

**SPECIAL MEETING
October 16, 2014**

The meeting was called to order at 3:30 p.m. by Chairman Michael A. Tabolt.

Roll Call: All Legislators were present, except Legislator Brennan.

The Invocation was offered by Legislator Hathway, followed by a moment of silence for those deceased. Chairman Tabolt led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

There were 5 persons present.

REPORT OF THE RULES AND LEGISLATION COMMITTEE:

The Rules and Legislation Committee had met and recommended to waive the rules to allow action on late resolutions.

Lawrence Dolhof, Chairman
Bryan Moser

Dated: October 17, 2014

Legislator Moser made a motion to waive the rules, seconded by Legislator Dolhof, and carried.

RESOLUTION:

**RESOLUTION NO. 353 - 2014
RESOLUTION DESIGNATING
LEWIS COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AS
TOURIST PROMOTION AGENCY
AND COMMITTING MATCHING FUNDS FOR
(I LOVE NY) PROGRAM**

Introduced by Legislator Lawrence Dolhof, Chairman of the Economic Development Committee.

BE IT RESOLVED as follows:

Section 1. That the Lewis County Board of Legislators hereby designates the Lewis County Chamber of Commerce as Tourist Promotion Agency for the County of Lewis in its application for Matching Funds (I Love NY) Program for 2014-2015.

Section 2. That this Board hereby endorses the application of the Lewis County Chamber of Commerce, and hereby commits matching County funds in the amount of \$40,000.00 from 2015 County budget appropriations in support of said application.

Section 3. In addition, this Board hereby commits an additional \$75,000.00 to be encumbered from 2014 budgetary appropriations in support of said application.

Section 4. That the Chairman, or Vice-Chairman, of the Lewis County Board of Legislators is hereby authorized to sign any and all necessary papers and documents in connection with said application.

Section 5. That this resolution shall take effect immediately.

Moved by Legislator King, seconded by Legislator Moser.

Legislator Hathway explained the committee strongly supports appropriating \$40,000 in the 2015 County budget, while merely suggesting the level of additional funds by availing 2014 surplus budgetary appropriations.

Legislator King suggests placing a \$5.00 off coupon for a three-day pass in the brochure as a utilization tracking mechanism, and possible indication for impact on sales tax revenue. Recreation, Forestry and Parks Director Jackie Mahoney responded that the new website will allow tracking specific areas of interest through accessed sites, as well as the new scan code on the brochure.

Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Anne Merrill agreed the coupon would be a good idea and should be considered. In response to Legislator Kulzer, she stated she would advertise for bids for printing the brochures to avail the least cost.

Legislator Kulzer queried the wisdom of spending \$12,500 for mandarin language printing, He doubted justifiable response, while predicting those tourists would be fluent in both languages. He also expressed he could not justify the cost to his constituents. However, Legislator Kulzer supports the French language printing for distribution at Canadian shows. Legislator Dolhof opined that the Chinese are the highest marketed tourist group throughout the United States, and supports the initial attempt to attract them. While not focusing on any nationality, Liz Swearingin cited the Nano-Tech Center in Utica, whose employed engineers hail from around the world. She strongly encouraged the Board trust the judgment of their chosen tourism agents, asserting that Ms. Merrill and Jackie Mahoney are the experts who attend the shows and field the posed questions, encouraging support of their knowledgeable and justifiable request.

Legislator Pepper noted that the Chamber's request was for \$100,000, inquiring the reason for additional appropriations. Anne Merrill stated their request reflects their plans to attend 10 shows, more than double of the current year. A lesser funding level would reduce the amount of printed materials for 2015. She confirmed that the entire County appropriation would be matched by the State's Love NY's Program.

Legislator Moser clarified that the extra \$15,000 above the 2014's Love NY's Program funding was justifiable; and the additional \$75,000 was deemed a reasonable portion to encumber of the projected 2014 sales tax revenue surplus.

