PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
September 16, 2026

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 10:35 a.m. by Planning & Economic Development Committee Chair Gretchen Hanchett.

Roll Call: G. Hanchett, D. Healy, G. Barnes, K. LaForge, W. Meunier, J. Ricci, B. Harris (Absent: S. Havey)

Other Attendees: C. Bessette, A. Carrow, C. Clark, P. Curran, S. Decker, K. Demick, K. Dirlam, J. Kelley, T. Linn, M. Linza, M. Pingitore, J. Ricketts-Swales, A. Smith, R. Sobeck-Lynch, P. Stockin, R. Whitney

Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by Legislator Healy, seconded by Legislator Meunier, and carried to approve the Planning and Economic Development Committee meeting agenda of September 16, 2026.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Legislator Ricci, seconded by Legislator Healy, and carried to approve the Planning and Economic Development Committee meeting minutes of August 19, 2026.

PLANNING

Director of Planning Kier Dirlam attended the meeting and submitted his monthly report to the committee for review. Mr. Dirlam reported that his office has been busy assisting communities with their various moratoriums and laws that they are trying to put together. Most of that is related to solar, battery storage, and data centers. Mr. Dirlam reported that the Planning Board meets this evening and extended an invitation to anyone who may be interested in attending. They will meet at 7:00 p.m. at the Crossroads Center. Mr. Dirlam reported that they are waiting for towns to review the Sewer study that was distributed in early August. They have not received much response from our municipalities, so they have sent it out again, asking them to review the report before it is finalized. Mr. Dirlam reported that they have completed the first draft of the Village of Angelica's comprehensive plan, which has been sent to the village planning board for their review. He noted that they have been working heavily on the County Comprehensive Plan with plans to have a final draft around the first of the year.

Authorization to Apply for the Countywide Resilience Implementation Strategy Program

Mr. Dirlam requested a resolution and authorization for the Allegany County Office of Planning to apply for the Countywide Resilience Implementation Strategy Program administered through the New York State Department of State, Office of Planning, Development & Community Infrastructure. The program provides up to $250,000 in State funding to counties to develop an action-oriented countywide resilience strategy that builds upon existing plans, studies, technical analyses, geospatial data, and stakeholder input and advances priority projects toward implementation. Applications are due October 26, 2026. Grant funds will be used to retain a consultant to prepare a Countywide Resilience Needs Assessment; develop a portfolio of at least ten (10) priority resilience projects; advance a minimum of two (2) priority projects through implementation-ready work such as feasibility, preliminary engineering, conceptual design, benefit-cost analysis, permitting strategy, or grant development; and prepare the final Countywide Resilience Implementation Strategy. The consultant scope will also include development of an interactive implementation dashboard that incorporates the County Comprehensive Plan Action Matrix and related County planning initiatives to track project status, responsible agencies and partners, funding opportunities, project readiness, community indicators, and implementation progress. The project will build upon recent County planning efforts, including the Allegany County Comprehensive Plan, Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan, Countywide Sewer Infrastructure Study, Housing Market Assessment and Development Strategy, Countywide Trails Master Plan, and other County and municipal plans and studies. The dashboard will provide an ongoing tool for the Office of Planning, County

leadership, municipalities, and partner organizations to monitor implementation and maintain a coordinated pipeline of priority and grant-ready projects. Mr. Dirlam also requested that the Chairman of the Board be authorized to execute documents needed for the submission of the grant, subject to review and approval of the terms and conditions provided by the County Attorney. The total grant application budget amount is $277,778. The request was approved on a motion by Legislator Healy, seconded by Legislator Ricci, and carried. ***Refer to Ways and Means***

