

ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
Meeting of February 21, 2020

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Staples called the meeting to order at 9:02 AM at the IDA office, Ernest J. LaBaff Industrial Building, Canton.

ROLL CALL:

Blevins	Present	Reagen	Present
Hall.....	Present	LaBaff.....	Absent
McMahon	Present	Staples.....	Present
Morrill	Present		

SLCIDA Chairman Staples announces there is a quorum.

Others: IDA Staff (Patrick Kelly, Richard Williams, Kimberly Gilbert, and Lori Sibley); IDA-LDC Staff (Thomas Plastino); Andrew Silver, Esq. (Attorney for SLCIDA)

PUBLIC NOTICE: Public notifications sent February 14, 2020 to, at a minimum: newspapers designated for the publication of local laws and other matters required by law to be published; additional local media sources and websites.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Greg Thompson - Administrator for the Village of Potsdam, and William Eckert - Reporter for Northern New York Newspapers, are both in attendance. Mr. Thompson speaks in support of the PILOT for the Vecino Group's Old Snell Hall project. He comments that the Village of Potsdam recently voted in favor of the PILOT by resolution, noting the project is very instrumental to the Village and falls in line with the DRI award program. Additionally, he notes the renovations play a key role in bringing the facility back to life and the PILOT is helping to make this happen. Mr. McMahon asks if there were previous projects proposed for the building. Mr. Thompson responds that there were other developers looking at the facility, but they did not move forward due to a lack of financing. Mr. McMahon inquires into the biggest selling point to the community. Mr. Thompson notes the building is deteriorating and it is a historic building. It is important too that it satisfied the low to moderate income housing needs and the PILOT will create revenue for the taxing jurisdictions. Mr. Staples asks about the public access to this building and Mr. Thompson responds that the theatre is a big part of the DRI. They will seek the support of the DRI as they move along in the project. In response to Mr. Reagen's question about the PILOT is structured, Mr. Thompson notes that it is a 32-year PILOT agreement. Further discussion regarding the specifics of the PILOT will be held later in the meeting when the project resolution is addressed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Motion to accept the minutes of the December 11, 2019 meeting by Mr. Hall seconded by Mr. Morrill. Motion carried unanimously.

FINANCIAL REPORTS: Motion to accept the November 2019 financial reports by Mr. McMahon, seconded by Mr. Hall. Ms. Gilbert reports building revenues that amount to almost \$5,000, the fourth installment from the County Economic Development Services contract totaling \$400,000, as well as \$10,000 received by the County for the J&L rehabilitation project. Additionally, she notes expenses that were paid out in November that include installing an air conditioning unit in the Potsdam building. Mr. Kelly provides a summary of the status of the Newell Building rehabilitation project in Ogdensburg. Ms. Gilbert responds to Mr. Hall's question about applying for grants by stating that IDA staff are currently reviewing potential grant sources to help with the project. Mr. Reagen adds that a Restore NY grant for \$1 million has been secured, as well as a National Grid grant for \$300,000. He notes that it would be difficult for the community to make the repairs that are needed to bring the facility back into productive use. Motion carried unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS: None

STAFF REPORT: Patrick Kelly reports the following:

St. Lawrence Gas Company PILOT: The consent agreements have been executed formalizing the assignment of the St. Lawrence Gas PILOT to Liberty Utilities.

Empire State Mines: As a way of providing periodic updates to the membership, Mr. Kelly notes that the current price of zinc is down to \$.95 (a decrease of about a nickel from what was reported at the last meeting). He adds that there are now over 100 employees at the Fowler facility.

Renewable Energy (Solar): We continue to be in discussions with several projects proposed throughout the County.

Consolidated Funding Application: The CFA for Arconic's project was approved. Mr. Kelly provides a brief description of the proposed project. The CFA will help provide a comprehensive feasibility study for over 2,000 acres of land available at the Arconic site with a goal of developing a business park for recruiting manufacturers from outside the area.

Properties: From The Heart Cabinetry has executed its option to acquire the Potsdam Building. Mr. Kelly distributes a handout from a business publication which includes an article highlighting the success of the business.

Marketing: *Procurement and Technical Assistance Center* – PTAC has been holding meetings in the IDA conference room with various companies from within the County that are interested in Government contract work. Mr. Kelly sees the services provided by PTAC to be a benefit to businesses in the County and recommends renewing the contract for another year. Website – redevelopment efforts for the new website are ongoing. As part of the *Come Back Here Campaign*, ads have been placed with North Country Now and Northern New York Newspapers to seek out people that want to return to the North Country.

