

ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

Meeting of October 9, 2020

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Staples requests that Mr. Hall (who is attending the meeting in person) run the meeting. Mr. Hall calls the meeting to order at 9:03 AM in the main conference room at the Ernest J. LaBaff Industrial Building, Canton.

ROLL CALL:

Blevins	Absent	Reagen.....	Absent
Hall.....	Present	McMahon	Present
Morrill	Absent	LaBaff.....	Present
Staples	Present (via teleconference)	(via teleconference)	

Mr. Hall announces there is a quorum.

Others: IDA Staff (Patrick Kelly, Richard Williams, Kimberly Gilbert and Lori Sibley); Andrew Silver, Esq. (IDA Attorney); Christopher C. Canada, Esq., Hodgson Russ, LLP (Transaction Counsel for IDA Solar Projects)

PUBLIC NOTICE: Public notifications sent October 2, 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: Vaughn Golden, Reporter for the Watertown Daily Times is in attendance. No comment.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Motion to accept the minutes of the September 3, 2020 meeting by Mr. LaBaff seconded by Mr. McMahon with correction of the word “additional” to “addition” on page 2, second paragraph from the bottom of the page. Motion carried unanimously.

FINANCIAL REPORTS: Motion to accept the August 2020 financial reports by Mr. LaBaff, seconded by Mr. Staples. Mrs. Gilbert reports that the August highlights include revenues received from the Canton Potsdam Hospital Bond refinancing and interest income. Building expenses increased due to equipment purchased for the Canton building in response to COVID-19, including the installation of an intercom system at the front entrance. Additionally, with a CDL-A class starting next week, we are incurring expenses that will be reimbursed through the USDA Rural Business Development Grant we received to support the CDL-A training through the SUNY Canton CREST Center. As a response to a question posed by Mr. McMahon regarding the CDL-A expenses, Mrs. Gilbert explains that the IDA was awarded \$57,000 from the USDA’s Rural Development Block Grant as part of a total project cost of \$75,000. The additional \$18,000 will be paid by the Adult Ed participants enrolled in the program. Motion carried unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS: None

STAFF REPORT: Patrick Kelly reports the following:

St. Lawrence County Reopening Task Force: We partnered with the SBDC, Chamber of Commerce, NYPA and other local partners to offer a virtual networking event for manufacturers in the County. The webinar titled “Making It In St. Lawrence County: Best Practices for Manufacturers” was held on September 23rd and included panelist participation from Defelsko Corporation, Dunn Paper, Seaway Pharma/SkinStitch and Curran Renewable Energy. The event covered a number of topics, including the challenges facing businesses as a result of COVID-19, opportunities with the CARES Act, and other regional programs that have been of

assistance over the last several months. The speakers also discussed how they are managing their facilities and working to maintain their markets during these difficult times.

SLCIDA Attorney Andrew Silver enters the meeting at 9:08 AM.

Mr. Kelly adds that another webinar will be presented on October 15th titled “Understanding the Virus: Best Practices for Business.” A professor from Clarkson University will discuss research that will help businesses understand issues related to the spread of the virus so they can better prepare their workplaces for the upcoming winter months.

Empire State Mines (former St. Lawrence Zinc): Zinc prices have dropped to \$1.06 from \$1.13 since our last meeting a month ago. Prices have ranged from \$.90 to \$1.15 throughout the pandemic.

Arconic: Plans continue to move forward for the study regarding the development of a business park on excess property in Massena.

Newell Building: The City of Ogdensburg is in the process of getting the roof repaired that collapsed last winter as a result of excess snow, covering approximately 1,000 square feet of former office space in the building. We recently sent out a request for quotes (“RFQ”) for Architectural Services to assist with the design and engineering services for build-outs for the next phase of the rehabilitation of the building. The plan is to start the additional work on the building by the end of the year.

Advertising (COVID-19): Mr. Kelly notes that specific targeted advertisements ended the last week of September. 250 “Please Keep SLC Open For Business” yard signs and 100 window signs were distributed to local businesses, colleges/universities, and local developers to place throughout the county. Mr. McMahon adds that he has heard different variations of the ads on the radio, some better than others, and he hopes that the intent of the messaging was met. Mr. Kelly explains that we tried to take a proactive stance by calling over 500 businesses in an effort to make personal contacts to offer assistance. The advertising was meant to reach those we may have missed in our calling efforts. As a central point of contact, we have helped some companies directly and referred people out to CITEC, SBDC and other local and regional partners.

Dairy Processing Industries RFP: As we continue to work on new and future project activity, we have sent out a Request for Proposals for firms to outreach prospective companies in the milk processing/dairy industry. We’ve had a number of discussions with large farms in the County as well as with the Cornell Cooperative Extension regarding resource that the local supply of milk could provide as a means to attract additional processors to the County.

