PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
COMMITTEE MEETING

October 21, 2026

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 11:00 a.m. by Planning & Economic Development Committee Chair Gretchen Hanchett.

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

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

Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by Legislator Healy, seconded by Legislator Havey, and carried to approve the Planning and Economic Development Committee meeting agenda of October 21, 2026.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Legislator Ricci, seconded by Legislator Havey, and carried to approve the Planning and Economic Development Committee meeting minutes of September 16, 2026.

PLANNING

Director of Planning Kier Dirlam Office reviewed the monthly report, noting that his staff time had primarily focused on routine planning activities and technical assistance to towns and villages. Requests have largely included assistance with local moratoriums and laws, reflecting increased activity in areas that historically had required less planning support.

Mr. Dirlam reported that he recently attended the Upstate American Planning Association annual conference. Sessions covered ethics, natural resource inventories, and brownfields. Mr. Dirlam highlighted the value of being able to exchange information with other county planning directors and professionals

Mr. Dirlam stated that tonight at 7:00 p.m. at the Crossroads Center, the County Planning Board was scheduled to review 16 referrals from eight municipalities. Members of the Board were invited to attend the meeting or request a Microsoft Teams link. The completed meeting packet totaled 360 pages. Referrals for the meeting held this evening include moratoriums involving battery storage, data centers, solar energy, and short-term

rentals; a new solar law; a zoning law amendment; site plans; and State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) lead agency requests.

Mr. Dirlam presented a request to accept Larson Design Group's $380,000 proposal to prepare preliminary engineering reports for sewer study priority projects under Phase Three of the study. Three proposals were received in response to the request for proposals issued in late August, and Larson Design Group received the highest score following review.

The proposed contract would run from execution of the purchase order through project completion, which is anticipated in Summer of 2027. The work would be fully grant-funded, with no County match required.

Mr. Dirlam noted that the request was also on the Ways and Means Committee agenda for later in the day, and he anticipated consideration by the full Board next week at the meeting being held on October 28, 2026.

Legislator Ricci asked Mr. Dirlam what he considered to be a short-term rental, Mr. Dirlam explained that short-term rentals generally involve stays of fewer than 30 days, often arranged through online platforms such as Airbnb or VRBO. Mr. Ricci asked whether the classification of motels would fall into the same category and Mr. Dirlam noted that motels typically fall under a separate zoning category and are already addressed in the Village of Alfred's zoning law. Mr. Dirlam stated that the Village was seeking to address increased short-term rentals of larger homes considering existing housing pressures, including student housing demand.

Authorization to Accept Proposal from LDG for Preliminary Engineering Reports

The Office of Planning requested a resolution authorizing Allegany County to accept a $380,000 proposal from Larson Design Group (LDG) to complete Preliminary Engineering Reports for Sewer Study Priority Projects. The project is part of the IIJA, ARC, and ESD-funded grant project approved in 2024. The resolution also authorizes the Chairman of the Legislature to execute all required forms and contracts, subject to review and approval by the County Attorney.

The contract term will begin upon execution of the purchase order and continue through project completion. The total fiscal impact is $380,000, with funding allocated to accounts A1015.429, A1015.4089.ARP, and A1015.3089. Related resolutions previously approved include #440-23, #247-24, and #349-24.

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

ALLEGANY COUNTY INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

Director of the Allegany County Industrial Development Agency Dr. Craig Clark reviewed highlights from his report, which had been distributed by hard copy. Both Legislator Hanchett and Dr. Clark noted the success of the October 8th annual dinner, with highlights that it was well attended and featured a presentation by Greg Egan, president of Insight Consulting. Dr. Clark highlighted the organization's continued outreach to Allegany County manufacturers, including visits by Mr. Egan and Peter Coleman. He described its consulting services as a valuable, low-cost resource and stated that additional information would be distributed to local manufacturers.

Dr. Clark went over his handout explaining in detail payment-in-lieu-of-taxes (PILOT) agreements. He stated that the Industrial Development Agency (IDA) does not recruit solar or wind companies to Allegany County and that they only become involved in PILOT discussions after a municipality expresses support of a proposed project. Dr. Clark also reported that currently all PILOT payments associated with Allegany County IDA agreements were current, with no outstanding payments.

Legislator Burdick asked how payments under PILOT agreements are allocated among school districts, the County, and towns. Dr. Craig Clark explained that the allocations are based on the respective tax rates rather than determined by the Industrial Development Agency (IDA). Legislator Burdick expressed concern that this distribution does not adequately reflect the work undertaken by the host town. Dr. Clark stated that the IDA requires a separate host community agreement to provide additional compensation directly to the town. He explained that solar projects typically provide a PILOT payment of approximately $2,500 per megawatt, shared among the taxing jurisdictions, and a separate host community payment to the town of approximately $2,500 per megawatt. Dr. Clark noted that when these payments are combined, the host town receives more than the other individual taxing jurisdictions.

Legislator Burdick disputed that this was always the case, noting that higher tax rates allow other taxing jurisdictions to receive substantially larger shares of PILOT revenues. Legislator Burdick stated that the host community agreement for an existing project in her district provided less compensation than the amount Dr. Clark described, she further stated that the town should have negotiated a better agreement. Dr. Clark responded that the IDA advises towns on recommended host community payment amounts, typically within the range of $2,400 to $2,500 per megawatt.

Legislator Hanchett asked how PILOT revenues were divided amongst the County, towns, and school districts according to their respective tax rates. Dr. Clark stated that School districts typically receive more than 50 percent, the County approximately 30 percent, and towns approximately 10 to 12 percent. Dr. Clark further stated that the standard practice of the IDA has been to use tax rates to determine said allocations.

