

**EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE  
MINUTES**

**FRIDAY, JANUARY 25, 2019  
4:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Paul Ruszkiewicz, Chairman  
Barry J. Cheney, Joseph J. Minuta, James D. O'Donnell,  
Rob Sassi, Joel Sierra, Kathy A. Stegenga, Laurie R. Tautel

ALSO

PRESENT: L. Stephen Brescia, Chairman  
Katie Bonelli, Majority Leader  
Michael D. Paduch, Minority Leader  
John S. Vero, Legislator  
Antoinette Reed, Legislative Counsel  
Harold Porr III, Acting County Executive  
Mary Pat Smith, Assistant to the County Executive  
Steven M. Gross, Commissioner, Human Resources  
Donna McCarey, Deputy Commissioner, Human Resources  
Charles F. Mitchell, Commissioner, Consumer Affairs  
Julie Richmond, Deputy Commissioner, Planning  
Bill Fiovoranti, Director, Economic Development  
Maureen Halahan, President, CEO, Orange County Partnership  
Summer Crockett Moore, Managing Partner, Choice Films  
Tony Glazer, Managing Partner, Choice Films  
Deborah Slesinski, Deputy Budget Director

Chairman Ruszkiewicz opened the committee meeting at 4:02 p.m. by asking everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. All committee members were present with the exception of Mr. Minuta and Mr. Sierra who arrived at 4:05 p.m.

The first item on the agenda was a request from Mr. Porr to confirm an appointment of William Vacca to Orange County Community College Board of Trustees.

Mr. Sassi moved the request to confirm the appointment of William Vacca to Orange County Community College Board of Trustees, seconded by Ms. Stegenga.

Mr. Porr explained that Mr. Vacca was appointed with a few others last May or June but Mr. Vacca had to step away for personal matters which required his full attention. Since that time, Mr. Vacca is now available again to us and he is requesting confirmation for his appointment.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Mr. Gross was next on the agenda to request that various positions in the Planning Department be transferred to the Department of Tourism, as a division of the Office of the County Executive.

Ms. Stegenga moved the request that the Director of Tourism position; Tourism Coordinator position; Tourism Assistant(s) positions and the Senior Clerk position be transferred from the Department of Planning to the Department of Tourism, as a division of the Office of the County Executive, seconded by Mr. Cheney.

Mr. Gross stated what they were doing was administrative action under Civil Service Law Section 70.2 which will transfer employees from one department to another as a result of the 2019 budget. The positions will be transferred from the Department of Planning which is where they are currently in our organization structure and will be put under the County Executive's Office as a stand-alone department as the Department of Tourism.

Ms. Stegenga asked if Mr. Gross anticipated employees to request salary increases since Tourism is their own department now.

Mr. Gross explained that everything will stay as it is. The majority of the positions are civil service competitive positions tied to the CSEA Contract.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Mr. Mitchell was next on the agenda to provide an update on Electrical Licensing. There were some questions as to how much money was taken in and to date for 2018 they brought in close to \$200,000 in electrical licensing revenue. They have 325 electricians that are licensed that are Orange County residents and there are 190 that are residents of New York State but live outside of the county and there are 170 that are out of state residents. It is a grand total of 685 licensed electricians in Orange County.

Mr. Ruskiewicz asked if there was a different fee for in-county residents.

Mr. Mitchell explained that there is a different fee. To renew the license or to get the license it is \$150.00 for Orange County residents; for residents of New York State but outside of the Orange County is \$250.00 and for out of state residents it is \$750.00. The renewals for each of them is a little different as well. Some of the revenue included some fines that were initiated against some companies last year. There was two very big fines last year, one was to Cumberland Farms for \$7,500.00. They were working with an unlicensed contractor with electricians that were coming up from Florida to work. When they found out about it they went there and stopped the job. The Hampton Inn on Dunning Road was fined \$5,000.00 for the same reason, using unlicensed out of state electrical contractors. They are told they cannot proceed with the job until they pay the fine and they need a master electrician that is licensed on the job, at the site, doing work.

Mr. Minuta asked what is done when a licensed contractor who lends out their license.

Mr. Mitchell responded that their license gets suspended and they get fined and they are given a hearing date to come before the Electrical Licensing Board.

Ms. Tautel confirmed that the cities have separate licensing so if they wanted to upgrade they would need a city license as well as a county license and Mr. Mitchell replied, yes.

Ms. Stegenga asked what the process was for recertification and what was the cost.

Mr. Mitchell responded that it was a renewal process and it was the same fee.

Mr. Fioravanti was next with an update on Economic Development. He explained that he is part one of a two part presentation. If you include the Orange County Arts Council when they came in to discuss the film office, this is technically part two of three. There was a lot of interest in wanting more information and they did not get enough when the film office was here. He and Ms. Dana are both on the same page in terms of really believing in the economic impact of building on the film and television production. He wanted to give a real example with real numbers and a real impact and also talk about what the possibilities are.