ALLEGANY COUNTY INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

Director of the Allegany County Industrial Development Agency Dr. Craig Clark attended the meeting and submitted his monthly report to the committee for review. Dr. Clark reported that the microenterprise grant paperwork has been submitted, and applications for the funding assistance are due September 30th. Committee Chair Hanchett remarked that it has been a successful program. Dr. Clark added that all but one of the companies who received assistance are still in existence today. Dr. Clark reported that they continue pushing the Allegany County Gateway Marketplace project, noting its importance to our local agriculture community and artisans. Committee Chair Hanchett asked where they are with the ARC funding. Dr. Clark said he anticipates hearing about the award in November at the earliest. Dr. Clark reported that they were successful in acquiring the Cuba property and emphasized that 70 percent of Allegany County households qualify under the standard local medium income limits that are set by the grant, which is designed to help those in the workforce who do not qualify for a home mortgage. The grant application will be submitted by the Land Bank sometime next summer when it opens again. Legislator Healy asked if that meant qualifying for the grant would be income based. Dr. Clark said it would be income based but clarified that 70 percent of Allegany County will qualify for it and that it is not considered low-income housing. Dr. Clark reported that the RBDG BDO zone A rating is anticipated to attract viable businesses interested in our forest biproducts. Dr. Clark discussed the recent Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) event they held and clarified that the IDA does not take a stance on them and only approves financial assistance when a community approves a host agreement for energy storage or any of the solar or wind projects, and requests financial assistance. Dr. Clark indicated that they would send documentation of what was presented at that meeting. Committee Chair Hanchett noted that it is important to have balance and introduce all sides of the BESS discussion. Dr. Clark explained that the intention was to provide as much information to communities as possible, so they are informed when establishing laws to protect them. Dr. Clark reported that they are moving forward with the Brownfields Assessment Grant with a few Phase 2 projects being completed. They plan to continue with Phase 1 throughout the different communities and noted that the next engagement meeting for the community is October 13, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. in the Cuba Library. Legislator Demick indicated that he had received a few phone calls from concerned residents asking if there is a host agreement in place for the Alle-Catt Wind Farm and whether any revenue will go directly to the County. Dr. Clark said that it would be through the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT). He said that approximately $500,000 per year will go to the host communities with a portion going to the PILOT, which would be shared based upon local tax rates. Legislator Demick asked for the exact amounts they anticipated coming back to the County. Dr. Clark said that it istypically around 50 percent with a majority going to the school districts.

EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

Employment and Training Director Reita Sobeck-Lynch attended the meeting and submitted her monthly report to the committee for review. Mrs. Sobeck-Lynch reported that the adults and dislocated workers completed their training and found employment. She indicated that the average hourly wage they received was around $6.58 above the minimum wage. Mrs. Sobeck-Lynch reported that two more youth who completed several hours of job readiness training are ready for work experience. Mrs. Sobeck-Lynch noted that they are at a manufacturing and technology job fair, being held at the David A. Howe Public Library in Wellsville, and that the Job Board continues to be well received. Mrs. Sobeck-Lynch reported that 80 customers visited her office for services. Sometimes one person visits multiple times to

perform job search activities on their own. She noted that they continue to see people aged 60 and older who are looking for work. Legislator Meunier expressed concerns with his business attempting to post open positions to the Job Board, indicating that it took several days to receive a call back or to post a job. Mrs. Sobeck-Lynch apologized for that delay.

Authorization to Accept and Appropriate Donation of Allegany County Area Foundation Funds for "Skill Up Allegany" Tuition Assistance Program

Mrs. Sobeck-Lynch requested a resolution to accept and appropriate a donation of funds that they have been awarded from the Allegany County Area Foundation for their "Skill Up Allegany" tuition assistance program.

Appropriations:		
CD1 6400.475	Econ Opp & Dev Contract (County)	$5,000
Revenue:		
CD1 6400.2705.00	Gifts and Donations (County)	$5,000

The request was approved on a motion by Legislator Ricci, seconded by Legislator Barnes, and carried. ***Refer to Ways and Means***