CDL-A Training Course: Mr. Kelly distributes a handout to the members regarding the SUNY Canton CREST Center and the CDL-A training program. The St. Lawrence River Valley Redevelopment Agency and SLCIDA-LDC awarded funds to the CREST Center through the Community Development and Environmental Improvement Program that will be used to purchase a used tractor. Pepsi-Cola Ogdensburg Bottlers previously donated a trailer to the program.

Lake Champlain/Lake George Regional Planning Board: Funds were recently awarded to the Planning Board by the EDA to fund a Small Business Recovery Loan Program for which St. Lawrence County is included. As part of their application, funds are available for the IDA to participate in the promotion of the loan fund. We expect to sign an agreement with the Planning Board in the near future outlining this participation.

Workforce: At the recent Manufacturers webinar, the panelists talked about the challenges with finding workers to fill job openings. Matching available jobs with qualified job seekers is a growing problem both locally and nationally. We have assembled a sub-committee of our local developers group, including local economic developers, the colleges, workforce system partners, the SBDC, and the Chamber of Commerce to

work together to try to find ways to improve the process of matching workers with available jobs in the County.

Thomas A. Plastino: Mr. Kelly reminds the members that this is the first meeting since Tom's September 6th passing. He comments that it is fitting that the conference room which holds the IDA board meetings is named after Tom – a lasting reminder of Tom's work. There have been numerous calls, cards and other notes of sympathy that have poured into our office over the last month. Tom will be missed by many.

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

Resolution IDA-20-10-16: Adopting the FY2021 Final Budget: The draft budget was made available for review and comment over 30 days ago and is now ready for formal approval. Mrs. Gilbert notes a change to the tentative budget which includes a line item for a payroll expenditure increase of \$100,000. Mr. Kelly adds that the IDA and IDA-LDC are down to 5.5 employees from 8 and we wanted to have a figure budgeted in the event we add additional staff for the IDA. Mr. LaBaff motions to approve Resolution IDA-20-10-16, seconded by Mr. McMahon. The motion is approved by unanimous vote.

Resolution IDA-20-10-17: Authorizing Engineering Services for the Former Newell Manufacturing Building: The IDA received an award of \$500,000 from the Northern Border Regional Council and a \$200,000 loan/grant from the North Country Redevelopment Fund (DANC) to continue improvements on the building. A Request for Quotes for Architectural Services was distributed and a bid from Brooks Washburn is recommended. Mr. McMahon asks if the cost is in line with what was anticipated, as there were not a lot of other bids. Mr. Williams, IDA Facilities Manager, states that the bid from Brooks Washburn is in line with our expectations for a project of this size. Mr. Williams adds that Mr. Washburn has in-depth knowledge about the property and he is aware of the timeline and what we want to accomplish in this phase of work. Mr. McMahon motions to approve Resolution IDA-20-10-17, seconded by Mr. LaBaff. The motion is approved by unanimous vote.

Resolution IDA-20-10-18: Approving Resolution for Omni Navitas Renewables, LLC 126 Little Bow Road North Project: There are seven resolutions, including four in the Town of Gouverneur and three in the Town of DeKalb as part of the solar projects currently proposed by Omni Navitas. The projects have numerous consistencies, including the \$4,250 per megawatt PILOT price proposed. The PILOT parameters for these projects are similar to those found in the Morristown Solar project approved last month. The Cost Benefit Analysis showing the project evaluation and cost benefit is reviewed. The installation for this project will include approximately 24.4 acres of the Land of a 4.75 mW-AC ground-mounted photovoltaic solar energy system including panels, racking, inverters, electrical cables, grid interconnection, site preparation, access roads and any other required improvements. There is currently \$1,240 paid in property tax now on the subject parcel. The new property tax payments are expected to increase to \$20,187.50 based on the 4.75 size of the project (an increase 17 times what the property tax being paid is currently on the parcel).

