

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

*Wednesday, October 4, 2023*

*9:30 a.m.*

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

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

**COMMITTEE:** Aaron I. Mullen, Chair                      Hilda T. Lando, Vice Chair                      Carol A. Ferratella  
Paul E. Van Caesele

**STAFF:** Jack K. Wheeler                                      Christopher Brewer                                      Jennifer Prossick  
Marie Myers Shearing                                      Eric Rose                                      Craig Patrick

**LEGISLATORS:** Scott J. Van Etten                                      Kelly H. Fitzpatrick                                      K. Michael Hanna  
Wendy Lozo                                      John V. Malter                                      Nicholas D. Pelham  
Frederick G. Potter

**ABSENT:** James Kuhl

**OTHERS:** James Johnson, Executive Director, Steuben County Industrial Development Agency  
Jill Staats, Deputy Director of Operations, Steuben County Industrial Development Agency  
Kamala Keeley, President, Three Rivers Development Corporation  
Tess McKinley, Executive Director, Cornell Cooperative Extension  
Mary Perham  
Joe Tobia

*Secretary's Note: Hilda Lando attended under the Extraordinary Circumstance exemption. Mr. Kuhl attended via Zoom, however, not under the Extraordinary Circumstance exemption.*

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Mullen called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. He noted that Mrs. Lando is attending under the Extraordinary Circumstance exemption and as such is allowed to participate in discussion and voting with her video turned on.

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**MOTION: APPROVING THE MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 6, 2023, MEETING MADE BY MRS. FERRATELLA. SECONDED BY MR. VAN CAESELE. ALL BEING IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIES 3-0. (MRS. LANDO UNABLE TO VOTE DUE TO TECHNICAL ISSUE)**

**III. DEPARTMENT REQUESTS**

**A. Buildings & Grounds**

1. **Authorization to Purchase Pro Press Tool and Add to Major Equipment** – Mr. Rose requested authorization to purchase a Pro Press Tool for \$3,460.00 and add to their Major Equipment list.

**MOTION: AUTHORIZING THE COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC WORKS TO PURCHASE A PRO PRESS TOOL FOR \$3,460.00 AND ADD TO THE BUILDINGS & GROUNDS 2023 MAJOR EQUIPMENT LIST MADE BY MRS. FERRATELLA. SECONDED BY MR. VAN CAESELE. ALL BEING IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIES 4-0.**

B. Planning

1. **Coffee Cart Contract** – Ms. Myers Shearing requested authorization to extend the contract with Dwayne Arnold d/b/a Big D and Chef T’s, for one year under the same terms and conditions. The new term will run from November 1, 2023 – November 1, 2024.

**MOTION: AUTHORIZING THE DIRECTOR OF PLANNING TO EXTEND THE CONTRACT WITH DWAYNE ARNOLD D/B/A BIG D AND CHEF T’S, FOR ONE YEAR UNDER THE SAME TERMS AND CONDITIONS, EFFECTIVE NOVEMBER 1, 2023 MADE BY MR. VAN CAESEELE. SECONDED BY MRS. FERRATELLA. ALL BEING IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIES 4-0.**

2. **Transit Review Update** – Ms. Myers Shearing informed the committee that First Transit recently underwent a review. There were a number of recommendations made on the deficiencies that were noted. There was insufficient reporting to senior management, which in this case is the Legislature. We are working with First Transit to see what numbers we need to have and how often we need them reported. A second recommendation was the creation of a standard operating procedure and First Transit is working on that. This is a requirement from both New York State Department of Transportation and the Federal Transportation Authority. First Transit has contracted with a consultant to come on site at both the Corning and Elmira sties. She noted that a lot will be happening with transportation in the next couple of years. First Transit will be getting new buses as the current buses are past the standard life span.