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Director of Economic Development Ashley Smith attended the meeting and submitted her monthly report to the committee for review. Ms. Smith reported that County officials are scheduled to meet with RG&E on October 2 to review cost proposals related to power service on County Road 20 and discuss next steps. A meeting with Empire State Development may follow to address potential grant participation and project responsibilities. Ms. Smith recognized Michelle Linza for conducting 66 meetings with existing and prospective businesses through the Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) program, representing 132 percent of the program goal. Committee Chair Hanchett thanked Ms. Linza for her outreach to local businesses and asked what additional services or program changes might be beneficial. Ms. Linza described the program as a work in progress focused on identifying business needs. Current efforts include outreach to manufacturers through the manufacturing roundtable and coordination with regional and County economic development partners to identify useful resources and training opportunities. She said additional needs should become clearer as the program develops over the next two years. Ms. Linza noted that businesses have shown particular interest in financial assistance and available grant programs, especially the Microenterprise Grant. She added that local businesses would benefit from additional grant opportunities. Ms. Linza said her role is to connect business owners with existing resources and partner agencies. Referrals have included Southern Tier West, ACCORD, and IncubatorWorks for assistance and training. She emphasized that one-on-one guidance helps businesses understand and access programs that may otherwise seem overwhelming.

Ms. Smith reported that the manufacturing roundtable averages six to ten participants and has maintained steady repeat attendance. A survey is being prepared to identify additional training needs, including topics such as automation and tariffs. She noted that the roundtable is a regional partnership involving multiple agencies. Ms. Smith reported that work has begun on the 2027 marketing materials, which are produced in-house, and that the marketing plan and campaign concepts will be presented later in the year. She referenced the annual New York State economic-impact report, noting that occupancy-tax revenue and visitor counts decreased, while visitor spending and average length of stay increased. Committee Chair Hanchett noted that the tourism-report link required users to create an account and asked that it be checked. Committee Chair Hanchett expressed surprise at the number of visitors from the New York City market. Ms. Smith said New York City is one of the County's strongest designated market areas and a major source of visitors. Marketing rotates among markets within approximately a

six-hour radius, including Buffalo, Rochester, Albany, New York City, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and Cleveland; the Canadian market is not currently targeted. In New York City, advertising focuses primarily on digital displays along roadways, in subways, and in public spaces. Ms. Smith also reminded committee members that the Garlic Festival would be held that weekend and invited anyone interested in assisting with the tourism trailer to contact Ms. Linza.

Branding Presentation

Ms. Smith presented the proposed County branding system and explained that the existing County seal would remain available for historical and ceremonial use. The proposed simplified brand would be used primarily for marketing and communications because details in the current seal become difficult to distinguish when reproduced at a small size. Legislator Barnes said he did not like the design and noted that the abbreviation "ACNY" might not be readily understood and said her prefers the traditional seal. Other committee members supported the simpler design because it would be easier to recognize and reproduce consistently. Committee Chair Hanchett emphasized that the proposal was a marketing initiative and would not replace the County seal. Ms. Smith said alternative options could be developed if requested but noted that the broader branding system had been built around the previously approved colors and design direction. The committee approved moving forward with the proposed branding direction on a motion by Legislator Meunier, seconded by Legislator Ricci, with Legislator Barnes opposed.

Legislator Stockin asked if they ever obtained input from the public. Ms. Smith said focus groups may be used as part of market research, but broad public polling had not been conducted. She reviewed the proposed department-specific identities developed with department leadership. She noted that the Sheriff's Office and Probation designs incorporate the New York State seal to reflect their badges. Ms. Smith presented proposed letterhead, envelopes, business cards, email signatures, postcards, folders, presentations, vehicle identification, building signs, and parking signs. Materials would use the County brand together with the applicable seal, department logo, or partner logo. She recommended photographs on business cards for department heads and legislators, with department heads determining whether other employees should include photographs. Committee members noted that photographs can help recipients identify contacts after conferences and other events. Legislator Whitney asked if the orange color is the actual color to be used. Ms. Smith said that the standard "NY" element would appear in orange and white, although alternate logo versions would be used when needed for different backgrounds and materials. She said that if approved to move forward, individualized assets would be developed with department heads for possible use beginning in November. Existing materials would continue to be used during the transition rather than discarded.

