



FULTON COUNTY CENTER FOR REGIONAL GROWTH

Fulton County Center for Regional Growth
Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors
Friday – September 22, 2023 – 8:30 a.m.
34 W Fulton St & Zoom Conference
Gloversville, New York

- Directors Present: Timothy Beckett, Terri Easterly, Dr. Leslie Ford, Warren Greene, Kent Kirch, Geoffrey Peck (video), Grant Preston, Denis Wilson, Jack Wilson
- Directors Absent: None
- Staff Present: Ronald Peters, Ken Adamczyk, Jenn Donovan, Desirée Perham
- Other Attendees: David D’Amore – Fulton County IDA Board;
Michael Albanese, Esq. – Legal Counsel (arr. 9:04 a.m)

Public Session

Call to Order: 8:30 a.m.

I. Welcome and Call to Order

- A. Grant Preston called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

II. Roll Call

- A. Roll call was taken by Desirée Perham. A quorum was present.

III. Meeting Minutes

- A. The Chair asked the Board to review the August 18, 2023, CRG Regular Board Meeting Minutes. Dr. Leslie Ford moved a motion to approve the minutes as drafted, and Terri Easterly seconded the motion. No changes were suggested. All present voted in favor and the motion passed.

IV. Announcements

- A. None

V. Reports

A. Chair Report – (Grant Preston)

- 1. None.

Conclusion of Chair Report

B. Committee Reports

1. Executive Committee

- a. This committee has not met since the last Board meeting.

2. Governance Committee

- a. This committee has not met since the last Board meeting.

3. Finance Committee – (Geoffrey Peck)

- a. The Finance Committee met on Thursday, September 21, 2023.
- b. No findings of any significance. CRG's financial position is strong.
- c. CRG will shop for CD terms and rates and will review the results with the Committee.
- d. Loan pools are all current except for one which was sent notifications of payments due.

4. Audit Committee

- a. This committee has not met since the last Board meeting.

Conclusion of Committee Reports.

C. Membership & Marketing Report

Ken Adamczyk: (Report was included with board package)

- 1. Google My Business is generating leads and bringing people to CRG's website.
- 2. Next Microgrant Business Training will begin in January 2024.

3. National Apprenticeship Week is November 13-19, 2023. Event planning is underway with a multi-county group that CRG formed. The Apprenticeship Ambassador logo was received. A presentation will be made at the next ED&E Committee, and they will be asked for a proclamation supporting the week-long event. Assemblyman Robert Smullen will also be asked for a proclamation.
 - a. By day:
 - Day One - Youth apprenticeships: Must be 18 yrs. old to be an apprentice. Targeting educators, this session will discuss how students under 18 can prepare to feed into the program (pre-apprenticeships, pathways to apprenticeships.)
 - Day Two - New and emerging fields in industry: Run by FMCC in person and a Zoom to other Counties, Christie Davis, FMCC will lead with participants from DOL, MACNY, and CEG.
 - Day Three - Underserved populations: John Goldsworth, FMS Workforce will lead this virtual session.
 - Day Four - Women in registered apprenticeships: John, Summer, and CEG will present this session.
 - Day Five - Veterans & federal employees: This session will be coordinated with Ian Pitcavage, Director, Fulton County Veterans Affairs and may be tied in with Day Three.
 - b. Apprenticeships have changed and are available for many degreed programs like nursing, healthcare, and finance, not just the traditional skilled labor jobs. This will help build the County's workforce.
 - c. The goal is to knock down barriers to entering the workforce, to expand and train the workforce, to offer apprenticeships in new fields, and to support both business needs and the apprentices.
 - d. The businesses in the program will receive funding, the apprentices will receive an education that prepares them to enter and remain in the workforce.
 - e. The team includes CRG, FMS Workforce, FM Community College, F-M Chamber – including BOCES, Schoharie Chamber, HMO Workforce Solutions (includes 11 counties), the Albany CEG, NYS Dept. of Labor and the Manufacturers Association of Central NY (MACNY). The team is engaged and excited to support this event.
 - f. The event will be advertised on radio and digitally. It will be held either online or in person each day.
4. CRG's Facebook trends have improved, followers increased slightly.
5. The Palmal Digital Report was received and will be emailed to the Board of Directors. The Board can review the report and discuss it in the October meeting if desired. The data show where and when people are clicking and what impacts it, like Trade & Industry magazine advertising which resulted in a bump. CRG's name and information on Fulton County are getting exposure to a nationwide audience.
6. Membership is at 58% of the financial goal, 69% with the City of Gloversville's payment included. Emails were sent out this week to unpaid past members as a reminder to renew. Over \$3,000 has already been received from this effort.
7. The *Initiative Guide* articles are complete and going to be edited next. Advertising should be complete in early October and the photos are nearly finished. The design layout will begin soon with the goal of going to print in November and closing out the project by early December so a grant application can be sent to National Grid to cover a portion of the cost before the end of the year.