Mr. Mullen stated at the Comprehensive Plan meeting they were talking about there being a pretty large pool of money for transportation issues being available if we have some of these data sources updated. Where would that funding be coming from? Ms. Myers Shearing replied that would be 5311, rural transit funding. The Institute for Human Services and Southern Tier Central applied for a grant to look at the bus routes as well as looking at the workforce. Currently the buses are running from 6am – 6pm. They are getting a study done to look at that.

Ms. Myers Shearing noted another deficiency is that there is no avenue for the settlement of any contract issues or disputes. Our documents do not address that. She is working with the County Manager, Law and Purchasing to best achieve that. What we have for procurement is not enough. We also need to update our route brochures and update the Title VI officer contact information.

3. **Comprehensive Plan Update** – Ms. Myers Shearing stated we are currently looking at stakeholder input on plan implementation. By the end of the week we will have finalized our initiatives, action items, responsible entities and have a timeframe. The next comprehensive plan meeting will be October 31, 2023, at 10:00 a.m.

4. **Flood Safe Land Use Project** – Ms. Myers Shearing informed the committee that Southern Tier Central (STC) is doing a Flood Safe Land Use Project. This will be for the development of a plan in support of response recovery and hazard mitigation activities. The funding will come from FEMA which will be passed to the State, which will then be passed through to the County as a sub-recipient. The total grant award is \$98,512 and the County will be receiving \$4,860 for the administrative oversight. She noted that Southern Tier Central will carry out the work of this project.

**MOTION: AUTHORIZING THE ACCEPTANCE OF A \$98,512 GRANT FROM FEMA FOR A FLOOD SAFE LAND USE PROJECT TO BE CONDUCTED BY SOUTHERN TIER CENTRAL AND AUTHORIZING A SUB-RECIPIENT AGREEMENT FOR \$4,860 WITH SOUTHERN TIER CENTRAL FOR THE ADMINISTRATIVE OVERSIGHT OF SAID PROJECT MADE BY MRS. LANDO. SECONDED BY MR. VAN CAESEELE. ALL BEING IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIES 4-0. Resolution Required.**

C. County Manager

1. **Animal Cruelty – Hornell Area Humane Society** – Mr. Wheeler explained as you know we fund the Hornell Area Humane Society to a certain extent for the Spirit Program at the Jail and for the Trap Spay Neuter Program for feral cats. We have recently learned that when the Sheriff’s Office is handling an animal cruelty case they have been utilizing the Hornell Area Humane Society to house the animals as part of the cruelty

investigation. Until something happens with the court case, this is a cost to the County. That is why we have a retainer agreement for animal cruelty housing with the Finger Lakes SPCA. Even if we do not have a contract for this with the Hornell Area Humane Society, under State Law, this would still be a charge to the County as we are the police agency that seized the animals.

In talking with the Hornell Area Humane Society, he had suggested that it may be better to follow what the Finger Lakes SPCA has done. They have drafted an invoice setting rates at \$15.00 per hour for animal handler, \$18.00 per hour for Licensed Vet Tech, \$25.00 per hour for non-medical staff time, \$75.00 per hour for Veterinarian and \$10.00 per day for the boarding of dogs and/or cats. Mr. Wheeler requested authorization to enter into a retainer agreement with the Hornell Area Humane Society for \$5,000 per year to start. We do have funds in the Animal Cruelty budget to fund this right now. However, next month he likely will be coming to request additional funding in the amount of \$15,000 - \$20,000 because some of these animals have been seized and housed since February.

**MOTION: AUTHORIZING THE COUNTY MANAGER TO ENTER INTO A RETAINER AGREEMENT WITH THE HORNELL AREA HUMANE SOCIETY IN THE AMOUNT OF \$5,000 PER YEAR FOR THE HOUSING OF ANIMALS SEIZED AS A RESULT OF ANIMAL CRUELTY INVESTIGATIONS MADE BY MRS. FERRATELLA. SECONDED BY MR. VAN CAESELE.**

Mr. Malter stated some of the emails he has been receiving are concerning one of these animal cruelty cases that has not gone through the courts and the expenses keep building and building. What is the status of that? Mr. Wheeler replied that is complicated from a legal standpoint. It sounds as though there have been a number of attorney conflicts. Ms. Prossick stated a new attorney has been assigned to the case. Part of the problem is the court kept rescheduling the matter without checking the attorney calendar. There is also the problem of attorney shortages on top of that.

