

PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

January 19, 2022

Members Present: D. Root, G. Barnes, P. Curran, A. Cyr, D. Healy, J. Ricci, J. Ricketts-Swales, P. Stockin, (Absent: G. Hanchett)

Others Present: D. Bigelow, J. Burdick, C. Clark, A. Cyr, K. Demick, M. Denhoff, K. Dirlam, B. Harris, S. Havey, K. Hooker, C. Jones, C. Knapp, T. Linn, T. Miner, B. Riehle, T. Ross, R. Sobeck-Lynch

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 2:05 p.m. by Planning & Economic Development Committee Chair Debra Root.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Legislator Ricci, seconded by Legislator Curran, and carried to approve the December 15, 2021, Planning & Economic Development Committee minutes.

EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING

Employment and Training Director Reita Sobeck-Lynch attended the meeting and submitted her monthly report to the committee for review. Ms. Lynch stated that this month had been relatively uneventful with front door traffic being down. Ms. Lynch stated that their two job developers provided 1,300 services to businesses and recorded 1,089 business contacts, including 46 new business contacts. Ms. Lynch stated that these new business contacts were not new businesses, but new contacts for Employment and Training. Committee Chair Root asked if these contacts were all Allegany County businesses. Ms. Lynch stated that there were some from surrounding counties.

Veteran Services

Legislator Healy referenced Veteran Services from Ms. Lynch's report and noted that six Veterans received assistance with two new Veterans. Legislator Healy asked what kind of outreach if any is done to make the Veterans aware of the services available to them. Ms. Lynch stated that they have information within the Veteran Affairs clinic, and the Department of Labor refers the Veterans to them, as well as Director of Veterans' Services Mike Hennessy.

Unemployment

Legislator Barnes referenced unemployment information from Ms. Lynch's report and asked if the 4 percent unemployment rate in Allegany County was based on the number of people receiving benefits. Ms. Lynch stated that the 4 percent was the latest information as of November 2021, and that December 2021 will be available next week. Legislator Barnes stated that they are not included if they are not receiving benefits. Ms. Lynch responded, yes. Legislator Barnes stated that what is confusing is, based on the number of people that have been laid off in the last couple of years, it is surprising to him that the unemployment rate is not higher. Mr. Barnes asked if that was because these people found jobs outside of the County, or moved out of the County? Ms. Lynch stated that it was possible, but that there is a methodology for the calculation that she can provide with next month's report. Ms. Lynch stated that these numbers are the hard facts of the number of people currently receiving unemployment benefits. Ms. Lynch pointed out that the job quits numbers are generally those that quit one job to take another job that was probably better. Legislator Barnes asked if companies that are struggling to fill vacant positions could be because not enough people are looking for work, or because people are still receiving a lot of benefits to remain unemployed. Ms. Lynch stated that she does not believe there are a lot of

additional benefits at this time, but a lot of those who have not returned to the workforce are women that are staying home due to childcare, school closures, and remote work options. Ms. Lynch stated that there are a lot of women looking for remote work only. Legislator Healy stated if they are not receiving unemployment, or not looking for work, then they are not considered in those figures. Ms. Lynch stated that she would not see those numbers. Legislator Healy stated that we would not see any of the figures if they went from working, to Welfare, Social Security Disability, or retired and went to receiving Social Security, and we do not know how many are in the labor pool that are not looking for work. Legislator Healy stated that he heard in the news that 4.5 million people nationally quit their jobs in November 2021 and asked if Allegany County was having the same problem. Ms. Lynch stated that it is not something she typically receives, but will try to look into some data for the next meeting. Committee Chair Root asked if the methodology calculation takes into consideration the number of people leaving the State. Ms. Lynch stated that they do have data on that, but she is not sure if it is included in the unemployment rate.

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Planning Director Kier Dirlam attended the meeting and submitted his monthly report to the committee for review. Mr. Dirlam briefly explained that his reports focus mainly on the projects with activity in the last 30 days, but does not represent the many different projects that his department will have going on. Mr. Dirlam stated that his department also maintains the County website including the tourism website, and provides various digital support to all departments as needed. Mr. Dirlam referenced his report and gave a brief description for each item.

Community Technical Assistance

Mr. Dirlam explained that the services they provide to the Towns and Villages are considered a standard part of support within our County, and are done upon request from the Towns and Villages, and that no fees are charged.

County Planning Board

Mr. Dirlam stated that the County Planning Board meeting is tentatively scheduled for January 15 at 7:00 p.m., at the Crossroads Center. Mr. Dirlam stated that the meeting is open to non-Board members and he can send a zoom link to anyone that wishes to participate this way.

COVID-19 Response

Mr. Dirlam explained that COVID-19 Response has been heavily involved with assisting the Health Department with getting the word out regarding various COVID-19 issues. Mr. Dirlam stated that they have been dialing some of that back over the last few weeks while the Health Department begins to take over some of that effort. Mr. Dirlam stated that the COVID-19 dashboard they developed last winter will be going away. Mr. Dirlam explained that maintaining the dashboard was extremely time intensive, and required one staff member for approximately 8 hours per week. Mr. Dirlam stated that the Department of Health website has been updated for COVID-19 with a red box.