Mr. Fioravanti introduced his guests, Summer Crockett Moore and Tony Glazer from Choice Films and they are managing Umbra Stages which is off of Route 84 in Newburgh.

Ms. Crockett Moore explained that their company is 20 years old and based in Manhattan and in New Jersey. They moved their offices to Newburgh about 1 ½ years ago and took over the management of Sound Stage. They displayed a power point presentation (on file in Clerk's office). They presently have three featured films coming in and HBO is setting up in the region for 8 months and they will be using their stage so they are very excited. They have been having a lot of discussion with Mr. Fioravanti and Ms. Dana about the hub and the domino affect that is happening and can expand more rapidly in Orange County.

Mr. Glazer stated that these companies get priced out in the city and come to Orange County for the tax credit, the locations are varied, it is only an hour from the city. These companies bring everything with them and leave with everything. This is about them trying to establish and build. They are working on their crew base to make more and more people find this interesting so they keep coming here.

Ms. Crockett Moore mentioned that some people are familiar with Amazon Prime, Netflix, video on demand or go to the movies, you may have noticed that they have five releases last year of theatrical films and some of those projects were filmed in the Hudson Valley. She gave an example of a film that was filmed here locally just so she could provide some dollar figures. Over a nine month period 868 people were employed with them. There were local vendors that received money as a result of production. They set up shop at various locations and turned one place into a police station, another site into a night club. What was spent in New York State is one thing, but what we spent here locally is another story. On one project that filmed 8 episodes, it was \$10.5 million. Out of the 868 New York hires, 238 were cast and crew; 630 were extras. They spent almost \$1 million on I.T. and security detail. They have three films coming soon and we want these films, we want the productions.

Mr. Glazer discussed the young adults they recruited to train and work on the crew. They provide paying jobs and this serves their needs too. They get calls everyday and are barely doing the outreach.

Ms. Crockett Moore stated that the potential for work to come and stay in Orange County is a domino effect. They love the support from Orange County.

Mr. Glazer stated that where they are in Newburgh, they want to reach out to the rest of Orange County and ultimately throughout the rest of the region. They want to be a resource to make sure everyone knows that this is a great place to come.

Ms. Tautel commended Mr. Glazer and Ms. Crockett Moore for working with the kids and asked if they have worked with the Youth Bureau or the local BOCES program.

Ms. Crockett Moore added that they have nine interns starting next week.

There was discussion on a vendor database and who is used while filming. They use local services which is another perk to Orange County keeping the local vendors busy. Mr. Glazer mentioned that the database is not just for them but they want it to be accessible for the public and have it out there.

Ms. Tautel suggested putting something on Facebook similar to an ad that they are seeking information for things while in production.

Mr. Glazer stated that they had a stuntman that they brought in from out of the area only to find out that they have eight stuntmen here locally.

Mr. Minuta asked if they felt there was a need for more soundstages in Orange County and what are the qualifications of a soundstage location.

Mr. Glazer responded yes, more qualified.

Ms. Crockett Moore expanded that there are a lot of spaces that are considered qualified production facilities but do not have proper electric, no dressing rooms, or kitchens. They would like to partner with the college because they have a full curriculum but they are a production company, but they are not a college.

Mr. Minuta asked what size of a location would they need.

Ms. Crockett Moore explained that the minimum of a stage size should be 7,000 or they would not qualify. A facility size would be 30,000 plus.

Mr. O'Donnell commented that he believed they used the Newburgh Armory community center in the past and he would love it if they went back.

Both Mr. Glazer and Ms. Crockett Moore added that they loved it there and checked their availability for one of the films they have coming but they are fully booked.

Ms. Crockett Moore mentioned that she took pictures on her way into the Orange County Government Center building because they fell in love with it and she sent them to the location manager. She thanked the committee for taking the time to meet with them.

Mr. Glazer added that they want to figure out how to best create synergy with everybody so everybody feels they are part of everything that is happening. That is their goal.

Mr. Fioravanti stated that Ms. Dana will do a presentation next month.

Ms. Halahan was next on the agenda with a request for the Orange County Legislature to support upgrading Route 17 in Orange and Sullivan counties.

Mr. Minuta moved the request for a Resolution of the Orange County Legislature in support of upgrading Route 17 in Orange and Sullivan counties, seconded by Mr. Sierra.