Legislator Chartrand questioned the \$125,000 brochure printing costs, citing the move to digital, wanting to assure a good return on the investment. Sr. Planner Frank Pace explained that the scan code on the brochures will facilitate easy access through the website directing persons to specific applications.

Legislator Pepper expressed concern with the extraordinary funding amount being four times that of the current year. He submits that if tourist promotion efforts are successful, there may not be adequate facilities to handle the anticipated onslaught. Legislator Pepper specifically cited the lack of outlets for kayaking equipment or snowmobiling clothing for those who appear without needed gear.

Ms. Merrill informed that Maple Ridge Supply has prospective plans to open in the vicinity at the first of the year, to sell cross-country skiing and snowshoeing gear, among other sport equipment.

Legislator Moser exclaimed "Isn't that what we want, to have tourists that want services that evoke new businesses to serve their needs?"

Legislator Pepper wants to proceed cautiously, afraid of potential negative consequences caused by a new tourist having an initial bad experience because we are unable to serve their needs. Legislator Moser responded that tourism efforts focus on what we can support.

In response to Legislator Kulzer's inquiry, Ms. Merrill estimated that 6,000 brochures were handed out during the 12-day State Fair; and averaged 2,000 to 3,000 were distributed at weekend events. There are also 40,000 brochures available at 39 visitor centers throughout the State for distribution. The Long Island and other high traffic centers distribute as many as 10,000, while others range from 100 to 5,000 dependent upon pedestrian traffic.

Ms. Merrill affirmed that any advertising proceeds are used to offset printing costs. In response to Chairman Tabolt, Legislator Hathway relayed the Committee's opinion that the proposed appropriation levels are the maximum amounts, until completing their budget deliberations to consider departmental obligations in their entirety. Legislator Chartrand expressed concurrence, citing the instant need for 2015 fund commitment. Legislator King is aware of the annual tourism commitment, stating the current year sales tax surplus allows the one-time additional appropriation.

In response to Legislator Moser, County Treasurer Patricia O'Brien believes the surplus is attributable to the imposed sales tax increased percentage, increased tourism, and other undefined factors.

Legislator Hathway stated the Committee's proposal considered unspent economic development funds and sales tax surplus. Legislator Chartrand cautioned that other areas may need to be addressed as a result of increased tourism traffic, recognizing the advantages that would present.

Legislator King shared his observation there have been many more ATV enthusiasts utilizing the trails on weekends during this season, projecting eventual increases.

Citing the Chamber's request for \$100,000, Legislator Kulzer made a motion to amend and reduce the \$75,000 additional funding to \$60,000 which would equate the requested level. The motion was seconded by Legislator Chartrand.

Director of Economic Development Eric Virkler strongly advocated for the \$75,000 level reminding that every dollar committed would be matched equally by the State, providing adequate funding to accomplish most of what the Chamber has planned.

Although admittedly skeptical, Legislator Pepper recognized that sending representatives to shows without adequate materials would not be productive, thereby favoring the higher level.

Legislator Kulzer questioned the need for 100,000 brochures, asking for accountability for disbursed materials at the various tourism shows. He favors getting some feedback on disbursed brochures before considering increased funding. Ms. Merrill submitted that the 50,000 brochures printed for 2014 will be depleted by the end of the year; while plans are to double the number of shows they attend next year.

Legislator King recognized the savings for printing a larger number of brochures at one time, while also asserting that additional funding may not be available in the future.

Chairman Tabolt concurred with Legislator Kulzer that a lot could be accomplished with \$200,000, considering the matching funds.

The amending motion was defeated by a vote of 2 to 7, with Legislators Chartrand, Dolhof, Hathway, King, Moroughan, Moser and Pepper opposed. Legislator Brennan was absent.

The resolution was then adopted by a vote of 7 to 2, with Legislators Kulzer and Tabolt opposed. Legislator Brennan was absent.

OTHER BUSINESS:

There being no other business to come before the Board, Legislator Moser made a motion to adjourn at 4:11 p.m., seconded by Legislator Pepper and carried.