Ms. Fitzpatrick asked is the use of the Hornell Area Humane Society for the housing of animals new? Mr. Wheeler replied it is new to my knowledge. We were not aware of this until we were approached with this information in late summer. This is certainly within the discretion of the officer. These cases were close to the Hornell area and they had the capacity to handle the animals and it was proper. Ms. Fitzpatrick asked are there any other organizations that we could look at for similar services? Mr. Wheeler replied we had put out a request for proposals and had only received one response for the housing of horses.

Mr. Van Etten commented we should do this for the additional capacity. Mr. Wheeler stated the Hornell Area Humane Society and the Finger Lakes SPCA are the two largest providers in the County. The Finger Lakes SPCA actually last year rolled over the retainer amount, so they have been drawing that down. This contract with the Hornell Area Humane Society would be similar. If we don't use the \$5,000, then that amount will get rolled over.

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

**IV. OUTSIDE AGENCIES**

**A. Steuben County Industrial Development Agency**

**1. Activities Update**

*a. LP Building Solutions* – Mr. Johnson thanked all those who attended LP's grand opening yesterday. They were very impressed with the timeline for how this project developed. They are also very pleased with the applications they have been receiving. For every job opening they have been getting 15 – 25 applicants. Mr. Van Etten stated that he was very impressed with the facility. Mrs. Ferratella and Mrs. Lando both apologized for not attending, however, they did not know about it. Mr. Johnson stated that must have been an oversight on the invitation list; he apologized and said that they will make sure they keep everyone informed in the future.

*b. ARC Grant* – Mr. Johnson stated they have applied for an ARC (Appalachian Regional Commission) Grant to study the State Route 54 corridor due to the amount of growth that we have seen

with LP, Amazon, the dental office, health clinic etc. He noted that Momentum of NY will be doing construction very soon. We have applied for a \$75,000 grant to study the Route 54 corridor and we anticipate looking at how to develop that property for continued development. We will not hear a final announcement until April or May of next year.

*c. Phillips* – Phillips has been working on the final cleanup plan. We will need to start looking at this area for targeted development.

*d. Painted Post Foundry Site* – Mr. Johnson stated this site recently received a FAST NY award and there has been a lot of interest in this area. There has been some pushback from the community on what has been presented for development on that site. They were approached by Southern Tier Central (STC) who manages the planning for the Village of Painted Post, about doing a similar initiative with the village where we would look at that site and determine the maximum potential for development, and then we would need to get the Village to agree to what they would accept out of that as the maximum development plan; then we can pre-permit and be ready to go. We are a financial participant in this and we are helping to match the ARC grant.

*e. Dana Lyons* – They are looking at having their groundbreaking/ribbon cutting event late November or early December. They anticipate leasing to start in 2025.

*f. New York Forward Grant* – Mr. Johnson stated they have been working with the Village of Bath, Town of Urbana and Village of Hammondsport on their applications for the New York Forward Grant. This is a State funded program that provides communities with up to \$4.5 million to advance their revitalization strategies. We have two solid applications that have been submitted.

*g. Craft Beverage Fund* – The State announced a new Craft Beverage Fund where each applicant could apply for \$25,000. This year we had six applications. The craft beverage industry has been a huge draw from the tourism perspective. This fund was created to focus more on increasing production. He has been so impressed with the impact and the growth of these particular operations. They are expanding their brewing capacity as well as their warehouse capacity.