Ms. Halahan explained that 17 Forward 86 is a coalition that represents a diverse interest of stakeholders in Orange and Sullivan county who understand that expanding Route 17 is vital to quality of life and economic well-being of the Hudson Valley. The proposed expansion of Route 17 will strengthen the regions economy by improving access for tourists and businesses while enhancing commuter safety and reducing environmental damage from vehicular emissions caused by idling motorists. With the population growth and retention of companies that are already here, it is important to make sure this corridor is ready for future development. The funding that they are asking for on the 17 Forward 86 is in excess of the normal annual allocation for transportation funds. The next five year infrastructure plan will be \$150 billion and this is \$50 billion more than the current plan reflects. She stated that when they were awarded the \$5 million it was Senator Bonacic, Assemblywoman Gunther, and Assemblyman Skoufis who wrote to the Governor Cuomo requesting that funding be included in this project. With the strength of the county Legislature they need to work together and be proactive and make this project a top priority in Albany. She would like the support of the Legislature to move this forward.

Mr. Ruskiewicz stated that everyone received a memo from the Commissioner of Planning, Dave Church, and his primary concern was this taking funding away from the limited funding that we already get.

Ms. Halahan mentioned that this was in addition to that.

Ms. Tautel moved to amend the resolution by adding WHEREAS, the proposed plan to be included in New York State D.O.T. next five year capital plan. Such funds will be separate and apart from any TIP funding, seconded by Mr. O'Donnell.

Ms. Tautel explained that this way it will be clear that they are in support of this coming from a separate funding source being part of the D.O.T. capital plan. As Ms. Halahan indicated the funding comes out of the \$150 billion. That is not the TIP pot, it is totally separate revenue stream. This is something that would be in addition to our regular TIP

funding. It wouldn't take away from the projects that Commissioner Church addressed which is part of the traffic safety plan for Orange County.

Mr. Cheney asked if it was necessary to add the amendment as a WHEREAS or as a BE IT RESOLVED.

Ms. Richmond stated that Mr. Church's concerns were cautionary and we need to not only be supporting a third lane on Route 17 but we need to think about all the options for addressing the congestion issue. This will fall primarily on Orange County, not so much on Sullivan County. They just learned today in the Orange County Transportation Council meeting that they are over programmed for our existing local projects that have been identified as priorities and D.O.T. is telling them that the funding is shrinking. They are facing a federal rescission that will impact local projects in July 2020.

Mr. Cheney commented that if he understood correctly, they would not just push this forward for another project, they are grabbing it back.

Ms. Richmond responded that is what the rescission will do.

Mr. Cheney asked if future opportunities to get money for future projects will be impacted because they haven't used it so the pot would get smaller.

Mr. Ruskiewicz stated that after he spoke with Mr. Church, he indicated that they have more projects in the pike than they have funding for so they would not be spending this money if it was going to get pulled back.

Ms. Richmond added that this was not a result in them not performing, it is because they have more projects than they have funding available for. The federal rescission is separate and apart from their performance. They have no control over that.

Ms. Tautel asked why we are not using the funding for these projects since the federal government was going to take back.

Ms. Richmond explained that they were trying to do that now. She did not know what the rescission numbers are.

Ms. Tautel request additional information from the Planning Department on the actual numbers.

Chairman Brescia asked if this was time sensitive.

Ms. Halahan stated that it was time sensitive. It is really support from our County Legislature to basically say, "we want this to be a priority." We want this in Albany in February.

Chairman Brescia stated that they could pass it today and have the questions answered before it goes to the Legislative Session. They could pull it if they are not happy with the answers.

Mr. O'Donnell agreed with Legislator Tautel. It should not take a month for the Planning Department to provide a list of how much money they are talking about. He would also like to see any priority that is bigger than a third lane on Route 17.

Ms. Richmond explained that this was not out of the Planning Department. The projects on the tip are all the county municipalities so these are town and village priorities.

Mr. O'Donnell pointed out that Ms. Richmond is the representative at these meetings and Ms. Richmond confirmed he was correct.

Mr. O'Donnell asked what the five top priorities and how much money were they talking about.

Mr. Cheney noted that Ms. Tautel's amendment is no TIP money. We want it separate from the TIP money because there are important projects in that TIP that are peripheral to Route 17.

Ms. Reed asked about the wording "smart growth" in the fifth WHEREAS.

Ms. Halahan stated it was more priority growth corridors. She noted that maybe it was the wrong wording.

Ms. Bonelli asked if this could go to the Physical Services Committee and see if Mr. Church is available to attend.

Mr. Ruskiewicz suggested passing the resolution today and hopefully they can get further clarification at Physical Services next week.

Ms. Halahan noted that she heard Governor Cuomo allocated money directly to high priority projects that are backed by local communities. This is a separate bucket of money allocated for that.

Mr. Ruskiewicz stated that he felt the amendment to the resolution takes care of it.

Motion carried. All in favor. (Tautel's amendment)

Mr. Cheney moved to amend the resolution in the Fifth WHEREAS and remove the words "Smart Growth Principles and," seconded by Ms. Tautel.

Motion carried. All in favor. (Cheney's amendment)

On the motion of Ms. Tautel, seconded by Mr. Cheney, the meeting adjourned at 5:25 p.m.