Annual Reporting: IDA staff are currently in the process of obtaining information from companies to enter in the PARIS Database. There are approximately 90 projects that are participating in the review process and the results will be prepared and presented for the members to discuss at the next meeting.

Potsdam Downtown Revitalization Initiative (“DRI”): The IDA is serving as a non-voting member on the local planning committee for the Potsdam DRI. Mr. McMahon inquires into the number of hours of staff time to assist with this endeavor. Mr. Kelly estimates about 100 hours or more of staff time will be used for this project.

CN Rail: Mr. Kelly references an article recently published regarding the protests (including railroad blockages) taking place over pipeline issues in Canada. CN Rail is in the process of acquiring the CSX Rail line from Syracuse to Massena which already connects to the CN Rail line in Canada. So far, there have not been any impacts noted for local businesses on rail service as a result of the issues in Canada. Mr. Kelly expects CN Rail will hear from the U.S. Service Transportation Board in April regarding approval for the proposed acquisition. Mr. McMahon adds that he recently heard from disgruntled members in the Massena community that the train held up traffic on South Main Street for over an hour when the wait typically lasts 10-15 minutes.

Public Works Enforcement Fund: A letter was recently received from the New York State Department of Labor stating that public works projects have a fee that is required to be paid into the Public Works Enforcement Fund. A similar letter was received a few years ago which we responded to at the time, an updated letter was sent this year as well.

Mr. Blevins asks if we have been contacted by anyone regarding a potential hotel project in Ogdensburg, at this time we have not.

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

Resolution IDA-20-02-01: Approving Resolution – The Quarry Potsdam, LLC Project: As part of the process for approving the PILOT, the IDA is required to secure consent from the local taxing jurisdictions. Meetings were held by these entities and a public hearing was held by the IDA in the Village of Potsdam. Mr. Kelly highlights a number of comments that were shared, including the disappointment in the incentives being made available to the company for financing and the timing of the public hearing. Mr. Kelly references the cost benefit analysis which outlines the financial benefits and jobs contributing to the project. He adds that Clarkson University currently owns the property and will lease it to the Vecino Group for the project. In response to an inquiry from Mr. Staples, Mr. Kelly provides a brief history of the building and what the project will provide for future use. Mr. Blevins adds that with low to mid income housing, rents will be controlled for 30 years. Mr. McMahon reiterates the building is such a cornerstone of the community that it should be supported. Mr. Kelly adds that the project is also in-line with the CEDS and also listed in the North Country Progress Report from the North Country Regional Economic Development Council. Mr. Staples adds that the resolutions have been approved by the Potsdam School District, as well as the Town and Village of Potsdam. Mr. Hall states he read the procurement action plan will outlines the efforts made to provide work to local contractors. Mr. Hall motions to approve Resolution IDA-20-02-01, seconded by Mr. Morrill. The motion is approved by unanimous vote.

Resolution IDA-20-02-02: Authorizing Project Termination for Butternut Assets: The project has completed its PILOT period and the facility will be placed fully on the tax roll. In response to Mr. Staples question, Mr. Kelly notes the length of the PILOT was 10 years. Mr. Kelly adds that discussions are ongoing with the company regarding potential future project work and expansion opportunities. Mr. Hall motions to approve Resolution IDA-20-02-02, seconded by Mr. McMahon. The motion is approved by unanimous vote.

Resolution IDA-20-02-03: Authorizing Support for the Continued Operation of the New York State Correctional Facilities in St. Lawrence County: Mr. Kelly emphasizes the continued interest in protecting the three facilities in St. Lawrence County. He adds that two facilities in New York State closed last year. We worked with community members, our State elected officials, and local community members from Ogdensburg and Gouverneur to highlight the economic and community benefits provided by the prisons. The local facilities are successful and operate very well. The resolution is similar to the one passed last year. This year's budget reflects Governor Cuomo's proposal to remove an additional 2,500 beds from the prison system. Mr. McMahon asks how many beds are in St. Lawrence County and Mr. Kelly responds that there are approximately 1,600 to 2,000 between all three facilities. Mr. Reagen expands upon the conversation by recounting the events that took place leading up to the facilities initially being located in St. Lawrence County and the promise that the now Governor Cuomo made that he felt he owed it to us to keep our prisons open. Mr. Reagen motions to approve Resolution IDA-20-02-03, seconded by Mr. Blevins. The motion is approved by unanimous vote.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: None

ADJOURNMENT: A motion to adjourn is made by Mr. Hall, seconded by Mr. Morrill. The meeting adjourns at 9:43 AM by unanimous vote.

(Mr.) Lynn Blevins, Secretary