

**STEBEN COUNTY AGRICULTURE, INDUSTRY AND PLANNING COMMITTEE**

*Wednesday, August 2, 2023*

*9:30 a.m.*

*Legislative Chambers, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Annex Building  
Bath, New York*

**\*\*MINUTES\*\***

<b>COMMITTEE:</b>	Hilda T. Lando, Vice Chair Paul E. Van Caesele	Carol A. Ferratella	James Kuhl
<b>STAFF:</b>	Jack K. Wheeler Marie Myers Shearing	Jennifer Prossick Eric Rose	Craig Patrick Tammy Hurd-Harvey
<b>LEGISLATORS:</b>	Scott J. Van Etten John V. Malter	Kelly H. Fitzpatrick Frederick G. Potter	Wendy Lozo
<b>ABSENT:</b>	Aaron I. Mullen, Chair		
<b>OTHERS:</b>	Mary Perham Joe Tobia		

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Mrs. Lando called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**MOTION: APPROVING THE MINUTES OF THE JULY 5, 2023, AND JULY 24, 2023, MEETINGS MADE BY MR. KUHL. SECONDED BY MRS. FERRATELLA. ALL BEING IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIES 4-0.**

**III. DEPARTMENTAL REQUESTS**

A. Planning

1. **Public Hearing Request for CDBG Well and Septic Replacement Program** – Ms. Myers Shearing requested authorization to hold the second public hearing relative to the 2020 CDBG Well and Septic Program. This project is complete, however, we are required to hold a public hearing upon completion. She noted they did 11 projects.

**MOTION: AUTHORIZING THE DIRECTOR OF PLANNING TO HOLD THE SECOND PUBLIC HEARING RELATIVE TO THE 2020 CDBG WELL AND SEPTIC REPLACEMENT PROGRAM MADE BY MR. KUHL. SECONDED BY MRS. FERRATELLA. ALL BEING IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIES 4-0.**

2. **Public Hearing Request for CDBG Economic Development Funding** – Ms. Myers Shearing requested authorization to hold a public hearing relative to the application for CDBG economic development funding for the LP Building Solutions Project. She stated she is working with the Steuben County Industrial Development Agency and this application is for LP Building Solutions to purchase equipment.

**MOTION: AUTHORIZING THE DIRECTOR OF PLANNING TO HOLD A PUBLIC HEARING RELATIVE TO AN APPLICATION FOR CDBG ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FUNDING FOR THE LP BUILDING SOLUTIONS PROJECT MADE BY MR. VAN CAESELE. SECONDED BY MR. KUHL.**

Mrs. Ferratella asked what equipment will they be purchasing? Mr. Johnson replied this is for production line equipment. Mrs. Fitzpatrick asked how much are they applying for? Ms. Myers Shearing replied they are applying for the full amount of \$750,000.

**VOTE ON PREVIOUS MOTION: ALL BEING IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIES 4-0.**

3. **CDBG Woodlands Project** – Ms. Myers Shearing stated she wanted to provide an update on this project as follow-up to questions that were asked last month. There were two projects; water/sewer and electrical/infrastructure. Any local matching funds were provided by the Woodlands community and they are invested in the project that we have been doing. Mr. Malter asked what was the amount of the match? Ms. Myers Shearing stated she will find out.

B. County Manager

1. **Youth Hunting Local Law Amendment** – Mr. Wheeler explained this board passed a Local Law opting in to allow youth hunting for 12 and 13 year olds with licensed, adult supervision. Your Local Law sunsets at the end of this year, and the DEC (Department of Environmental Conservation) has extended it until the end of 2025. He stated his recommendation would be to amend the Local Law to remove the sunset date so that our law can follow the State.