*h. Restore New York Program* – Mr. Johnson stated they are waiting for an announcement regarding the Restore New York Program. This is a program that has been on the books for a long time and was refunded last year to look at major redevelopment projects in downtown communities. We are currently working with two applicants. One of the applicants is the Village of Wayland. They were unsuccessful in the last round of applicants but received positive feedback from the State and have made some changes to their project and we have been working with them to submit another application. The other applicant is for an individual who is looking at redeveloping the Curtis School in Hammondsport. We are hoping the State will make the announcement before the end of October and then the applications would likely be due in January.

*i. Instant Brands – Corelle* – We found out that the bankruptcy court has accepted Centerline Equity’s purchase offer. They own brands like Lennox and 20 percent of their holdings are in the consumer products field. They are waiting for the bankruptcy court to make the final offer. We are hopeful that this will come out in a positive light.

*j. Family Life Network* – Mr. Johnson stated that construction continues at Family Life Network.

*k. Hammondsport Sewer Project* – Most of the treatment area work has been completed and they will move toward the downtown area now that tourism season is beginning to subside. You’ll be able to see more activity in the downtown area as they begin laying the lines.

2. **Steuben County Loan Fund** – Mr. Johnson stated the Steuben County Emergency Loan Fund was established through REDEC during COVID. At that time the IDA, Corning Enterprises and the County provided funding to REDEC to allow them to divert some of their administrative funding in order to establish a loan program targeted to Steuben County businesses dealing with the COVID pandemic. We did see some success with that and we converted it to allow for a larger expanded program to deal with flooding issues in the southern portion of the County. At this point we have about \$250,000 of unused funds and \$137,000 in outstanding debt to be repaid. We have been talking with REDEC about how to put those funds to good use. We have been talking about creating a redevelopment program for vacant or blighted commercial properties or mixed use buildings and downtowns. Specifically in areas that are focused around community centers located in Steuben County; Wayland, Troupsburg, Woodhull. In some of the larger areas applicants have to be for-profit entities and the funds would have to be used for the rehabilitation of existing buildings in those downtown community centers.

Mr. Johnson explained the way the loan program would be set up is that there would be \$30,000 available per project, but no more than 50 percent of the project budget would be eligible. There would be a minimum loan of \$10,000 and there has to be 10 percent owner equity into the program. We will fix the interest rate at 3 percent. For the first year there will be interest only payments until the project is complete. After the project is complete, we have proposed that one half of the outstanding balance will be forgiven upon receiving the certificate of occupancy. This program is structured very similar to an old NYS DOT program called the Industrial Access Program, which was very successful, and when the project was completed, they would convert a portion of that to a grant. These buildings take a lot of money and effort to get them to a productive use. Our hope is that in the coming weeks we will be able to finalize the details with REDEC to promote this program and put this money back into productive use.

Mr. Pelham asked with regard to the Dana Lyons project, has there been a proposed closing date? Mr. Johnson stated they are working on that. Mr. Pelham stated to his knowledge there is no closing date. Mr. Johnson stated that he will ask them and see what their plan is. They are currently reviewing our legal documents.

Mr. Van Etten stated at the IDA meeting last week there was discussion regarding a reduction or change to the PILOT calculations for the property tax cap. The proposal is to take the PILOT calculation out and they are waiting for the Governor to sign that bill. This would be very good for the municipalities. Mr. Wheeler stated he had not heard that and it would be very good for the municipalities. Mr. Johnson stated if this is passed, it would allow for the PILOT projects to be included in the growth factor once they come off the PILOT.

Mr. Malter asked what would be the percent of increase in the assessment? Mr. Johnson replied that would depend on the project. The growth factor is the number that is provided by the State. Mr. Mullen asked are the wind projects on a 20 year PILOT? Mr. Johnson replied yes. Most standard projects are in the 10 year range.