Local Waterfront Revitalization

Mr. Dirlam explained that Local Waterfront Revitalization includes 10 municipalities up and down the Genesee River working together with a separate consultant. Mr. Dirlam stated that they

will be having some meetings in February or March and will get the word out once the meetings are scheduled.

Shared Services CWSSI

Mr. Dirlam explained that Shared Services CWSSI is a program they work on with the County Administrator's office. Mr. Dirlam stated that there are 29 Towns, 10 Villages, and the County Administrator required to vote, and it has been challenging to get a quorum of 40 individuals to show up either in-person or online. Mr. Dirlam stated that they did finally have a quorum in November 2021 and the report went in last week in time for the deadline.

Trails and Outdoor Recreation

Mr. Dirlam stated that they submitted the closeout documents for the Ralph Wilson Foundation Grant on the Allegany Trails Connection Project. Mr. Dirlam explained that this project was to obtain approximately \$50,000 of grant funding to look at the possible corridors to connect the Genesee Valley Greenway in Belfast to the Wag Trail in Wellsville. Mr. Dirlam stated that the consultant's report has a lot of options, and pros and cons.

Websites

Mr. Dirlam explained that there are a lot of miscellaneous items with the website, but that one thing he would love to offload to a different department is the County meeting uploads to the County YouTube channel. Mr. Dirlam stated that this allows those who do not use Facebook an opportunity to view these meetings on YouTube.

I Love NY

Mr. Dirlam stated that the I Love NY tourism grant application was submitted last week, and the funds were approved for acceptance, but they are working through the last little bit of paperwork with the Treasurer's office.

Tourism Guide

Mr. Dirlam stated that the tourism guide is expected to be completed, printed, and delivered by the February meeting. Mr. Dirlam stated that this was a total redesign with a new consultant and printer.

Regional Activities

Mr. Dirlam stated that two shows are tentatively scheduled with the Chautauqua-Allegheny Region this Spring in early March in Erie, PA, and Hamburg, NY, assuming COVID-19 does not take them down. Mr. Dirlam explained that he will be standing one day at the booth there, and that they share time with Chautauqua-Allegheny Regions.

Administrative Acronyms

Committee Chair Root asked Mr. Dirlam to explain the acronyms as follows:

- IDA - Industrial Development Agency OR
- ACIDA - Allegany County Industrial Development Agency
- ACUC - Allegany Crossroads Utility Corporation

- CRC - Capital Resource Corporation

Wild Souls, Wild Places

Mr. Dirlam explained that Wild Souls, Wild Places is a social media brand created to encourage growth in Allegany County.

- Total reach increased 31 percent from December 2021 to today
- 385,000 total people reached between September 7, 2021, and December 31, 2021
- Total number of link clicks increased 18 percent
- Organic traffic (when someone types Western New York Wilds into a search engine) accounts for 31.7 percent of total website traffic in the last five months

Mr. Dirlam stated that he feels these are good numbers, and that we have struggled to quantify the success of our ad campaigns, but social media gives us the ability to actually track it where regular paper ads do not. The “Meet Carly” video for December was played for the committee.

Legislator Healy asked if the trend is that individuals want to move from urban areas to rural areas. Mr. Dirlam stated that is what they were seeing last year especially with the COVID-19 impact. Legislator Healy asked if that was despite the State’s focus and dedication for most of their resources for encouraging development in urban areas. Mr. Dirlam stated that there are individuals interested in living in an urban area, but during the pandemic, people realized there is more to life than going to work every day, and that many people are looking for opportunities to get out of the city, and possibly remote work. Mr. Dirlam stated that one thing they noticed was the weekly real estate transactions listed in the Cuba Patriot showing that 30 to 50 percent of those transactions were coming from outside of the County. Legislator Healy stated that it is common that individuals are always looking to move to rural areas to increase their quality of life, but the problem continues to be the lack of jobs and industry in the County, and it would be nice if the State would help with more funding to encourage industry. Mr. Dirlam stated that they expect to do another couple of months with this campaign, and then do an evaluation to determine the success, or if there may be other opportunities. Mr. Dirlam stated that there are other social media platforms that are less expensive, but that Facebook is designed to target a middle to older demographic, while others are aimed at younger folks. Committee Chair Root asked what age groups are currently being targeted with the campaign. Mr. Dirlam stated that he does not have the exact numbers available, but that the groups being targeted are 20 to 30-year olds, and another is in his age group.

