

AGRICULTURE, PLANNING, TOURISM & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES – AUGUST 30, 2023

AGRICULTURE, PLANNING, TOURISM & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

PRESENT: Griffith, Campbell, O'Brien, Shaw, Skellie

AGRICULTURE, PLANNING, TOURISM & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

ABSENT: Hicks, Ferguson

SUPERVISORS: Henke, Nolan, Clary

Debra Prehoda, Clerk of the Board

Dan Martindale, Deputy County Attorney

Melissa Fitch, County Administrator

Al Nolette, County Treasurer

AGENDA AS PRESENTED IN COMMITTEE NOTICE:

- 1) Call to Order
- 2) Accept Minutes – July 25, 2023
- 3) Recognize ARPA Funding
- 4) EDA Recompete Grant
- 5) LaBella Contract Changes
- 6) Lead Agency Notice – Bald Mountain Solar
- 7) Other Business
- 8) Adjournment

Chairman Griffith called the meeting to order at 11:35 A.M. in the second-floor classroom, Room B214, Municipal Center, Fort Edward.

A motion to accept the minutes of the July 25, 2023 meeting was moved by Mr. Shaw, seconded by Mr. Campbell, and adopted.

Laura Oswald, Economic Development Director, addressed the following items with the committee:

RECOGNIZE ARPA FUNDING – Secured \$100,000 in ARPA funding related to tribe lands to be paid in two installments. Motion to recognize \$50,000 of ARPA funding in the 2023 budget: \$25,000 in Planning for LGLCRPB Technical Assistance Program and \$25,000 in County Administrator for sign was moved by Mr. O'Brien, seconded by Mr. Campbell, and adopted.

EDA RECOMPETE GRANT – EDA put out a new program, probably one-time only program, that allows eligible communities to apply for between \$250,000 and \$500,000 in planning money and then nationwide after that the ability to apply for \$20M to \$50M to implement the project. Washington County is one of two counties eligible in New York State to apply for this funding but there are a few portions of cities and small census tracts across the state. The funding eligibility is funded by what is consider a deficiency in the prime age employment rate. Washington County has a total population of about 62,000 and of those 24,000 are between the ages of 25 and 54 and only about 17,000 are employment or 73% of the people who are of prime working age are employed. Point of funding is to work out a way to get people of that age group back to work by connecting them to existing jobs or creating new jobs. Program requires no match; it is nationwide and will be competitive. The proposal because LEAP handles our career services managing the workforce center, the potential project for the application is hire a business liaison to do more direct outreach to businesses because that is something we could do a better job at. This funding will pay for payroll so use the funding to hire someone and then potentially hire them long term. The intention is LEAP would hire this position. LEAP is aware that the funding would only pay this person for a couple of years and she has asked LEAP to discuss how the position would be sustainable. The County or LEAP can be the applicant as could another related non-profit entity. The County could act as applicant and have more control over

the project and contract with LEAP to deliver the services or LEAP could be the applicant and working and owning all services. The idea would be LCLGRP would do the administration because they are familiar with EDA grants. Asked if the County was interested in being the applicant or LEAP be the applicant and the Economic Development Director will work with them. Mr. Shaw mentioned the issue towns and schools are facing having CDL drivers and the cost for training. The Workforce Development Board offers CDL training through the career center at no cost but applicants must meet eligibility requirements/income eligible. There is an online program for CDL. Also, a shortage of machine tool operators in the area. This grant is due in October. The Economic Development Director stated one way or another workforce is something that if she could get from under broadband, she would like to find the time to pay some attention to. If LEAP has this individual no matter who is the applicant, she would like to create a communication pathway between the two and ensure everyone is going along the same way. A motion that the County is the applicant for the EDA Recompete grant and LEAP administer was moved by Mr. Campbell, and seconded by Mr. Skellie. Discussion. The Economic Development Coordinator stated LEAP will be the provider providing the services, the Regional Planning Board will do the administration and her roll will be to help create the ideas that go into the application and maintain communication with LEAP that activity is happening and the County is seeing some benefit from it. The motion that the County is the applicant for the EDA Recompete grant and LEAP administer was moved by Mr. Campbell, seconded by Mr. Skellie, and adopted. Mr. Shaw opposed.