PILOT consents have been received by the Town of Gouverneur and the Gouverneur School District. There is no request for a Sales and Use Tax or a Mortgage Recording Tax. The NYSERDA solar tool kit was used as one data point for reviewing the project, as were the review of numerous other solar projects approved by IDAs around the State. Mr. Kelly adds that there is a priority in New York State to grow the renewable energy sector. Mr. Staples asks for Mr. McMahon's opinion concerning the project. Mr. McMahon adds that he is surprised solar development in northern New York State is so lucrative considering the cost of energy is so low. He adds that he supports this kind of project activity because it supports the existing renewable sector and may be beneficial in supporting other industries in the area. Mr. Kelly explains that as the largest

County in the State, we have the opportunity to be a key player in renewable energy for the State. Mr. Hall asks if there is any concern about losing farming production. Mr. Kelly states that the IDA attends the Ag and Farmland Protection Board meetings where there has been a great deal of discussion regarding the importance of preserving better soils for agricultural production. There is a balance between preserving these soils and enabling landowners, including farm owners, and local communities to generate revenue from property. In response to Mr. LaBaff's question about losing farms now, Mr. Kelly mentions that there has been a lot of consolidation in the farming sector. There are fewer farms which are becoming larger and more efficient at producing milk. We partner with the Cornell Cooperative Extension and participate in the Ag and Farmland Protection Board meetings because the Agriculture sector is so important to us. This is a large part of why we are trying to recruit dairy processing facilities to our area. A public hearing was held on September 30th via Zoom to hear comments that are either in favor of or opposed to the project. Mr. Kelly mentions that job creation is not a large part of these projects, with the primary benefits being the value of the PILOT payments and the role the projects play in supporting the development and use of renewable energy locally and in New York State. Mr. LaBaff motions to approve Resolution IDA-20-10-18, seconded by Mr. McMahan. The motion is approved by unanimous vote.

Resolution IDA-20-10-19: Approving Resolution for Omni Navitas Renewables, LLC 126 Little Bow Road South Project: This parcel is a neighboring parcel to 126 Little Bow Road North, dynamics are similar, and most of the information relative to this project was covered in the previous resolution. The installation is on approximately 24.3 acres of land and includes a 4.0 mW-AC ground-mounted photovoltaic solar energy system including panels, racking, inverters, electrical cables, grid interconnection, site preparation, access roads and any other required improvements. Mr. McMahan explains that this is approximately 5 acres per mW. He adds that the general rule used to be 7-8 acres per mW, but now it is around 5 acres per mW. The footprint is getting smaller and that is important as less land is needed for the same power production. Mr. LaBaff motions to approve Resolution IDA-20-10-19, seconded by Mr. Staples. The motion is approved by unanimous vote.

Resolution IDA-20-10-20: Approving Resolution for ASA Gouverneur Solar II, LLC Project: The installation is on approximately 17.8 acres of land and includes a 4.0 mW-AC ground-mounted photovoltaic solar energy system including panels, racking, inverters, electrical cables, grid interconnection, site preparation, access roads and any other required improvements. Mr. LaBaff motions to approve Resolution IDA-20-10-20, seconded by Mr. McMahan. The motion is approved by unanimous vote.

Resolution IDA-20-10-21: Approving Resolution for ASA DeKalb Solar I, LLC Project: The installation is on approximately 18.21 acres of land and includes a 5.0 mW-AC ground-mounted photovoltaic solar energy system including panels, racking, inverters, electrical cables, grid interconnection, site preparation, access roads and any other required improvements. Mr. LaBaff motions to approve Resolution IDA-20-10-21, seconded by Mr. McMahan. The motion is approved by unanimous vote.

Resolution IDA-20-10-22: Approving Resolution for ASA DeKalb Solar II, LLC Project: The installation is on approximately 15.11 acres of land and includes a 3.0 mW-AC ground-mounted photovoltaic solar energy system including panels, racking, inverters, electrical cables, grid interconnection, site preparation, access roads and any other required improvements. Mr. LaBaff motions to approve Resolution IDA-20-10-22, seconded by Mr. Staples. The motion is approved by unanimous vote.

Resolution IDA-20-10-23: Approving Resolution for ASA DeKalb Solar III, LLC Project: The installation is on approximately 15.85 acres of land and includes a 3.3 mW-AC ground-mounted photovoltaic solar energy system including panels, racking, inverters, electrical cables, grid interconnection, site

preparation, access roads and any other required improvements. Mr. LaBaff motions to approve Resolution IDA-20-10-23, seconded by Mr. Staples. The motion is approved by unanimous vote.

Resolution IDA-20-10-24: Approving Resolution for ASA Gouverneur Solar I, LLC Project: The installation is on approximately 12.03 acres of land and includes a 1.48 mW-AC ground-mounted photovoltaic solar energy system including panels, racking, inverters, electrical cables, grid interconnection, site preparation, access roads and any other required improvements. Mr. LaBaff motions to approve Resolution IDA-20-10-24, seconded by Mr. McMahon. The motion is approved by unanimous vote.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: None

ADJOURNMENT: A motion to adjourn is made by Mr. LaBaff, seconded by Mr. Staples. The meeting adjourns at 9:44 AM by unanimous vote.

(Mr.) Lynn Blevins, Secretary