**MOTION: PRESENTING LOCAL LAW TENTATIVELY NO. SEVEN FOR THE YEAR 2023, AMENDING LOCAL LAW NO. TWO FOR THE YEAR 2021, AUTHORIZING 12 AND 13 YEAR OLD LICENSED HUNTERS TO HUNT DEER WITH A FIREARM OR CROSSBOW DURING HUNTING SEASON WITH THE SUPERVISION OF A LICENSED ADULT MADE BY MRS. FERRATELLA. SECONDED BY MR. KUHL. ALL BEING IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIES 4-0. Resolution Required.**

IV. OUTSIDE AGENCIES

A. Arts of the Southern Finger Lakes (Connie Sullivan-Blum)

1. **2024 Budget Presentation** – Ms. Sullivan-Blum presented her 2024 budget request for consideration. Last year we received \$47,500 from the County and in order to maintain our staff, she is requesting an 8 percent increase, which equates to \$3,800. The total request for 2024 is \$51,300. We are doing more now than prior to the pandemic and this is a critical moment for your support. She presented a PowerPoint presentation.

- Grants – Administer the Community Foundation and NYS Council on the Arts
  - Large increase in both grants that is distributed to artists; brought in twice as much money into the region
  - 2023 administered 56 grants totaling \$91,452
- Staff
  - 6 full-time staff, 5 staff have Masters Degree or higher
  - Average length of employment is 8 years
- Budget
  - 48 percent - government sources (Federal, State, County)
  - 29 percent - private foundations
  - 20 percent – donations from individuals and businesses
  - 3 percent – earned income
  - Expenses
    - 82 percent – Programs
    - 11 percent – Administration
    - 7 percent - Fundraising

Mrs. Lando asked where are your offices located? Ms. Sullivan-Blum replied we are located on Market Street in Corning and will be doing many improvements to our facility this year.

B. Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (Jeff Parker)

1. **2024 Budget Presentation**

a. *Activities Update* – Mr. Parker provided an update on all current activities.

- **Staffing** – Mr. Parker stated he has hired a new District Technician who has been with us for three months. They also have a new Agriculture individual who has been training with us for one year. He has worked to get internships and this year they have two individuals.
- **Streambank Stabilization** – There has been a tremendous amount of work to do. We have completed 18 projects.
- **Gravel Pit Permits** – They have been working on all of the gravel pit permit renewals for the Department of Public Works, as well as all of the municipalities in the County.
- **National Association of Conservation Districts** – Mr. Parker stated he participated in this national meeting.
- **Grants** –
  - One CRF (Climate Resilient Farming) grant application for a producer in Cohocton for a manure separation system which will allow the producer to utilize the manure for bedding. There is \$680,000 available under this grant and Mr. Parker wrote the grant for \$400,000.
  - Re-submission of WQIP Grants for Bennetts Creek in Canisteo for streambank erosion - \$500,000
- **FEMA Projects** – They are still working with municipalities on writing their projects from damage that occurred from Hurricane Fred in 2021.

b. *2024 Budget Request* – Mr. Parker stated his total budget for 2024 is \$907,321.71. The proposed County appropriation for general option is \$173,676 and \$75,000 for the District Streambank Program. He noted that he is requesting a 3 percent increase this year. The County appropriation of \$173,676 represents 19 percent of our budget and the rest is made up of State funds and grants.

Mrs. Ferratella asked what is your biggest need for 2024; equipment, funding or staff? Mr. Parker replied all of the above. He received a \$50,000 grant from Assemblyman Palmesano to purchase a new dump truck for their hydroseeding program. We are looking at purchasing a skid steer loader to do our streambank stabilization program. We currently have three large excavators.

Mr. Parker stated with regard to our staffing, we need to keep and retain the staff we have and in order to do that we have to pay them a good salary. We have been through a lot of people over the past eight years. Our Board of Directors have made attempts to get our salaries to be more competitive. Mr. Van Caesele asked are staff leaving because of the salary or are they unreliable? Mr. Parker replied a little of both, but mainly because of the salaries. Since COVID we have had difficulty attracting people.

Mr. Kuhl asked will you need to come back to committee with a request for funding for the skid steer, or is that reflected in this budget proposal? Mr. Parker replied it is included in the budget. He does not plan to come back committee with requests for additional funding. I am fortunate that the County gave me ARPA funds for the streambank program and that caught us up and helped us tremendously.

Mr. Parker reviewed the 2024/2025 outlook. He also noted that he is the Chair of the Upper Susquehanna Coalition Program.