New York Marijuana Opt Out Findings

Assistant Director of Economic Development and Planning Michelle Denhoff attended the meeting and provided the findings to the committee for review. Ms. Denhoff briefly explained that New York State enacted legislation legalizing adult-use cannabis, and that the State left the decision to municipalities to allow for consumption at different sites. Ms. Denhoff stated that Towns and Villages were given to the end of 2021 to do that, and she had received an update as follows:

- 18 communities opted to allow both dispensary and consumption sites
- 2 communities opted to allow dispensaries only
- 17 communities opted out of both dispensary and consumption site
- 2 communities did not report

Ms. Denhoff stated that the number is approximately one half that is allowing dispensaries and consumption sites, and one half that did not want anything to do with it. Ms. Denhoff stated that the State is still in the process of creating the regulations, and we may not see anything for another 18 months or so. Ms. Denhoff stated that licensing will be determined by New York State, and anyone requesting a license in a Town that has opted in would be required to notify the municipality for review. Ms. Denhoff stated that there will be 3 different taxes associated with Marijuana sales. Ms. Denhoff explained that two will go directly to the State, and one will go to the County, Towns, and Villages that have opted in. Legislator Ricketts-Swales asked if dispensing and growing were the same thing. Ms. Denhoff explained that there are approximately one dozen different types of licenses, and only one set of regulations have come through. Ms. Denhoff explained that a dispensary is for retail, and consumption sites would be like a bar, where you would purchase and consume on site. Legislator Ricketts-Swales asked if data is being collected on growing. Ms. Denhoff stated that all of this data is still very new, but that this current focus is only on dispensaries and consumption sites, and there will be more information coming with grow sites. Legislator Barnes asked for clarification with the taxes. Ms. Denhoff explained that there are three different taxes, with one tax on the actual distributor for the different types of cannabis products they sell based on the amount of THC in each product. Ms. Denhoff stated that one tax will go to a different State program with 40 percent toward new grant funding, a second tax is a 9 percent rate on the product price paid by the consumer, and an additional 4 percent tax is given to the County, where 75 percent of that is equally distributed between the Town and the Village if both have opted in. Legislator Barnes asked if the 4 percent is the local share of the total sales, and 1 percent goes to the County with 3 percent being shared between the Towns and Villages. Ms. Denhoff stated, yes. Legislator Barnes asked if the Towns and Villages that did not opt in are waiting to see if the income justifies allowing the sale of cannabis. Ms. Denhoff stated that they have not had a lot of interaction with the municipalities whether they want to opt in or out. Ms. Denhoff stated that there will be planning sessions to determine what type of outreach may be necessary to help municipalities decide if there is a benefit to their economic development.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

Allegany County Development and Industrial Development Agency Executive Director Craig Clark attended the meeting and submitted his monthly report to the committee for review. Dr. Clark began with explaining that there is no set way to give out licenses to grow marijuana yet, that one of the biggest issues is the \$5 million requirement to get a license, as well as the push to get minorities to obtain those licenses. Dr. Clark stated that it will take approximately 18 months to get the Board into place. Dr. Clark stated that it is interesting that they are talking about sales and usage, but there is no legal marijuana to purchase, which he believes is putting the cart before the horse. Dr. Clark briefly highlighted his monthly report noting the following:

- Development Team continues to update the County website as necessary
- Crossroads project is looking at the cost for CPL to start doing the work in the spring
- ARVOS Ljungstrom has started hiring
- Wellsville Business Park still looking at options
- Alle-Catt wind project is anticipating starting work this year
- Micro Enterprise Grant final application is waiting for approval
- START-UP Allegany Group will have another 3 college events this April with their goal to have some of their graduates stay and start a company
- Houghton College has asked the CRC to develop a \$25 million bond to mainly restructure debt, with a public hearing scheduled for February 1, 2022, at Caneadea Town Hall with a resolution for approval

Great Lakes Cheese Facility

Legislator Barnes asked if 3-years is the length of time before a decision can be made with the existing Great Lakes Cheese facility in Cuba, NY. Dr. Clark stated that we cannot market it, but they will need to have meetings with the Town of Cuba to see what they would like to try and do with the facility. Dr. Clark stated that Great Lakes Cheese has been relatively proactive in saying that Cuba can do anything they would like with the facility, from donating the whole thing, to raising the facility, but letting them decide what they would like to do with it. Legislator Barnes stated that there are restrictions. Dr. Clark stated that the restriction was to prevent competitors of Great Lakes Cheese, but that will need to be discussed because it is a cheese operation.

Appointments to the Industrial Development Agency

The Industrial Development Agency recommends the following individuals be reappointed and appointed for a four-year term commencing January 1, 2022, and expiring December 31, 2025:

Reappointments:

Richard Ewell, Wellsville
Douglas Frank, Cuba
Judith D. Hopkins, Fillmore
Randy Shayler, Wellsville
Ward "Skip" Wilday, Cuba

Appointment:

John D. Ricci, Cuba

Dr. Clark stated that there had been questions regarding Mr. Wilday's residence in Ellicottville, but he confirmed that his official residency is in Cuba, NY. Legislator Ricci asked to abstain from the vote due to his appointment to the IDA. The request was approved on a motion made by Legislator Cyr, seconded by Legislator Barnes, and carried. **Prepare Resolution**

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 2:52 p.m. following a motion by Legislator Barnes, seconded by Legislator Ricci, and carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Tiffany Linn, Confidential Secretary
Allegany County Board of Legislators