. Young was discussed last month and is for payroll services. She was asked to look into other companies. Paylocity did offer a much cheaper quote; however, they would not agree to the County's voucher process. She spoke with the County Treasurer who said the County does not allow ACH payments. The contract for these services does expire June 30th and would like to contract with J. J. Young for the year and look into other options in the future.

A motion was made by Mr. Tollisen, seconded by Mrs. Raymond, to authorize a contract with J. J. Young, LLC to provide administrative services for the Workforce Development Board.

Mr. Lawler said the Saratoga County Reopening Advisory Group has a proposal from the Saratoga County Chamber of Commerce to fund a \$50,000 promotional campaign to support Saratoga County businesses during the reopening of the County's economy. Mr. Lawler asked Mr. Shimkus to present this proposal.

Mr. Shimkus was thankful for being appointed to the Advisory Group and has been working with the other economic organizations in the County. Discussions in the Advisory Group meetings have been how do we get the word out that a website was created with a portal that everyone in Saratoga County can go to in order to get all the latest information as well as a campaign to let the region know that businesses are open. The proposal (attached to these minutes) contains a social media aspect with a cost of \$5,000. They felt this was an important component so they went ahead and started. On June 1st they launched a social media campaign. In the first 10 days of that promotion, which contained a video that was created in house, there was 1400 views. As of today, there were over 39,000 views. Those views were driven by this campaign. The website is being seen, as there were over 21,000 views. The rest of the campaign includes an additional social media push with different content. There would also be a digital display and key word add campaign. Mr. Shimkus explained what the key target by geo meant to this program. There would be television ads to let the region know Saratoga County businesses are open and this is important for demographics. Television ads are something the Chamber cannot do in-house and they would need help with this. The Chair of the Board of the Chamber, Kevin Hedley, wants to be clear that this is not a Saratoga Springs campaign but a Saratoga County campaign.

Mr. Lawler recognized Charles Wait. Mr. Wait is a member of the Saratoga County Reopening Advisory Group. Mr. Wait thanked Mr. Lawler for the opportunity to address the committee. He said this proposal is so important as there is a need. Many businesses are hanging on by a thread. He said there would be no fan racing at the track. This will be the worst season in Saratoga County since WWII. He said he is worried about Skidmore and other colleges with the calling back of students or a portion of the students. We are already in a recession. There is a need for this funding to help small businesses to urge people to come to the County and spend money. This will help raise sales tax, which is vital to the County. The \$50,000 will be funding well spent and the

businesses will appreciate this. The Chamber has done this work for many years and is the right choice to do this campaign.

Mr. Lawler said the mission of the Advisory Reopening Group was to assist business communities in Saratoga County to reopen as quickly and as safely as possible. Both of those conditions are very important. The point of the advertising and promotion program is to stress both of those. To stress that our business community is open. Our small businesses in particular need support. As Mr. Wait stated, the absence of the big-ticket venues, NYRA and SPAC, being open that bring people to Saratoga County during the summer we need to make sure our business community does not struggle any more than it already has. The summer season is what makes these small businesses succeed. If you take it a step further it benefits every single town supervisor in terms of generating sales tax receipts. We don't have to look any further than the last sales tax report to see the impact that the pandemic has had on commercial activity in Saratoga County. Many towns use the sales tax receipt to fund portions of town governments. The sales tax receipts offset and lessen the tax burdens in every community. To support the businesses in opening is not only good for the businesses but for every taxpayer in Saratoga County.

Mr. Tollisen said there is no question that the small business community has suffered immensely. His biggest question and concern with the money is really, what is that target that we are trying to hit. Is this the right time line? He reflected on the weekend when he took his family to dinner. There were many people waiting to be seated. There is a desire to get out and be back to normal. He asked how this advertisement would help the businesses in his town. Mr. Tollisen said Saratoga County pays the Chamber a lot of money for tourism. If the track and SPAC isn't happening, do those funds get redirected.

Mr. Shimkus said in terms of why now, it is time with more businesses starting to open in Phase 3 and through the opening of Phase 4. The campaign will get the word out that Saratoga County businesses are open and it is safe to come here. Mr. Shimkus said the tourism funding is a completely different entity. The mission for that funding is to drive overnight stays. These stays will drive the occupancy tax revenues. The tourism is more about drawing tourists from outside the area of over 100-mile radius. Tourism is more about leisure time activities, meetings and weddings. The Chamber is hoping to be able to reopen to weddings in the fall. We would like to be able to campaign to have weddings come to Saratoga County. Tourism is a different market than the opening we would advertise for now.

Mr. Lawler addressed Mr. Tollisen saying when the campaign was put together the point of it was to coincide with each of the reopening phases. That is why it is a short-term campaign. The idea was to support each phase and the businesses in each phase that are allowed to open. Safety is a key component of this campaign. Mr. Lawler asked Mr. Shimkus if it was correct that other counties were considering reopening campaigns. Mr. Shimkus said correct and he has been in conversations with a couple counties.

Mrs. Raymond said people have been pent up on this pause and people want to get out. Saratoga County has an opportunity, a good opportunity to show people what is here. This will highlight the edges of the County. This is helpful and she will support this request.

Mr. Pemrick said in the past three months, he has seen generosity, helping others and people making sacrifices. This campaign will highlight the fringes and edges of the county is important for the communities. This will be a valuable contribution.

Mr. Richardson said remember the old adage you have to spend money to make money. Anyone that has run a small business will appreciate this.

Mr. Schopf said there have been countless conversations with how horrible the economy is, how horrible the sales tax revenues and projections are. He doesn't think this is the time to start handing out money. Now is the time to focus, dial down and extract ourselves from all the private/public partnerships that we have. It is time to focus on the infrastructure, roads and all the services that will have to be provided in 2021. There is no money in the budget for this. We need to focus on the core responsibilities. Lay path work at no cost would be what he suggests.