C. Steuben County Industrial Development Agency (James Johnson)

1. **Activities Update**

- *LP Building Solutions* – This project is going great. Mr. Johnson stated he recently toured their facility and that is only one-quarter of the building; they can quadruple in the future. They expect to be operational in October. This is the only greenfield project that they have ever done and their location in Bath includes a big training facility.
  - They have applied for a CDBG Economic Development Grant to purchase production line equipment
  - Agreement with \$1.8 million railroad improvement project – gated crossing on Route 415 and replacing the steel. This has been a great project with cooperation from the Appalachian Regional Commission, NYSDOT and the Federal Highway Commission
- *Consolidated Funding Applications* – We are working on a number of CFA applications and those were due last Friday.
  - Planned expansion of HP Hood in Arkport which will result in an additional demand of 700,000 gallons of milk
- *Craft Brewing Program* – Mr. Johnson stated there are \$25,000 in grants available and he has worked directly with four breweries. Region wide 160 applications have been submitted from the Southern Tier Region. This is a program that will be in high demand.
- *Food Manufacturing* – Mr. Johnson stated food manufacturing is going strong. We have HP Hood and BelGioioso Cheese. He noted that BelGioioso has been a great success story. They have purchased the Poly-O brand and will be producing Poly-O Twist String Cheese.
- *Family Life Network, Town of Erwin* – This project continues to evolve. They purchased the old K-Mart/Tops site and were going to reuse the buildings, however they demolished the buildings. Once they did that, all of the permitting and approval they had gotten for the buildings went away. There has also been some opposition in that area. We have been coordinating with them and Mr. Johnson stated he is happy to say that as of July they have received all of the approvals for a redesign project. They will also be pushing the building back farther on the site. The earthwork is scheduled to begin this fall and they will start construction in the spring.
- *Prattsburgh* – Mr. Johnson stated they have been working with Chris Costanzo who purchased four storefront properties on Main Street. This will be a \$1.3 million renovation. Mr. Costanza has two tenants lined up for three of the storefronts. They have received Restore NY and NY Main Street Revitalization grants. We have been working with the town on code questions. This investment in Prattsburgh is being driven by the growth in Empire Telephone.
- *Empire Telephone* – Mr. Johnson stated they have now taken over complete use of the old library building for their operations center. They are also undergoing a physical expansion of their warehouse and space that is located outside of town. The company has committed to having their headquarters and operations in Prattsburgh. They seem to be fully staffed and have hired an additional 50 people over the last year or two.

2. **Funding Request** – Mr. Johnson stated as investors are looking at our communities, it is a challenge for the smaller communities as they do not have the staff. As part of the county's Comprehensive Plan process, it has become clear that there is a real lack of capacity in these communities. We have been looking at how we can, or if we are able, to dedicate resources to help with this. We have been working very closely with the Village of Wayland on the redevelopment of the Main Street buildings that were burned. We are limited on our staff resources. Mr. Johnson stated in 2018 we partnered with the County to hire J.C. Smith and that has been a huge success. The County pays the salary and we pay the fringe and other costs.

Mr. Johnson stated that Mr. Smith has worked with Hammondspport, Bath and Prattsburgh on their sewer projects. He also successfully secured EDA funding for Alstom and LP Building Solutions. Unfortunately, Mr. Smith has informed us that he wants to retire. This partnership has been a great success and we have until the end of the

year to replace him. Mr. Johnson stated that he has talked with Mr. Wheeler and Mr. Brewer to see if there was the potential to expand this partnership into a full-time Director of Infrastructure and Community Development position.

Mr. Johnson stated he submitted his budget request to Mr. Wheeler. Currently the County invests \$75,000 of which \$45,000 is used for small business development support and \$30,000 is used for the part-time position for infrastructure development support. He is requesting an increase of \$55,000 bringing the total investment to \$130,000 with \$45,000 for small business development support and \$75,000 for full-time community and infrastructure development support.

Mr. Potter asked is anyone currently working with Mr. Smith to learn his skills? Mr. Johnson replied if we can get some level of commitment from the county, we would start the hiring process almost immediately so we would have some overlap with Mr. Smith. Mr. Smith has indicated that he would be on-call and is willing to work with whomever we identify. Mr. Smith brings not only his knowledge and understanding of programs, but his ability to work with the communities.