Mr. Mullen commented with regard to the PILOTs and wind projects, the wind companies are using the new State law with respect to lower assessment in how they are negotiating with the towns. When those PILOTs go away, they will receive a substantial drop in revenue. Mr. Johnson replied we have seen that happen more with the solar projects. Mr. Mullen commented they are using that leverage when they are negotiating.

Mr. Malter asked will the PILOT program go away with this new State law? Mr. Johnson replied yes. They can certainly get the sales tax exemption on energy generating equipment. If they can prove the equipment they are purchasing is part of energy generation, they can get the State exemption. For the larger projects they are using that more as a leverage tool with the local communities. The larger projects likely will continue with the PILOT program and the smaller projects may just go with an assessment model and we have only seen one of those projects do that.

## B. Three Rivers Development Corporation

1. **Activities Update** – Ms. Keeley stated she has been in her position as President for a little over two years. We are a small, privately funded organization. She stated our mission is to develop projects and

initiatives to move the economy forward and enhance quality of life. Our strategic priorities are workforce, quality of life, infrastructure and business.

Ms. Keeley stated our workforce priority originally came out of the SoFLX Workforce Committee which was formed by Three Rivers to create strategies to engage a greater percentage of the workforce eligible population. We have an incredibly high number of disengaged individuals, which represent 45 – 50 percent of the population that could and is eligible to work. We designed the Workforce Navigator Program to assist our partners in education, workforce organizations and employers in helping individuals to overcome the myriad of barriers to employment and training opportunities. This will be a pilot program for the next two years.

Ms. Keeley stated our quality of life priority focuses on talent, the development of quality of life assets and the Corning Housing Partnership. The Corning Housing Partnership transforms neighborhoods and increases property values in Corning by investing in housing rehabilitation projects. This program is a public-private partnership between the City of Corning, Corning Enterprises, Three Rivers Development Foundation and Arbor Housing and Development. Ms. Keeley stated they also have programs to focus on both their infrastructure and business priorities. With regard to infrastructure we recently were able to work with Steuben County on the sale of the former courthouse in the City of Corning. We would like to see that be developed into a housing asset within the City of Corning and have been assisting the new owner to help him in his efforts to do that. She stated they also recently received a grant to complete a feasibility study for a multi-modal trail to connect the cities of Corning and Elmira. This is a quality of life asset development but also an opportunity to create small scale economic development along that route and create more connectedness with the region. She stated they also work with businesses on retention, recruitment and growth within the region.

Ms. Keeley provided more detailed information about the Workforce Navigator Pilot Program. This was modeled on the Empire State Poverty Reduction Initiative Navigator Program in Elmira and they are focusing on disconnected youth aged 16 to 24 years old. The Workforce Navigator(s) will work collaboratively with multiple regional partners including small/rural school districts, Social Services, community support organizations, CSS Workforce NY, Southern Tier BOCES, wrap-around service providers, training and apprenticeship providers and employers. Our long-term goal is to help disengaged and marginalized youth and young adults prepare for the workforce. The Navigators will remain in contact with participants for at least one year to assist them with addressing needs and hardships that may occur during this process. Over the two year period we want to do outreach to 600 individuals. We want to have 240 of those engaged with a navigator and 240 referred to CSS Workforce because they have a youth program, Emerging Workforce Program, that we can slide them right into. We want to help them create life work pathways. We want to help create an employment track plan and then ultimately have 90 of them secure employment. Mr. Mullen stated that he is glad to hear that you are trying to connect with the rural school districts. I went to several of them growing up and I am really excited to hear about this.

Mr. Van Etten asked about the \$1 million that Chemung County provided for the Tanglewood project; were they the only one? Ms. Keeley replied Tanglewood is located in Chemung County and they were the only county we requested funding from and they used some of their ARPA funds. This is the first step toward securing additional funding. We have applied for \$600,000 in Market New York Funds through Empire State Development and we are also putting in an application for \$1 million through Southern Tier Central for ARC funds as well. Having that initial support from the county is critical.