Mr. Barrett asked Mr. Shimkus what the time frame may be with regards to allowing weddings. Mr. Shimkus said there was no way for him to know that. Mr. Barrett said from what he's seen it may not even happen in Phase 4 and there may still be restrictions. He said Mr. Shimkus mentioned providing metrics to people so they feel safe to come out. He said this will be difficult and people will be hard to convince. He spoke about his summer camp and the amount of attendees. The Town offered refunds to these people if they did not feel safe. He said it will be hard to convince people that it is safe. Mr. Shimkus said Saratoga County is ranked #1 in health in the State. Saratoga County has great metrics. Mr. Barrett said COVID has changed the dynamics of this. He has been tracking statistics and been putting them out for months. The County has less than 40 active cases. He doesn't think that is changing anyone's mind either. What will you be promoting other than overnights if the big venues are not here as a draw.

Mr. Lawler said the Chamber would be putting together a separate/regional approach for the tourism. That will be coming to the committee later. This \$50,000 proposal is for the Capital Region. Some people, no matter what is advertised, won't want to return to their normal schedule of going shopping, dinner or whatever they were doing before. There will be some who will go, with or without a mask, out to shop or dine. There are people who are unsure what to do. This campaign will show people that Saratoga County businesses are serious about safety. This is the County's chance to step up and highlight the small business community Saratoga County. The \$50,000 is an investment in our business community.

Mr. Kinowski said there has been an uptake in the trail systems, horse caring facility use is up; and there has been more use of the lakes for recreation. Saratoga County is a healthy place to come.

Ms. Gaston asked how much of the advertising budget is actually production and how much on advertising. Mr. Shimkus said he is not sure how much would be spent on the production. He has not reached out to any firms because he didn't want to start conversations if the proposal didn't get approved. He thought \$5,000 for production. Ms. Gaston said she wasn't sure if she understood his answer regarding tourism costs. How much is budgeted for Chamber expenses for the tourism campaign. She asked if it was \$375,000. Mr. Lawler said he thought that was the figure. Ms. Gaston asked if any of that money could be spent on this program. Mr. Shimkus said the tourism funding compliments this program. The Chamber makes no money on the tourism

funding. The Chamber has a contract with the County that spells out what the Chamber can do with the tourism funding.

A motion was made by Mrs. Raymond, seconded by Mr. Richardson, to authorize an agreement with the Saratoga County Chamber of Commerce to fund a \$50,000 promotional campaign to support Saratoga County businesses during the reopening of the County's economy. The motion was approved.

Mr. Tollisen said he would vote in favor of it for Economic Development but needs more convincing that this is an appropriate use of funds. Mr. Schopf voted no.

Mr. Barrett asked what the status of the Trails funding was. Mr. Richardson said the program will be rolling out in the new few weeks.

A motion was made by Mrs. Raymond, seconded by Mr. Pemrick, the meeting was adjourned unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Pamela Wright
Clerk of the Board



Campaign: Reopening Saratoga County

Campaign Goals: Drive visits to Saratoga County’s reopening website AND share with region’s households why they should visit Saratoga County as we reopen safely this summer.

Target Audience: Adults 25-74 Business & Industry owners and managers AND regional households looking for great dining, shopping, outdoor recreation, and entertainment.

Content: Chamber’s Board of Directors is directing staff to determine a way to showcase a myriad of stores, shops, attractions and things to do in communities all across the County. This goal will be accomplished either via photos, video, text, voiceovers, posts or any combination of these tactics.

Social Media

Create Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn ads and boosted posts that will redirect to the Saratoga County website. Campaign will target followers of the saratoga.com’s and existing County FB, Instagram and LinkedIn pages, business page administrators, and users with business ownership interests. This will be expanded to target households in the region as we reopen to promote Saratoga County’s visitor focused sectors that have safely reopened and our outdoor amenities.

Results from June 1 – June 10 – Chamber professional staff created 30-second video in-house. Video launched 5/29 on Chamber social media generating 1,400 views by June 1. Video call to action was to drive traffic to www.reopeningsaratogacounty.com website created by Saratoga County. Working with Mannix Marketing, we launched ads on June 1st using this video and this same call to action on FB, Instagram and LinkedIn. This video has now been seen 39,000+ times on FB alone. The website is now up to nearly 21,960 views.

Digital Display & Pre-Roll Video

Keyword search targeting Saratoga County at first AND region as we reopen. Campaign will target those actively searching for terms such as: New York phased reopening, coronavirus, New York phases, N.Y. reopening, Saratoga county small business, covid19, Saratoga county, things to do, outdoor dining, outdoor fun, etc.

Television

We will professionally produce new videos for television, digital and social media that share Saratoga County’s story of how our businesses are reopening safely putting the health of their customers and employees first. We’ll invite households from across the region who love our local businesses to safely return to their favorite local shops, stores, restaurants, parks, waterways and recreational amenities. The TV campaign will focus on local cable television regional zones and local news programming.

Campaign Budget

<u>Campaign Breakout:</u>	<u>Goal</u>	<u>Investment</u>	<u>Start</u>	<u>End</u>
Social Media	Website Promotion	\$ 5,000.00	6/1/2020	6/19/2020
	Regional Promotion	\$ 5,000.00	6/19/2020	7/10/2020
Digital Display/Keyword	Website Promotion	\$ 5,000.00	6/17/2020	7/1/2020
	Regional Promotion	\$ 10,000.00	6/17/2020	7/15/2020
Television	Regional Promotion	\$ 25,000.00	6/17/2020	7/15/2020
Total Budget		\$ 50,000.00		