8. The grant covering a portion of the Palmal Digital marketing efforts was received.
9. The new Membership format needs to be reviewed by the Board, but CRG's Membership Committee was disbanded in 2020 so an ad hoc committee will be created. There will be a few membership format options to review which will be sent out to this committee in advance of meeting. This will be set up soon.

Conclusion of Marketing and Membership Report.

D. Gloversville Downtown Development Specialist Report

Jenn Donovan: (Report was included with board package)

1. The report provided to the Board includes a DRI update, but not all information can be shared as some of the financing is private, not public information.
2. The Board was provided with a copy of the DRI Process Checklist used in reviewing what is needed from the grant recipients to provide a perspective of the considerable amount of work that goes into each applicant. Two hundred hours have gone into the DRI project so far.
3. The DRI projects are split between three agencies. CRG deals with the private projects that go through ESD and HCR. Although there are no shovels in the ground, a lot of work is being completed to get through the required process.
 - a. Financing options are being researched and packages assembled.
 - b. Environmental studies are being conducted to determine if hazards are present and if a Phase II study is needed.
 - c. Some applicants need board planning approval.
4. 52 Church St does have visible work going on as pre-demolition has begun. Asbestos removal, parking lot light removal, milling the old parking lot and tree/shrub removal is underway in preparation for the foundation construction.
5. The Grip Grant program has launched. Recipients are not under contract yet, so names cannot be released, but similar meetings are being held.
6. The DDS will be working with various in-house loan funds as needed for financial options.
7. NYS ESD stated that CRG/DDS is doing well with the program and the progress and timing is better than most DRI programs.
8. The Board asked if there was a way to get a DRI Update out to the public as most people do not understand the process and the timing. Possibly a Leader Herald article with a high-level update. WENT could put out the information or an article in the Chamber's Newslite letter. Perhaps use one project that could be shared publicly as a sample case so people can understand the process.
9. Calls from potential businesses interested in store front space and/or financing are being fielded on a regular basis. The CRG team works in conjunction to discuss all available options with these contacts.
10. Destination Gloversville highlight videos are being shared on TikTok and other social media sites, not on YouTube yet. Hits have been in the 200s for most posts.

Conclusion of GDDS Report.

E. Chamber Report (Anne Boles)

1. No in person report this month. Conclusion of Chamber Report.

F. Fulton County - (Warren Greene/Jack Wilson)

1. Budget review sessions are being conducted. Committees are meeting and department heads are reporting in with requests. Next step is the Finance Committee review and cuts and finally the review by the full County Board of Supervisors. A final budget vote is anticipated by the end of November or early December.
2. The Baseball Hall of Fame held an event that included the grandson and great grandson of Babe Ruth. The turnout was very good.
3. A couple of union contracts reached settlement bringing the County's employees up to a level where they belong, and the County can be competitive when hiring. There are a lot of job openings that need to be filled.

Conclusion of County Report.

