

ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

Meeting of August 23, 2021

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Staples calls the meeting to order at 3:09 PM in the Thomas A. Plastino Conference Room at the Ernest J. LaBaff Industrial Building, Canton.

ROLL CALL:

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

Mr. Staples announces there is a quorum.

Others: IDA Staff (Patrick Kelly, Richard Williams, Kimberly Gilbert, and Lori Sibley); SLCIDA-LDC Staff (John Pinkerton)

PUBLIC NOTICE: Public notifications sent August 18, 2021 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: None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Mr. Kelly requests a minor change to the March 30, 2021 meeting minutes. Proposed changes include removing the resolution numbers from the tabled discussions and resetting the numeric sequence for the resolution that follows. Motion to accept the minutes of the April 27, 2021 meeting and revisions to the March 30, 2021 by Mr. Hall seconded by Mr. LaBaff. Motion carried unanimously.

FINANCIAL REPORTS: Motion to accept the April, May, June, and July 2021 financial reports by Mr. Morrill, seconded by Mr. Blevins. Mrs. Gilbert reports that the *April* highlights include marketing expenses in the amount of \$20,000 paid out to the Elder Group; *May* highlights reflect the former Newell Building rehabilitation expenses and the RDBG Adult Ed CDL-A expenses. Now that the grant is completed and the funds have been expended, we will submit the required forms for reimbursement from USDA. As a side note, the funds served seven more participants than originally expected. Motion to accept the April, May, June, and July 2021 financial reports by Mr. Morrill, seconded by Mr. Blevins. Motion carried unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS: Nominating Committee Chairman Ernest LaBaff offers the following slate of officers: Brian W. Staples (Chairman), Ernest LaBaff (Vice-Chairman) and Lynn Blevins (Secretary). Hearing no other nominations, the list of nominees is elected by unanimous vote. The Board unanimously approves the following: Patrick J. Kelly (Chief Executive Officer), Kimberly Gilbert (Chief Financial Officer) and the Law Firm of Silver & Collins (Agency General Counsel). Motion to accept the slate of officers made by Mr. Blevins, seconded by Mr. Morrill. Motion carried unanimously.

STAFF REPORT: Patrick Kelly reports the following:

Organizational Chart: A more accurate description of staff roles is proposed with suggested revisions to the organizational chart. Richard Williams has been functioning in a Project Manager role since the beginning of the year and this new chart more accurately reflects his role and duties. With the addition of a new business development specialist (Bob Ahlfeld), Brian Norton will focus more on building, facilities, and sites. Mr. Kelly adds that at the Governance Committee meeting this Fall there will be further discussion with regards to staff roles and a potential for additional changes. Motion to accept the updated Organizational Chart is made by Mr. LaBaff, seconded by Mr. McMahon. Motion carried unanimously.

Renewable Energy: The closing documents for five NexAmp Solar projects were executed last week. The Renewable Properties (RPNY) project closing documents will be executed this week.

Northern Border Regional Commission (“NBRC”): The grant application for rail bridge repair for Dunn Paper that was submitted to the NBRC for \$450,000 was not approved. We will consider submitting a new application for the project through an NBRC forest products grant program if it is a fit for the program. We are still waiting for announcements from the NYS Department of Transportation on rail grant submissions submitted for projects with Dunn Paper and Alcoa.

Former Newell Manufacturing Building: Chairman Staples, Mr. Reagen, and Mr. Blevins each toured the former Newell Manufacturing building on August 20th to see the work in progress.

Nature and Networking Events: The next event is planned for Massena next month, with another event to follow in Star Lake in October. We are working with the County Chamber now to prepare for these events. Previous events this year have brought businesses together to facilitate networking and in-person conversations with a focus on workforce issues.

Workforce Recruitment: Chairman Staples suggested reaching out to the newly appointed Commanding General at Fort Drum to welcome him and inform him about opportunities for recruiting soldiers transitioning out of the military. With Mr. LaBaff’s background as a Colonel in the U.S. Army, it seemed appropriate for Vice Chairman LaBaff to send an introductory letter on the Agency’s behalf. Mr. Kelly distributes a copy of the letter that was sent to Commanding General Milfred Beagle, Jr. at Fort Drum. Recently, staff visited the post and met with representatives of Transitional Services to discuss further options for working together to recruit soldiers transitioning out of military duty for career opportunities with St. Lawrence County employers.

COVID-19 Response: As the pandemic and related guidance continues to evolve, we remain active with the St. Lawrence County Reopening Task Force and are connecting businesses with assistance programs and public health guidance. As an example, we are relaying messaging to businesses that if they have at least 6 employees on site that will sign up to receive the COVID vaccine, the St. Lawrence County Public Health Department will schedule a vaccination clinic at the worksite. Businesses are now trying to determine their best course of action in response to escalating COVID illnesses now that the Governor’s Executive Orders have lapsed.

2020 Census: 2020 County-level Census results were released last week. St. Lawrence County population numbers have declined by approximately 3.1%. In New York State, growth centered more around New York City and other metropolitan areas. Mr. Kelly also provides an update on unemployment and workforce numbers in the County. Mr. McMahon suggests a continuation of this type of dashboard of economic indicator information be presented periodically so board members have data and information to measure the County’s progress moving forward. Mr. LaBaff mentions how the loss of many good paying manufacturing jobs in Massena has affected our population numbers. Mr. Staples highlights the importance of keeping the jobs we have currently in the county. He adds that creating jobs is important, but so is preserving the jobs we currently have. Mr. LaBaff further explains that the COVID pandemic has affected workforce recruitment everywhere and truck drivers in particular are desperately needed. Mr. Kelly adds that staff is working with the Workforce Development Board and local employers, as well as the USDA, to get assistance with funding the CDL-A driving program at SUNY Canton’s CREST Center to keep students closer to home and keep expenses down. We continue to seek additional funding streams to assist with the program.

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (“CEDS”): An update to the CEDS is being developed. The 2020 Census information will be utilized as an important data point in the revised edition.

Semiannual Report: Mr. Kelly asks if there are any recommendations for the DRAFT report that is provided to the Board Members. If not, the report will go through Mr. Reagen in the coming days to be presented to the rest of the County Legislature. Mr. Reagen suggests putting a map on the cover with historical project information to show how we are involved in projects all around the County.

Annual Financial Disclosure Forms: The New York State Comptroller's Office has requested the Board Members complete a revised Annual Financial Disclosure Form that Mrs. Gilbert distributed prior to the meeting.

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

Resolution IDA-21-08-19: Support for the Continued Operation of the New York State Correctional Facilities in St. Lawrence County: As a reminder, Lieutenant Governor Kathy Hochul will take office as New York State Governor at midnight tonight. The resolution will serve as an introduction to the new Governor and a reminder to our other state level representatives of the County's on-going support to keep the correctional facilities in St. Lawrence County open. Mr. Blevins motions to approve Resolution IDA-21-08-19, seconded by Mr. LaBaff. The motion is approved by unanimous vote.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: None

ADJOURNMENT: A motion to adjourn is made by Mr. LaBaff. The meeting adjourns at 3:43 PM by unanimous vote.

(Mr.) Lynn Blevins, Secretary