

Economic Development Committee Minutes
July 7, 2021 – 3:00 p.m.

Present: Chairman Phil Barrett; Supervisors Tara Gaston, Joe Grasso, Kevin Tollisen, Sandra Winney, Tom Wood; and Chairman of the Board Todd Kusnierz; Steve Bulger, Ridge Harris, Matt Rose, Audra Hedden, County Administrator; Michael Hartnett, County Attorney; Jenniffer McCloskey, Employment and Training; Shelby Schneider, Tori Riley.

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

On a motion made by Ms. Gaston, seconded by Mr. Wood, the minutes of the June 2, 2021 meeting were approved unanimously.

A motion was made by Mr. Tollisen, seconded by Ms. Winney, to authorize an application for and acceptance of Federal funds for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act program for the 2021-2022 program year, and amending the budget in relation thereto. Unanimous.

Ms. McCloskey said that this is an annual item. There is a 15% increase this year. The allocation for this year is \$765,508.87 and will be split among Saratoga, Warren and Washington Counties.

A motion was made by Ms. Gaston, seconded by Mr. Wood, to approve the Workforce Development Board Project Year 2021 budget totaling \$191,600 for the Workforce Development Board's fiscal budget year beginning July 1st, 2021 and ending June 30th, 2022 and authorizing the Chair of the Board to execute any necessary agreements with the counties of Warren and Washington and other entities to fund the Workforce Development Board and its services. Unanimous.

Ms. McCloskey said that this is a cost shared by Saratoga, Warren and Washington Counties for the staff and the operation of the Workforce Development Board. Ms. McCloskey said that the Workforce Development Board was structured many years ago and is not up to date with what the rest of the State is doing. They are now attempting to retain an Executive Director, offer benefits and be more competitive to retain good staff for the Board. This budget was unanimously approved by the Workforce Development Board.

A motion was made by Mr. Tollisen, seconded by Ms. Winney, to authorize an agreement with J.J. Young to provide administrative services for the Workforce Development Board for a term of July 1st, 2021 until June 30th, 2022. Unanimous.

Ms. McCloskey said that WIOA legislation prohibits the Board from administering and providing services. This contract with J. J. Young will provide for payroll services. They have been providing this service for several years.

A motion was made by Ms. Gaston, seconded by Mr. Tollisen, to authorize the acceptance of \$236,856 in grant funding from the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance for the administration of the 2021 Summer Youth Employment Program from May 1st, 2021 until September 30th, 2021. Unanimous.

Ms. McCloskey said that this is a slight decrease over last year. Participation has been harder to get but they still plan on serving 65-70 youth in Saratoga County. Ms. McCloskey said that they still taking applications. Age range is 14-21. Mr. Barrett asked for another email be sent out to Supervisors regarding the program.

Ms. McCloskey said that the Department of Labor has reinstated the work search requirement for unemployment benefits. The DOL conducts meetings with the claimants. Unfortunately a lot of that was put on hold as the staff that used to handle those appointments were pulled from their regular duties to handle unemployment claims. These meetings are now starting up again and claimants have to prove they are doing at least three work search activities in a week. Ms. McCloskey said that she is still hearing from many businesses that people are applying however, they are not following up, not showing up to interviews or if they are hired, not showing up to work. Mr. Barrett confirmed with Ms. McCloskey that those on unemployment are also receiving a premium amount. Ms. McCloskey said that she believes this additional federal benefit will end around September 1st.

Saratoga Economic Development Corporation Update

Mr. Barrett said that he requested Ms. Riley give an update on an initiative that has begun involving electric utilities, communication companies, sewer and water entities throughout the County. This working group is working together through a grant from CDRPC, taking inventory of assets collectively in Saratoga County, working on resiliency for the future. SEDC was selected to be the administrator of the program. The first meeting was held and it went very well.

Ms. Riley said that what they are hoping to capture with this group is to update the contingency and resiliency plans, see where there may be some overlapping that complements and reduces expenses for each of the utilities, water, sewer, emergency services, landlines and broadband. Identify what we have, what opportunities and obstacles exist, and work together to apply for funding. Ms. Riley said that Mike Franchini also attended the meeting and encouraged them to following through with a study that can be used for funding opportunities. Other areas of discussion were resiliency needs, critical infrastructure and confidentiality concerns in place for each sector. The final report will be for county, municipalities, and businesses and will help with communications in cases of emergencies and resiliency. Mr. Barrett said that the meeting went very well and several more will be held as the process continues. Mr. Barrett said that when funding opportunities are being sought, having a study and a basis of information, or a study that can be included in the grant application, usually makes applications more viable. Ms. Riley said that she believes the final document will be resourceful for many. Mr. Barrett said that working closely with utility companies, and having an understanding of changes they face and what they deal with on a daily basis will help us identify opportunities to work with them in the future. Ms.

Gaston said that the County's Comprehensive Emergency Management plan also contains a list of utility contacts.

Mr. Barrett said that this is Ms. Schneider's last committee meeting in this capacity. Mr. Barrett congratulated Ms. Schneider and wished her well in her new endeavor. Ms. Schneider said that she will be the Deputy Director of the New York State Economic Development Council, which is not a State agency, it is a State entity. It's a membership organization of economic development organizations, agencies, IDA's etc. throughout New York State. Ms. Schneider thanked everyone for the opportunity to have worked in Saratoga County for the past 20 years, and is looking forward to bringing her knowledge and contacts and employing that at a State level.

A motion was made by Mr. Grasso, seconded by Mr. Wood, to authorize approval of Saratoga County Prosperity Partnership Economic Development Funding applications for the Town of Halfmoon, City of Saratoga Springs and Town of Wilton. Unanimous.

Ms. Schneider said that the project in the Town of Halfmoon is a Town center lighting project which is part of the overall comprehensive plan in making the Town a more attractive place.

The City of Saratoga Springs are putting their resources towards repairs at the Visitor Center on Broadway. Ms. Gaston added that the funding will go toward a strategic plan for renewing and preserving the WPA artwork in the facility.

The Town of Wilton's project is a renovation, beautification, and enhanced visibility project for a local business Wilton Flooring.

Ms. Schneider said that here are only 7 projects remaining this year for review. Ms. Schneider said that Amy at SCPP will be handling the projects and Matt Rose at the County has also assisted.

A motion was made by Mr. Grasso, seconded by Mr. Tollisen, the meeting was adjourned unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Therese Connolly
Clerk of the Board