**LABELLA CONTRACT CHANGES** – Five years ago received a grant from LWRP to develop a seven-mile trail from Fort Ann to Whitehall. Experienced problems with CP Rail, negotiations took place and nothing happened. Also received an additional \$150,000 from Canal Corp. Have renegotiated the seven-mile trail down to a two-mile section from the Comstock area by the prison to about two miles out to Ryder Road. There are two individual parcel owners who they are in final negotiations with a small section of privately owned land that must be crossed. Due to the project changing considerably is to redo the original contract with Chazen who is now with LaBella so it is simplest to complete the old contract which \$81,000 has been spent out of \$395,000. Had about \$314,000 remaining and the new project is going to about \$210,000 which will leave more money for construction. This must be finished by January 2025, no more extensions. The trail will go along old Rt. 4 and about a mile that crosses over onto Canal Corp. land which will need some work. Motion to authorize the Chairman of the Board to sign contract with Labella and grant a waiver from the Procurement Policy was moved by Mr. Campbell, seconded by Mr. Shaw, and adopted. Motion to forward to the Finance Committee a budget amendment to recognize unspent grant revenue in the 2023 budget was moved by Mr. Skellie, seconded by Mr. Campbell, and adopted.

**LEAD AGENCY NOTICE – BALD MOUNTAIN SOLAR** – Received a Lead Agency notice that went through the Planning Agency, 20-megawatt system in the Town of Greenwich, the Lead Agency. The Town of Greenwich wishes to be declared Lead Agency and basically it is official notice that say that the County does not object to the Town of Greenwich being declared Lead Agency. Motion that the County does not object to the Town of Greenwich being declared Lead Agency, Bald Mountain Solar, was moved by Mr. O'Brien and seconded by Mr. Campbell. Discussion. Discussed if these notices should come to the Ag and Farmland Protection Board if in an ag district. The Economic Development Director stated on one part of the form it must be checked if you are in proximity ag lands, documentation in the application. Motion that the County does not object to the Town of Greenwich being declared Lead Agency, Bald Mountain Solar, was moved by Mr. O'Brien, seconded by Mr. Campbell, and adopted.

OTHER BUSINESS:

250<sup>th</sup> Committee has provided a list for 2023 – 2024 of a variety of twenty-three to twenty-four things they plan to do with an estimated need of \$8,000. She asked if there will be other funding raising events and they indicated there would be but specifically looking for help in the first two years until they get going. A lot of their requests, we can do for them. Typically, the County does not hand a check to a non-profit agency for activities. Looking for guidance on how proceed with their requests. Prefer not to just cut a check. Discussed a establishing a specific budget line for some funding. Will address during budget discussions.

USDA Grant – Congresswoman Stefanik secured for the county a \$1M USDA grant for broadband. Documents are due to the USDA by September 28<sup>th</sup>. The Economic Development Director has separated out those addresses that are likely to only able to be served by Hudson Valley Wireless. The grant funding will be used to purchase necessary equipment for the household and to update the towers to deploy a signal that will get them to the qualifying signal strength. There are just over five hundred addresses and household will receive about \$1,000 worth of only wireless equipment and the remainder of the funding will go to Hudson Valley Wireless to be used to upgrade the towers. The documents due include standard policies and an operator agreement with Hudson Valley Wireless and Chairman's signature. All documents will be reviewed by the County Attorney. The Board will need to vote to accept the grant and authorize the Chairman's signature at the September 15<sup>th</sup> meeting and the Economic Development will report out at the Ag Planning meeting on September 19<sup>th</sup>.

Septic Grant Funding – Treasurer requested to move the unspent grant funds into the 2023 budget. Motion to forward to the Finance Committee budget amendment to carryover unspent septic grant funding to the 2023 budget was moved by Mr. Skellie, seconded by Mr. O'Brien, and adopted.

The meeting adjourned at 12:25 P.M.

*Debra Prehoda, Clerk*  
*Washington County Board of Supervisors*