

ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

Meeting of July 24, 2025

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Staples calls the meeting to order at 1:04 PM in the main conference room at the Ernest J. LaBaff Industrial Building, Canton.

ROLL CALL:

Staples Present
LaBaff Present
Blevins Present
Hall..... Present

McMahon Present
Morrill Present
Reagen..... Present

A quorum is recognized.

IDA Staff present: Patrick Kelly, Bob Ahlfeld, Kimberly Gilbert, and Lori Sibley

PUBLIC NOTICE: Public notifications sent July 17, 2025, 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: Watertown Daily Times (Andrew Gardner, Reporter) and a representative from North Country This Week joined via Zoom. No comment from the public.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Motion to accept the minutes of the May 27, 2025 meeting by Mr. LaBaff, seconded by Mr. Reagen. The motion is approved unanimously.

FINANCIAL REPORTS: Mrs. Gilbert provides highlights for April and May 2025. *April* highlights reflect ARPA revenue received from the County (the final 10% of funds), and PILOT payments that were received and sent out to the taxing jurisdictions. *May* includes typical expenditures plus the 30 Buck Street Canton building expenses. Motion to accept the April and May 2025 financial reports by Mr. LaBaff, seconded by Mr. Reagen. The motion is approved unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS: Nominating Committee (LaBaff – Chair, Blevins and Reagen). Nominating Committee Chairman Ernest LaBaff offers the following slate of officers: Brian W. Staples (Chairman), Lynn Blevins (Vice-Chairman), and Ernest LaBaff (Secretary). Hearing no other nominations, motion to accept the slate of officers made by Mr. LaBaff, seconded by Mr. Reagen. Motion carried unanimously

STAFF REPORT: Mr. Kelly highlights the following recent activities:

Vecino Group (Canton Mid Town Plaza and Potsdam Congdon Properties Projects): Discussions with the taxing jurisdictions indicate voting for their consent resolutions will be in August for both projects and we will then bring forward a final project resolution to consider after we held public hearings for the projects.

Bent Beam Brewing: The final financing packaging closed last Friday. The business is anticipating opening in late summer or fall 2025.

ARPA Funding: An ARPA award that was made for multi-use trails to do some bridge replacement work will not be completed in time to meet the deadline for expenditures to be submitted for ARPA reimbursement, so the group has asked that the funds be repurposed for a project to connect the southern trail to the Lewis County trail. The request shows a similar project scope and uses and meets ARPA guidelines. The request for modification to the award is presented to the board and approved unanimously.

Empire State Mines: Loans from the IDA-LDC, River Valley Redevelopment Agency and DANC totaling \$2 million for the commercial demonstration facility's graphite project have closed. The company is moving forward with securing the equipment and putting the graphite facility together. Mr. McMahon asks about timing for the project and Mr. Kelly responds that the goal is to begin demonstration production this year, with a series of other phases to follow in the next one to four years.

30 Buck Street, Canton facility: We are now doing some maintenance work now and security cameras have been placed around the facility. An RFP for construction work will likely go out in August in time to begin a late fall project. The initial project will include HVAC, lights, power, and similar work that we did for the Paterson Street Building in Ogdensburg. Mr. McMahon inquires into the cost for this phase of the project. Mr. Kelly states that we are in discussions about the project scope with LaBella Associates to determine costs.

DRI Project: Massena School of Business: Project work is on-going. Pictures showing the progress of the project are shared with the board for review. As a result of the recent back wall collapse, the demolition crew quickly mobilized to safeguard the structure. Mr. McMahon states that the recent collapse was an inconvenience to the locals since part of the main street was shut down, but all in all, he feels people will be pleased to see the blighted area get a much-needed makeover. Mr. Staples adds that the courtyard and accessway will be opened rather than just tearing down the entire structure, so there shouldn't be any gaps in the middle of Main Street.

Marketing and Events: A resolution will be brought forward under New Business today to approve the Lead Generation Marketing Campaign in Canada. Mr. Ahlfeld attended the Realtor Roundtable this morning in Massena. Mr. Kelly will attend an IDA conference next week. Ms. Sibley is working with the Development Authority of the North Country to arrange some outreach events for the Next Move NY initiative, and she will also attend the Fort Drum Career Fair in early August.

CSX Railroad: Mr. LaBaff inquires about the recent news about CSX Railroad giving designation to the former GM site. Mr. Kelly explains that CSX has different designations for sites on their rail. This CSX Select Site designation highlights the industrial potential for the GM site and will hopefully provide a higher profile for the site to any potential projects needing rail access.

NYPA (Nuclear Facility): Along with the Town and Village of Massena, we have signed a letter to NYPA recommending a nuclear facility be given priority consideration in Massena as NYPA works on Governor Hochul's request to seek a location for such a facility in New York State. Mr. LaBaff raises a concern that was brought up in a survey conducted many years ago about Massena being on a fault line. Mr. McMahon points out that it is not a major fault line, and Mr. Blevins adds that nuclear technology has advanced so much over the years that it is less concerning now. Mr. Kelly notes that with the infrastructure already in place in Massena, we want to highlight the positive aspects of having a nuclear facility in this area. Mr. LaBaff mentions that he is not against having a nuclear facility in Massena, but he wants to mention a concern that was raised many years ago.

Clarkson ROTC Program: Chairman Staples and Secretary LaBaff sent several letters out recently to our state and federal officials, including the Secretary of the Army, in support of Clarkson University's ROTC program after the recent announcements that the program will be ending next year. Both Mr. Staples and Mr. LaBaff have military background and Mr. Staples is an alum at Clarkson University. An email was received by Senator Schumer's office last night which states the closure has been placed on pause at this time. We will continue to advocate to keep the program at Clarkson University and will keep the board updated.

Reappointment: Mr. McMahon's term will expire in September. Mr. Hall motions for Mr. McMahon to be reappointed to another three-year term, seconded by Mr. Reagen. The motion passes unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS:

Resolution IDA-25-07-17: Project Authorizing Resolution for Kinney Drugs, Inc.: Mr. Kelly mentions that the IDA has worked on various projects with Kinney Drugs over the years. They currently have 82.5 full time equivalent workers and anticipate hiring another 2 full time equivalent workers at the project facility. The company plans to acquire SKUB machines to allow more efficiency with prescription fill processing. Mr. Blevins motions to approve Resolution IDA-25-07-17, seconded by Mr. Morrill. The motion is approved by unanimous vote.

Resolution IDA-25-07-18: Authorizing Disposal of Vehicle and New Vehicle Purchase: Mr. Blevins requests to abstain from discussions and voting. While he has no affiliation with the business that submitted a proposal, his last name is the same and he does not want there to be any doubt regarding conflict of interest. Mr. LaBaff motions to approve Resolution IDA-25-07-18, seconded by Mr. Reagen. The motion is approved by majority vote, with an abstention from Mr. Blevins.

Resolution IDA-25-07-19: Authorizing a Lead Generation Marketing Campaign: Mr. Kelly explains that as part of our promotional activities in Canada, and with support from a marketing grant received by National Grid, we would like to increase our business expansion messaging in Canada. We hope with assistance from a marketing firm located in Canada, our efforts will allow us more lead generation with Canadian businesses. Mr. LaBaff motions to approve Resolution IDA-25-07-19, seconded by Mr. Reagen. The motion is approved by unanimous vote.

OLD BUSINESS: None

ADJOURNMENT: A motion to adjourn is made by Mr. LaBaff. The meeting adjourns at 1:34 PM by unanimous vote.

Mr. Ernest LaBaff, Secretary