

**COMMITTEE MEETING
LAKE PLEASANT, NY
WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 13, 2013**

**PUBLICITY, TOURISM, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & PLANNING
COMMITTEE
2:00 PM**

Present: Neil McGovern, John Frey and Clark Seaman

Also present: Bill Farber, Brian Towers, Brian Wells, Bob Edwards, Rick Wilt, Frank Mezzano, Bill Osborne and Pete Klein

Bill Osborne reviewed how he would like to see the office organized with the hiring of ROOST.

Bill Osborne stated he would like to talk about titles and the individual employees that are in the office now; if they could go into executive session for that discussion when they are ready.

Bill Farber stated that would be the appropriate thing to do.

Bill Osborne feels that one of the individuals in that office should fill the role of Tourism Coordinator. This would mean that they continue the relationship with the communities, the administrative needs, a contact person to answer phones etc.

The website, Adirondack Good Life, is really a site designed to talk about the quality of life here in Hamilton County so he considers this to be more under economic development than tourism. The ROOST piece from an accountability and reporting relationship is easily resolved but the accountability and reporting relationship of the individual in this office is a little more difficult to deal with. This committee needs to decide exactly how that will be accomplished. Bill Osborne believes one of the important things they are doing here is separating Tourism from Economic Development. He believes it is important that the two employees be separated in order to establish accountability and who is responsible for what tasks.

Bill Osborne then reviewed how a part-time Economic Developer would work or contract with an Economic Development Firm. He is not sure how that would work with the IDA. If they had a part-time Economic Developer they would need strong administrative support to back that individual up. Bill also stated that if they hire a part-time Economic Developer; his/her responsibility is to justify their existence with an accomplishment and develop a project or task list that will be brought before the Board to justify the hiring of a full-time person, but he doesn't see the need for that right now.

Bill Osborne stated that there have been numerous discussions of him staying on as a part-time Economic Developer and if the Board chooses he would be interested and willing to stay on. He wanted to remind them that why he retired was because he felt overwhelmed by the process and felt that he accomplished very little at the end of the week.

One of the reasons he is willing to stay on part-time is because he feels this might be the beginning of some pretty exciting times for the park from an economic development stand point. Things are pointing in the right direction and he feels it is important. Bill continued to discuss how this would work.

Neil stated we see what this could mean to the budget for this department. Contracting out the Tourism marketing piece economically is the smart thing to do. Also having a part-time Economic Developer contributes to the bottom line.

They then had a discussion on how the budget would look.

Brian Towers stated from the funding aspect, the County has been very gracious to the IDA and it has always been part of whether it was Bill or Ann salary; they were just made Executive Director and there weren't any hard costs to the IDA. As we move forward do we need to take a fresh look at the idea that the IDA needs to cover some of the costs for administration etc.

Bill Osborne stated assuming that the funding was available for the Planning portion of the budget and the money that was in the Tourism portion of the budget last year, as long as those funding totals are not expended there is money to do it all. It may require moving some funding within the budget lines, but he believes that there isn't any need for an increase in either side in order to accomplish that he proposes with this particular structure in year one. If we by chance get a large project then maybe the IDA will have to cover some expenses.

Neil stated this is basically a snap shot of what could be for the next two years. Going forward if the future solution is farming out Economic Development to a consultant we would still want an in-house person as the IDA Director. Currently the way it is being proposed is the part-time Economic Developer is your Director and he feels they can fund that.

Bill Farber stated that the reality is that Economic Development is a chicken and an egg. Do we hope we get enough projects for a full-time position or do we start with part-time and try to build projects toward the need of a full-time position? He continued discussing the difference between contracting out the Tourism verses Economic Development.

Neil stated this is a very hard area for an Economic Developer.

Bill Osborne stated the ideal scenario only works if you give your part-time Economic Developer the opportunity to develop that project list and build the need. It is very easy for us to load up on the administrative details which put other projects on the backburner.

Bill Osborne stated he is interested in the part-time position and the salary is fine. He would set aside three or four hours a day, three times a week that he will be in the office and everyone knows when he will be in. The rest of his time he would like to be talking to business people, entrepreneurs and banks to get things going.

Bill Farber stated there are a couple of things that we need to do. One is we all have to be more aware of our actions so that we ask ourselves if we need to have the County Economic Developer

at certain meetings. The other is we need to think about how we have the staff in the office taking on more of a responsibility. We have shifted a portion of the Tourism responsibility out of that office which frees up more time for the staff. With that extra time, the staff can take on more administrative tasks. Discussion continued on how to do this.

John Frey asked if they had any ideas, budget wise, on how they would like to see that structured.

Bill Osborne stated that there is money in the budget that needs to be earmarked. He does not see an increase but just moving the money from one line to another.

A motion was made to go into Executive Session to discuss the specific job performances of the employees in the office by Mr. Edwards, seconded by Mr. Seaman. Carried.

A motion to open Session by Mr. McGovern, seconded by Mr. Edwards. Carried.

The Committee continued to discuss Bill Osborne's position.

Rick asked if they could adjust the projects in the future. Neil and Bill Osborne stated sure.

Rick stated he knows Bill Osborne is big on the county lodging, he just feels Bill would be wasting a lot of time if he spends 90% of his time on that and not pursue other little projects. Rick stated that we've lost businesses and we are still losing them, we need to find a solution. There are businesses now on a tight budget and if they have a bad winter then they're gone.

John stated that they are working on trying to get something in Blue Mountain Lake for the Adirondack Museum and tomorrow the Woods End could close in Inlet. They have had three different individuals looking at it, one for a personal house, the other two might have been for a business. The closest they came to getting their offer was the one who wanted it for a personal house.

Neil stated this is why he has asked for an inventory within the county businesses and revisiting them to know just how they are doing. Neil stated where we have lodging we don't necessarily have attractions.

Bill Farber stated that John's point is well taken; we can't afford to lose anymore lodging properties.

Bill Osborne stated to Rick's point one of the projects on the list is to market the Revolving Loan Fund, Bill sees this as an equal priority project.

Discussion continued on the project list.

A short discussion then went back to hiring an Economic Developer, after some discussion the Committee agreed to do a resolution to hire Bill Osborne as part-time Economic Developer at \$29,500 per year effective January 1, 2014.

Bill Farber reported that he would like to set up a meeting with Emergency Management in the northern portion of the County and also one with the southern end to try to work out some EMS associated issues. Some of the towns are having their own issues, as well as the squads and Fulton County with their fly-cars.

As there was no further business the meeting ended.