Authorization to Apply for Tourism Promotion Funds from I LOVE NY State Aid Program

Ms. Smith requested a resolution to apply for tourism promotion funds from the New York State I LOVE NY state aid program in the amount of $172,500 (Regional Formula amount of funding request for Allegany County) in anticipation of the 2027 request for proposals. Allegany County anticipates receiving a state aid funding award of approximately $55,000. Ms. Smith also requested that the Chairman of the Board be authorized to execute the grant application and any other documents necessary to submit the grant, subject to the review and approval of the terms and conditions by the County Attorney. With this funding, Allegany County will incorporate marketing strategies to promote tourism regionally and locally. Regional collaboration partners include the Chautauqua-Allegheny Region, which is Cattaraugus and Chautauqua Counties, as well as the WNY Wilds Counties which are Wyoming, Orleans, Genesee, Livingston, & Cattaraugus Counties. Allegany County is required to match the state aid amount of which will be put forward in the 2027 Budget. The actual amount of the grant award is determined at a later date but is estimated to be $55,000. The request was approved on a motion by Legislator Healy, seconded by Legislator Meunier, opposed by Legislator Barnes, and carried. ***Refer to Ways and Means***

Approval of Proposed Special Brand Identities

Ms. Smith requested a resolution authorizing the approval of proposed special brand identities for the Offices of Probation and Emergency Management Services and the Department of Health, and authorizing their use in County marketing, communications, promotions, department-specific initiatives, digital assets, printed materials, signage, and other related branding efforts moving forward. As identified within the 2026 Marketing Plan, the Allegany County Office of Economic Development has undertaken a comprehensive branding initiative for the Office of Economic Development, Allegany County government communications, and the WNY Wilds tourism initiative. The purpose of this effort is to create a coordinated and sustainable brand system that better reflects Allegany County today while positioning the County and region for future growth, investment, and community engagement. The proposed special brands establish distinct yet complementary identities that maintain brand consistency and continuity across Allegany County government. Each identity has been created for individualized departmental use while remaining part of a coordinated, co-branded strategy that aligns with the County's new brand identity. The benefit of this resolution is to establish a consistent framework for departmental branding through shared typography, coordinated color palettes, and complementary visual elements. This approach creates consistency across County departments while allowing each special brand to maintain its own audience, purpose, and messaging. The branding initiative also reflects a broader strategic objective of presenting Allegany County as a collaborative, cohesive, and forward-moving community. By establishing a unified visual system, County departments can communicate their individual missions while reinforcing their connection to the broader County organization and its shared identity. The adoption of these brand identities will have no fiscal impact. Any future fiscal impacts associated with implementation of the new brand strategy will be presented to the respective committees for consideration as they arise. The request was approved on a motion by Legislator Healy, seconded by Legislator Ricci, and carried. ***Prepare Resolution***

EXECUTIVE SESSION

A motion was made by Legislator Healy, seconded by Legislator Ricci, and carried to go into executive session at 11:28 a.m. to discuss the proposed acquisition, sale, or lease of real property. Immediately following the discussion, a motion was made by Legislator Ricci, seconded by Legislator Healy, and carried to come out of executive session and return to the regular meeting at 11:36 p.m.

CLERK OF THE BOARD

Appointment to the Allegany County Land Bank Corporation Board of Directors

Clerk of the Board Sarah Decker notified the committee that Chairman Harris plans to reappoint the following individuals as members of the Allegany County Land Bank Corporation Board of Directors for a two-year term commencing October 1, 2026, and expiring September 30, 2028, subject to confirmation by the Board of Legislators as follows:

H. Kier Dirlam, Director of Planning
Darwin Fanton
Brian Loucks
Bryan Perrin

The request was approved on a motion by Legislator Meunier, seconded by Legislator Healy, and carried. ***Prepare Resolution***

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 11:37 a.m. following a motion by Legislator Ricci, seconded by Legislator Meunier, and carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Tiffany Linn, Journal Clerk
Allegany County Board of Legislators