G. Fulton County IDA - (David D'Amore)

1. An IDA report was sent to the CRG Board in advance.
2. Nexus Renewables submitted their interconnection application to National Grid. Once approved, Nexus will obtain quotes on the solar project construction.
3. Winstanley Enterprises is still engaged with Tryon Park. National Grid will be implementing a project to provide 5-7 MW of distribution level power to Tryon Park by late this year or the first quarter of next year. National Grid stated that it is obligated to provide, at Grid's cost, 13.2kV distribution level power to a business moving into Tryon Park. If Winstanley attracts companies into Tryon Park and uses up the 5-7 MW power, then they would approach National Grid to bring more distribution level power to Tryon Park. This approach limits Winstanley to companies using 13.2kV power or less.
4. The CRG board asked if National Grid was obligated to provide additional 13.2kv power in a timely manner and what amount of time is that. That answer would need to come from National Grid directly. Winstanley is considering including co-generation in future projects to provide additional power.
5. The IDA has a proposed 2024 budget which needs to be adopted by November first.
6. A revised Uniform Tax Exemption Policy (UTEF) has been under development and is now approved by the IDA Board and is being distributed to the local taxing jurisdiction. This will be useful to incentivize certain types of projects like brownfields, mixed use, tourism destinations, adaptive reuse, and, in particular, housing. The policy was modified to be more flexible and aligns with how other IDAs across the state are broadening their perspectives of what it means to provide economic development in a community.
7. CRG asked if state approval of the UTEF was needed and if so when is it expected. The IDA board has approved the revised UTEF, and it can be utilized immediately.
8. The CRG Board noted that there is a large turnover of teachers as they retire and there needs to be housing for the new young teachers.
9. The IDA Board is advocating holding an economic development summit about housing to review the current housing stock and what land is available to develop. The summit would include municipal authorities, school districts, and the County. A housing crisis is imminent and needs to be addressed.
10. The CRG Board asked if any more has come from the IDA regarding soliciting housing developers. One developer spoke to the IDA Board about how they leverage IDA benefits on projects which was useful information.
11. It was unclear if additional meetings specific to housing were planned. Scott Horton did attend a meeting with the County and CRG to present that housing was needed.

12. CRG Board pointed out that sites for housing need to be identified and no one seems to be working on this yet.
13. The IDA Board noted that incentives for development did not typically include residential housing, but they are trying to make that option available. The IDA is limited in what it can offer.
14. It was pointed out that there are two projects trying to bring immigrants into the County that are currently stalled. Housing them is difficult but the area needs a workforce.
15. CRG suggested County Planning look for county-owned properties of significant size and identify one that the IDA, County, and CRG could develop together as a housing project. The Gloversville Planning Board is working on singular projects, but a County coordinated project would be better. A group development effort to provide market rate housing, not low-income housing, would be better.
16. A coordinated effort for housing needs to occur just like the effort that was put forth for industrial development. CRG has a mechanism to pull together resources to review with a potential developer, but there needs to be universal buy-in and coordinated participation and contributions from all County groups involved.

Conclusion of IDA Report.

H. City Reports

1. Gloversville
 - a. No in person report this month.
2. Johnstown
 - a. No in person report this month.

Conclusion of City Reports.

VI. President and CEO Report

Ronald Peters:

A. Business Update

1. Resolutions – None.
2. Grant Programs
 - a. The Board may need to appoint another member to the Microenterprise Grant Committee as Travis Mitchell may be stepping down due to his workload and travel requirements. CRG has a couple of people they could recommend for consideration. One works at the Credit Union where only personal loans are handled and the other works at FMCC. They will be invited to attend a committee meeting. It was suggested that one be appointed and the other be used as an alternate.
 - b. The current Microenterprise grants are coming to close. The CARES Act grant program is completed entirely. The County was asked if they want to apply for another regular Microenterprise grant for \$300,000 and they should get back to CRG by next week.