Mrs. Ferratella asked did Chemung and Schuyler counties agree to the original amount of investment for the Workforce Navigator position? Ms. Keeley replied we are still getting confirmation from Chemung County on the \$100,000 they are investing. Schuyler County is working out their amount in their budget and I believe they will be contributing \$25,000. We will need all three counties to participate in order for it to be successful.

Mr. Van Caesele commented one of my main concerns is for the jobs that we cannot fill. Do you know what some of those barriers are and how did these people manage to go to work prior to COVID and then post-COVID? Now they do not work anymore. Are there still programs out there for providing funds or have those all ended? Ms. Keeley replied as far as she is aware, all of those programs have ended. There was already a

disengaged population prior to COVID and I think COVID just exacerbated that. We are seeing this across the country and a big part of it is the Boomer population that is now retiring and that has created many more jobs. Now we are seeing lower birth rates, COVID and people are retiring early. The funnel of available workers is getting smaller, but the jobs have remained just as broad. Now we need to really revisit how we view jobs. We also need to make sure that we have our workforce doing the jobs that are available. In terms of barriers there are many, including appropriate housing, transportation, child care, training, necessary documentation, etc. The barriers are many, but go much beyond the individuals impacted by COVID. She stated she included a link in the presentation to the “Demographic Drought” by Ron Hetrick which talks about what we are facing in terms of workforce across the nation. We have a much better opportunity of solving our workforce needs in this region. If we were able to recruit another 1,000 people into the region, that would be impactful.

Mrs. Lando commented getting to the 16 years olds is really the heart of it because by the time they are 21 they have already made a decision about going to work, college, or whatever. The career days at the high schools are so important to get these kids to understand what is out there. Not just jobs at Corning Enterprise, but all of the jobs. Not everyone wants to be, or can be, an engineer. It is these career days where you can see the small, simple businesses that can come in and talk about what they do. Ms. Keeley stated one of the things that our focus has been so much on college and career jobs. I think that we have stopped seeing that all jobs have value. I think if we can have a culture where all jobs and all people are appreciated and valued, then I think it is much easier for individuals to want to work. We want to give individuals the opportunity to find what career path makes them happy and gives them the opportunity to live the life they want to live. Mr. Johnson commented the other interesting thing that ties into this in looking at demographics, it is the white males, aged 18 – 24 that are disengaged and that is the highest that it has ever been.

Ms. Staats stated that Glow with Your Hands just held their fifth annual skilled trades event. This is where contractors and trade unions all get together and hold the event outdoors and they bring equipment and tools. The kids have hard hats on and they are climbing on equipment, using various tools. Like Ms. Keeley said, the idea is to get them engaged and interested in the skilled trades again. We have a cohort here that last year created a similar local event that was held at the Big Flats BOCES campus and any of the 22 school districts are able to participate. Our first event we had 450 students and 30 presenters. Our committee is planning for the April 2024 event. There are a lot of great careers that do not require a college degree. She noted the Glow event has moved onto healthcare and that could be another opportunity. Mr. Johnson stated the first Friday of October is National Manufacturing Day and we have been working with Campbell-Savona School and Corning-Painted Post School to hold an event in November. Ms. Keeley stated it comes down to how to excite individuals. A job should be an avenue to get the life you want. If we can do that, that will help with recruitment and retention efforts.

**V. OTHER BUSINESS**

A. *Sales Tax* – Mrs. Ferratella asked we had talked about breaking down the sales tax by online and traditional sales tax. Have we been able to capture that information? Mr. Wheeler replied he will work with Mrs. Hurd-Harvey to get a report timely with your budget.

**MOTION: TO ADJOURN MADE BY MR. VAN CAESELE. 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, November 1, 2023**

**9:30 a.m.**

**Please send agenda items to the Clerk of the Legislature’s Office**

**NO LATER THAN NOON**

**Wednesday, October 25, 2023**