Mrs. Ferratella asked have there been any issues with workforce needs with LP Building Solutions? Mr. Johnson replied he has not heard of any. Ms. Staats stated with their senior management positions they have brought in people from other locations. They are starting to put together their management team and in the coming weeks they will fill the jobs on the floor. Mr. Johnson noted they will be the employer of choice with their pay scale, benefits package and scheduling. They will hire individuals away from other employers. That is not uncommon. It will not be LP that has the employment issue, it will be the other employers in the area.

Mr. Wheeler commented CSS Workforce Development has received notification that there is \$20,000 available for workforce training for LP which is on par with Hardinge. This is an indication that good things are happening. Mrs. Lando stated they want to be involved with the community and they have donated siding for Habitat for Humanity. Mr. Johnson stated one of the challenges with the siding is that not a lot of contractors know how to install it. The installation issues step from that and there will be a big learning curve.

Ms. Staats stated at our first skill event, the Plant Manager and Head of Human Resources, both from the area, came and set up a booth and participated. We have talked with them about participating in a manufacturing day event at Campbell-Savona School. They are also starting conversations on how they can participate in the Wineglass Marathon event.

Mrs. Lando asked would LP do a tour of their facility for the Legislature? Mr. Johnson replied yes, I'm sure we could get something scheduled once they are operational.

Mrs. Lando asked have you had any conversations with the new owners of the Corning Courthouse? Mr. Johnson replied no, but they have been in touch with Three Rivers who has shared information with the new owners. Mr. Wheeler commented we have provided access to the building. Mr. Johnson commented they are excited for the opportunity.

D. Steuben County Conference & Visitors' Bureau

1. **Designation of Tourism Promotion Agency** – Mr. Wheeler stated this morning we received an email from Mr. Peterson asking for the annual resolution designating the Conference and Visitors' Bureau as the official tourism promotion agency of the County.

**MOTION: DESIGNATING THE STEUBEN COUNTY CONFERENCE AND VISITORS' BUREAU AS THE OFFICIAL TOURISM PROMOTION AGENCY FOR STEUBEN COUNTY MADE BY MRS. FERRATELLA. SECONDED BY MR. VAN CAESELE. ALL BEING IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIES 4-0. Resolution Required.**

Mr. Kuhl asked do we have the ability to extend this beyond an annual designation? Mr. Wheeler replied we will look into it.

**V. OTHER BUSINESS**

A. *Cornell Cooperative Extension* – Mr. Malter commented in the minutes it referred to Cornell Cooperative Extension as using \$60,000 as the in-kind contribution for grants for the MILOR (maintenance in lieu of rent). He asked isn't it less than that? Ms. McKinley replied we have been using \$60,000 and we just received the actual number and I believe it is lower than that. Mr. Wheeler replied the amount is \$30,000 which is the median market rate in Bath. Ms. McKinley stated she will be updating that amount.

B. *Heritage Park Project* – Mrs. Ferratella asked what is the status of the Heritage Park project in the Village of Bath? Mr. Wheeler stated the organization was in the area in May and they had talked about starting work in August. He has reached out to them to find out where we are at. The individual that you met via Zoom is the only outreach person for the entire country. The hope and plan was to do it this summer/fall. It really depends on when they make the funding available to purchase the materials.

C. *Broadband* – Mrs. Ferratella asked are we communicating with the towns regarding broadband? Mr. Wheeler replied yes. We have had three meetings and we have a meeting scheduled with Caton.

**MOTION: TO ADJOURN MADE BY MR. VAN CAESELEE. SECONDED BY MRS. FERRATELLA. ALL BEING IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIES 4-0.**

Respectfully Submitted by

Amanda L. Chapman  
Deputy Clerk  
Steuben County Legislature

**\*\*NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED FOR\*\*  
Wednesday, September 6, 2023  
9:30 a.m.**

**Please send agenda items to the Clerk of the Legislature's Office  
NO LATER THAN NOON  
Wednesday, August 30, 2023**