- c. CRG expends \$5,000 out-of-pocket when an MEG grant application is completed, and this is not reimbursed by the County or covered by the grant. The grant does not cover grant writing expenses or preliminary administrative costs. The only administrative costs that can be included in the grant are the costs that occur after the grant agreement is signed. The budget request submitted to the County for 2024 included this \$5,000.
 - d. Phase II drilling for samples is taking place at the Fashion Tanning site as part of the Countywide EPA grant. Several County legislators were onsite to view the drilling process.
 - e. The EPA grant needs to be spent down by 70% in order to be eligible to apply for another grant. CRG is planning to apply for a \$500,000 Assessment Grant in November. The program is going well. There are numerous EPA approvals required at various stages that CRG is learning to navigate.
 - f. The Phase II sampling for Skip's garage is complete and in the lab analysis phase, results should be received soon.
 - g. Once the Phase II process is complete the site cleanup needs will be known which is beneficial to move forward in the development process.
 - h. CRG also included in the County budget request, funding for grant writing. There are a lot of Federal funds out there in the form of grants, and there is a cost to submitting applications. CRG wants to go after as many grants as possible through the EPA, USDA, EDA, etc. to bring money into the County.
3. Business Marketing
- a. A Gloversville Loan Fund loan to Parkhurst Field Foundation was closed.
 - b. A JDA Agriculture loan to Riehl's Lumber Products was closed.
 - c. An application to the Countywide Loan Fund was received.
 - d. Loan pools are all up to date including one loan that was two months behind.
 - e. Leslie Ford, Denis Wilson, John Blackmon, Jack Wilson, Ron Peters and Ken Adamczyk attended the CEG Annual Meeting. The IDA and ED&E Committee were also invited to attend. CRG coordinates with CEG and is a member. A relationship with CEG is good for staying in touch with regional development.
 - f. Next month is the Innovation Summit in Saratoga by FUZE Hub. This is an excellent event to see upcoming technology and to broaden your horizons. The Board requested event information be shared with the Directors.
 - g. The Mohawk Valley Developers Summit is progressing, and the team is looking at hiring an outside event planner to lighten the workload. It may be too costly at this point, but the option is being investigated.
 - h. The National Apprenticeship Week program is a chance for CRG to work as a team with WFD entities and is good exposure for the County and CRG.
4. Business Inquiries/Business Leads
- a. RFPs are reviewed as they come in. One was handed off to the IDA for Tryon. Some ask for power in the 200-500MW range that cannot be accommodated.
 - b. 34 W Fulton St. lease options for CRG will be discussed in executive session.
 - c. CRG sent out survey requests to businesses and academia to fill in the NY Loves Nano map gap between Utica and Albany. Four surveys have been received and submitted as candidates (possible suppliers, manufacturers of parts etc.)
 - d. CRG/IDA/County/Planning meeting has not met in a couple of months. The next meeting is scheduled in October.

Conclusion of the President and CEO Report.

VII. *Adjournment to Executive Session*

A motion was needed to enter executive session to discuss pending lease of 34 W Fulton St. as publicity would substantially affect the value thereof.

At 9:39 a.m., Dr. Leslie Ford moved a motion to adjourn to executive session Warren Greene seconded the motion, and it was passed by all present.

Kent Kirch moved a motion to return from executive session, Terri Easterly seconded the motion, and it was passed by all present. The Board returned from executive session at 10:01 a.m.

Action Taken:

None.

VIII. *Wrap Up*

Additional discussion took place around the housing development work that needs to take place. One entity needs to lead a coordinated effort regarding county housing. The housing study was completed by County Planning, which may be a good starting point. A copy can be shared with the Board.

The Board stated that CRG could talk to the County and suggest that CRG start to collect the assets and put together the collateral for a housing development meeting. Dave D'Amore should be included as he is the IDA Chair and is championing the housing effort.

The Board pointed out that currently there is no leadership, no accountability, and no authority. There are lots of meetings and no action. School districts could share information and be involved but not lead. The Board agreed that this is a county strategy issue. The County Board of Supervisors should lead this effort. There is a lack of structure and organization for development and strategic planning. A point person is needed to take action.

If a developer is brought in, they are going to recommend low-income housing in Fulton County as that is the demographic. Market rate housing needs to be built and infilled to start development down a different path.

CRG can act as a squeaky wheel to get something in motion. Need to include the right parties – Jon Stead, Jim Mraz, David D'Amore, and Planning. Everyone seems interested in housing, someone just needs to kick it off.

The Board asked if anyone knew the status of the FMCC Foundation owned property that was planned for a subdivision and a solar farm. Originally it was purchased to be a college town, but this did not happen. It bridges the two counties with 91.4 acres in Fulton County. It has road access, water, and power but no sewer. The total site is 155 acres, and the foundation wants to sell it.

IX. Adjourn Meeting

At 10:20 a.m., Timothy Beckett moved a **motion to adjourn** the meeting which was seconded by Kent Kirch and passed by all present.

Respectfully Submitted,



Dr. Leslie Ford, Board Secretary

10/27/23
Date

