

**EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE  
MINUTES  
MONDAY, JULY 19, 2021  
3:30 P.M.**

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

ALSO

PRESENT: Katie Bonelli, Majority Leader  
Thomas J. Faggione, Legislator  
Betsy N. Abraham, Legislative Counsel  
Mary Pat Smith, Assistant to County Executive  
Bill Fioravanti, Director, Economic Development  
Kerry Gallagher, Deputy Commissioner, Finance  
Michael Torelli, Chairman, Industrial Development Agency  
Dina Sena, Budget Analyst

Chairman Ruszkiewicz opened the committee meeting at 3:45 p.m. by asking everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. All committee members were present with the exception of Legislators Minuta and Sassi who were absent and Legislator Tautel who participated via teleconference call.

Ms. Stegenga moved the request for confirmation of reappointments to Orange County Community College Board of Trustees (R. Martucci, Jr., F. Hannes), seconded by Mr. Cheney.

Ms. Smith was presenting on behalf of County Executive Neuhaus and requested confirmation of the reappointments for Ralph Martucci and Florence Hannes. Everyone received a copy of their resumes and the term is set to expire June 30, 2028.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Mr. Ruszkiewicz provided an update on the IDA. He stated that they adopted the Code of Ethics Policy and the Conflict of Interest Policy which all the current board members signed. They have ads out looking for Executive Director and permanent counsel for the IDA. They already received a few applications for the Executive Director position. There were no current projects in front of them right now. He stated that this coming Wednesday at the Rules, Enactments and Intergovernmental Relations Committee they plan to present a resolution authorizing the Legislature to conduct an investigation and issuance of subpoenas to witnesses. The County Attorney asked that one of the office spaces be vacated and they have done so, initially they did refuse. They are trying to get more information on some of the contracts and grants that they received.

Ms. Bonelli asked when the deadline was for the Executive Director position.

Mr. Ruszkiewicz responded that he was pretty sure it was at the end of the month.

Mr. Sierra asked if the IDA Members had to file ethics forms prior to the recent events.

Mr. Ruszkiewicz responded that they did have to file but they adopted a new Code of Ethics based on the recommendations of the ABO. The ABO has a template which is what they adopted.

Mr. Sierra stated that he was aware that the Ethics Board has the ability to fine individuals and asked if they were doing an investigation.

Mr. Ruszkiewicz responded that he did not think there was an investigation but at this point the new board members sign the policies.

Mr. Sierra understood but he was referring to the previous board who is supposed to sign ethics forms every year like they are supposed to, they would be in violation somehow.

Mr. Ruszkiewicz replied that he can look into it.

Ms. Tautel was concerned and cautioned the new board about the individuals they plan to interview and eventually hire. She advised them to make sure they are accountable employees with good reviews.

Mr. Ruszkiewicz suggested taking a ten-minute recess at 3:54 p.m. to wait for others on the agenda to arrive.

Mr. Sierra left the meeting at 3:57 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 4:00 p.m.

Mr. Fioravanti provided a monthly update on Economic Development. He addressed unemployment in the county. There are help wanted signs everywhere. There is the added unemployment assistance which expires on September 6<sup>th</sup>. He stressed that Tourism is exploding. He read recent comments made by Labor Market Analyst, Johnny Nelson, who works for the State Department of Labor, sharing gains and losses. Orange County is the second fastest growing county in the area with a growth of 11.1%. Jobs are coming back, they just need employees to work. The Consolidated Funding Association (CFA) season is open and it is time to apply. There is \$750,000,000 in the pool of money. The season opened in May and the deadline is July 30<sup>th</sup>. He encourages the projects to apply for the funding. They are expecting the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) competition to open up soon. Ten million of that money went to Middletown, Peekskill, New Rochelle and Kingston in the past. It is not officially open, but it is eminent and it is in the budget. They continue to work closely with Foster Supply Hospitality (FSH) and they applied for the CFA. They plan to go before the Newburgh Planning Board this week. They would like to combine the three lots and apply for a hotel space. The County Executive's Office and the City of Newburgh provided letters of support for the CFA application. FSH is applying for tax relief and made a presentation to the Newburgh IDA. It is a \$25 million project and they estimate \$1.1 million in property taxes. They have over twenty new hotels in Orange County in the last five years. He mentioned that the Dinosaur Park is a year away. There is a steel manufacturer looking in the area. There is a kosher wine manufacturer interested in coming to Goshen. Amy's Kitchen is breaking ground next month. Film is on fire especially in Newburgh.

Mr. Ruskiewicz asked if Mr. Fioravanti knew when the deadline was for the applications for the IDA Counsel.

Mr. Fioravanti replied that he believed they were accepting applications for two months.

On the motion of Mr. Cheney, seconded by Ms. Stegenga, the meeting adjourned at 4:11 p.m.