Legislator Healy emphasized the importance of early communication with municipalities that would be affected by tax burdens regarding proposed IDA projects. Dr.

Clark agreed and stated that the IDA seeks to contact town supervisors when it becomes aware of prospective projects and holds the required public hearings. Multiple legislators emphasized that communities should be informed early to avoid surprises.

In concluding his remarks, Dr. Clark reported on a successful community event held in Cuba addressing brownfield development cleanup and thanked the legislators who attended. He stated that assessment work was progressing and that an additional grant was being pursued to assist with actual cleanup activities. A funding decision is anticipated by Spring of 2027.

EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

Employment and Training Director Rita Sobeck-Lynch reviewed her monthly report and discussed tuition assistance for adults and dislocated workers. Ms. Sobeck-Lynch reported receiving $5,000 from the Allegany County Area Foundation, of which at least $3,000 had already been obligated. Ms. Sobeck-Lynch was scheduled to meet with Bruce Campbell of the Allegany County Area Foundation the following day to explore additional partnerships and grant opportunities to support tuition assistance for County residents.

Ms. Sobeck-Lynch reported 87 youth contacts and stated that staff were currently working with 21 individuals, including gathering information to arrange work experience placements. The Summer Youth Employment Program concluded on September 30, 2026. The department continued providing services to area businesses and participating in the Western New York Regional Business Service Team, led by the New York State Department of Labor.

Ms. Sobeck-Lynch stated that the August unemployment rates remained largely unchanged. There were 17 new unemployment insurance benefit claims in September and eight so far in October.

Ms. Sobeck-Lynch advised the Board that the State's unemployment insurance benefits system would be unavailable for approximately 12 days beginning at 5 p.m. on November 2, 2026, while a replacement system was being implemented. During that timeframe, individuals would be unable to submit new applications or certify weekly benefits, resulting in payment delays. Ms. Sobeck-Lynch stated that the new system was intended to improve usability and allow claimants to manage more aspects of their claims without directly having to contact the NYS Department of Labor.

Ms. Sobeck-Lynch further stated that the NYS Department of Labor offices would be closed to in-person visits during the transition, with only virtual visits available, and that telephone assistance through the department's phones would be unavailable. The County's Employment and Training office would remain open to answer questions and assist residents. It was acknowledged that there could be the potential for frustration, particularly given the timing of seasonal layoffs.

Legislator Healy asked Ms. Sobeck-Lynch whether the NYS Dept. of Labor's temporary closure had been sufficiently advertised. Ms. Sobeck-Lynch stated that information had appeared in local newspapers, television coverage, and the Wellsville Sun newspaper. Current benefit recipients have received notice letters, and notices were posted throughout the Employment and Training Office. Legislator Healy emphasized the importance of ensuring that employers, particularly seasonal employers, were aware of the interruption.

In her closing remarks, Ms. Sobeck-Lynch said that her team had attended the Manufacturing and Technology Job Fair in Wellsville, which drew 40 participants and was considered successful.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Director of Economic Development Ashley Smith reviewed highlights from her monthly report. Ms. Smith reported meeting with an RG&E representative to discuss the status of ongoing efforts. A follow-up meeting was scheduled for October 26 to determine next steps involving the Empire State Development (ESD). Ms. Smith characterized the conversation as positive and stated that work continued to move forward.

Ms. Smith reported that counties participating in the now regional Western New York Wilds initiative continued to meet, with anticipated launch in early 2027. Participating counties were seeking support from their respective governing bodies, and responses so far have been favorable.

Following the brand refresh, the department had resumed the trademark application process. Ms. Smith anticipated having branded items available in November to support the application requirements and begin distribution throughout the County.

Regarding the Empowerment Hub project, Ms. Smith stated that potential space had been identified in connection with the proposed purchase of the Belmont School and that funding had been identified. She announced that the Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Foundation had approved the County's application for a $750,000 grant.

Authorization to $750,000 Grant from the Ralph C. Wilson Foundation to Support Advancing Allegany County: Economic Development Organization

The Office of Economic Development requested a resolution authorizing acceptance of the grant and authorizing the Chairman of the Board to execute all related paperwork. The request provided for acceptance and appropriation of $500,000 in the 2026 budget and $250,000 in the 2027 budget. Legislator Healy, during discussion, asked whether this approach would avoid the need for a subsequent budget adjustment, Ms. Smith confirmed that to be correct.

The Office of Economic Development requested a resolution authorizing Allegany County to accept a $750,000 grant from the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation to support

Advancing Allegany County: Economic Development Organization. The funds will be used for capacity building, professional services, facility planning, and project readiness, including a building feasibility study. Authorization to apply for the grant was previously approved under Resolution #280-26.

The resolution also authorizes the Chairman of the Board to execute all related paperwork. A 2026 budget adjustment of $500,000 is requested, with $500,000 in appropriations to account A6430.476 and $500,000 in grant revenue to account A6430.1989.RCWF. The remaining $250,000 is budgeted for 2027. The grant covers fiscal years 2026–2027, requires no local County match, and carries no county obligation after expiration. The Office of Economic Development will administer the grant.

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

Good of the Order

Chairman Harris requested with the permission of the Majority Leader, Legislator Havey, that a fifteen-minute caucus be held in the Legislative Chambers after the conclusion of the Planning & Economic Development Committee Meeting. Legislator Havey approved the request made by Chairman Harris.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 11:22 a.m. following a motion by Legislator Meunier, seconded by Legislator Ricci, and carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Michael J. Padlo, Deputy Clerk of the Board
Allegany County Board of Legislators