

**EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE  
MINUTES**

**MONDAY, MAY 15, 2023  
4:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Joseph J. Minuta, Chairman  
Thomas J. Faggione, **Kevindaryán Luján**, James O'Donnell,  
Paul Ruskiewicz, Robert C. Sassi, Kathy A. Stegenga, Genesis Ramos

ALSO

PRESENT: Katherine E. Bonelli, Chairwoman  
Barry J. Cheney, Legislator  
Stephanie Midler, Assistant County Attorney  
Kerry Gallagher, Commissioner of Finance  
Alan Sorensen, Commissioner, Planning Department  
Jennifer MacLeod, AICP, Land Use Planner, Planning Department  
Steven M. Gross, Director, Office of Economic Development  
Nicole Andersen, Director, Community Development  
Rachel Wilson, Director, Youth Bureau  
Paul Martland, Vice President of Admin., Orange County Community College  
Corey Dawkins, Director of Campus Facilities, Orange County Community College  
Lucy T. Joyce, Executive Dir., Cornell Cooperative Ext.  
Jill Van Aken, Events and Community Liaison, Cornell Cooperative Ext.  
Dina Sena, Budget Analyst

Chairman Minuta opened the committee meeting at 4:04 p.m. by asking everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. All committee members were present.

Mr. Sassi moved the request to accept and appropriate Funding received from "The Friends of the Orange County Youth Bureau," for awards, monetary and gift cards associated with the County Executive Youth Awards for 2023, \$7,050.00, seconded by Ms. Stegenga.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Mr. Sassi moved the request for supplemental appropriation to adjust 2023 Community Development budget, recording actual 2023 entitlement allocation received, funding decrease \$154,758.00, seconded by Mr. Faggione.

Ms. Andersen noted that they never received the Emergency Solutions Grant for 2023 which is what they use to help with homelessness in the county. The CDBG funding did, however, increase a bit. She provided a handout that detailed the current work that Community Development has been doing (On file in Clerk, Legislative Office).

Mr. Sassi moved the request authorizing the County Executive to enter into new Cooperative Agreements with cooperating communities for the purpose of undertaking the HOME Program and requalifying the HOME Consortium for the program years commencing federal fiscal years 2024-2026, seconded by Mr. Luján.

Ms. Andersen stated that the agreements were from 1993 so they decided to redo them since they were so out of date. They consult with HUD as they direct what is to be in the agreements.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Mr. Sassi moved the request authorizing the County Executive to enter into new Cooperative Agreements with the cooperating communities for the purpose of undertaking the CDBG Urban County Consortium for the program years commencing federal fiscal years 2024-2026, seconded by Mr. Luján.

Ms. Andersen explained that this is all the municipalities in the county except for the Cities of Newburgh, Middletown and Port Jervis, Village of Kiryas Joel and the Town of Palm Tree. New agreements were being executed as the old agreements were from 1982.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Mr. Sassi moved the request to create one (1) Deputy Director position, Management Grade 24, seconded by Ms. Stegenga.

Ms. Andersen stated that they have gone through five Assistant Directors over five years. They are creating this position in hopes that it will be a more stable position and have continuity.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Mr. Luján moved to approve the request for supplemental appropriation of recently approved ARPA funds by the Legislature for roof replacement, building envelope renovations and other repairs to Morrison Hall, and roof replacement on Horton Hall, both on the College's Middletown Campus. Engineering, project plan development, regulatory review (per historic buildings) and project bidding will take place in 2023 and Q1 of 2024. Actual renovations and roof replacements will be completed in 2024 or Q1 of 2025 at the latest. The requested \$5,000,000.00 represents 50% of the total projected project cost of \$10,000,000.00. The remaining \$5,000,000.00 will be supplied by the State of New York (ARPA funds), seconded by Mr. Sassi.

Mr. Martland stated that at the previous legislative session, the ARPA funding for this project was approved and the college recently held a meeting with the finance teams from the county and the college. During that meeting it was suggested that it would be appropriate for the college to ask for the full \$5 million through a resolution to get the process started. They are only

spending money on the engineering. There will be two contractors who will be doing the engineering for both projects and will take place over the summer and completed by October.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Mr. Sorensen was next on the agenda with a review of applications for Inclusion of Lands in Agricultural District No. 1 and a review of SEQRA. He explained that this was the annual opportunity for property owners to petition to join Agricultural District No. 1. Ten applications were submitted this year for inclusion. He added that Ms. MacLeod completed the Environmental Assessment Forms (EAF) and she attended site visits. He mentioned that the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board will meet next Wednesday and make a formal recommendation on the applications.

Mr. Faggione asked if they had any idea which application may or may not be included.

Mr. Sorensen noted that there were many variables that go into the decision making process.

Mr. Minuta announced the public hearing is scheduled for Thursday, June 1, 2023 at 3:15 p.m. before the Legislative Session.

Mr. Gross provided an update on Economic Development. He recapped his last update on the Ball Corporation and the letter they sent them to see if there was anything they can do to help retain their operation in the county. They did receive a letter back from the Ball Corporation. They stated that in order to adjust to changes in the market, they need to align their manufacturing supplies with customer and market demands. The plant was built in 1972 and does not have room in its existing footprint to add equipment and existing equipment needs to be fully replaced. They cannot take that action without shutting down or removing existing equipment which will result in their failure to meet commitments to their customers. They mentioned that after discussions with the union, the decision has been made to permanently cease operations at Ball Corporation plant.

Mr. Gross continued to state that he was working with the Orange County Partnership to find new occupants for that building because they do not want it to sit vacant and it is a great location. They had a webinar for the Foreign Trade Zone with over 100 people attending and they have been contacted by three companies from Taiwan and Asia. He discussed solar power and energy. There is a 12-megawatt battery storage system now in Warwick that will service the areas of Warwick, Greenwood Lake, Florida and Pine Island. They have been experiencing a lot of outreach lately which is great.

Ms. Joyce provided an update on Cornell Cooperative Extension (On file in Clerk, Legislative Office). She mentioned the controversial topic and what has been happening with Asylum Seekers in Orange County and shared that there is an asylum to agriculture job pipeline. Farmers have housing, and farmers need employees. That can potentially be a solution for some.

Ms. Van Aken announced that the Otisville Country Fair will be happening soon and flyers will be sent out soon.

Mr. O'Donnell asked if the farmers were approaching the hotels where the asylum seekers were being housed.

Ms. Joyce responded no they are not. She mentioned that there is a program that Cornell and other state agencies use for employment. There will be a job fair for employers coming up soon.

Mr. O'Donnell asked for more details regarding the program. He asked if the state put this program together, or the federal government.

Ms. Joyce responded that Ms. Ullrich received the information and passed it on to her. It originated from Dr. Richard Stup, the Agricultural Workforce Specialist. She noted that she would get more information.

On the motion of Mr. **Luján**, seconded by Mr. Faggione, the meeting adjourned at 4:46 p.m.