



FULTON COUNTY CENTER FOR REGIONAL GROWTH

Fulton County Center for Regional Growth
Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors
Friday – October 27, 2023 – 8:30 a.m.
34 W Fulton St & Zoom Conference
Gloversville, New York

Directors Present: Timothy Beckett, Terri Easterly, Dr. Leslie Ford, Kent Kirch, Geoffrey Peck (video-8:59a), Grant Preston, Denis Wilson, Jack Wilson

Directors Absent: Warren Greene

Staff Present: Ronald Peters, Ken Adamczyk, Jenn Donovan, Desirée Perham

Other Attendees: Scott Horton, Chair – Board of Supervisor
Anne Boles, Executive Director – F/M Chamber of Commerce
Susanne Collins – Fulton County IDA Board
Michael Albanese, Esq. – Legal Counsel

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 September 22, 2023, CRG Regular Board Meeting Minutes. Dr. Leslie Ford moved a motion to approve the minutes as drafted, and Kent Kirch 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. The Chair noted that an Executive Session will be needed.

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, October 26, 2023.
- b. CRG's financial position is good, County payments are being received regularly.
- c. There were a couple of items discussed in the Finance Committee meeting that will need to be reviewed in the Executive Session.
- d. A resolution regarding CRG's budget for ABO submission is to be addressed later in the meeting.

4. Audit Committee

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

5. Membership Committee (adhoc) (Kent Kirch)

- a. The committee discussed revamping CRG's membership program and considered simplifying the fee structure, reducing administrative costs, and changing what benefits members receive.
- b. CRG receives limited revenue from memberships and there is a considerable amount of general membership administrative time involved with messaging, tracking, follow-up calls, etc. The Annual Meeting preparation for the yearly membership meeting is also time consuming due to the proxy requirements, mailings, and follow-up needed to ensure a quorum is present.
- c. Maintaining revenue was not the top priority.

- d. Attorney Mike Albanese was asked to review the bylaws to determine if the membership component could be removed. He did not recommend this course of action as it would completely change the corporate structure.
- e. Considering new revenue streams was also part of the committee's discussion.
- f. Currently there are six fee levels, and no one is using the top \$5,000 level. The simplified fee structure recommendation is as follows:
 - i. Tier One - \$150
 - ii. Tier Two - \$250
 - iii. Tier Three - \$500 and up
- g. Tier three would enable larger corporate and municipal supporters to continue to donate at higher amounts, which will be encouraged in an outreach letter. Currently, most small businesses support CRG at the Tier Two level. Tier One is good for individuals and startups.
- h. The Membership Committee also recommends that the value proposition, member benefits, be discontinued. The point of membership is to provide CRG financial support to accomplish economic development work in the County. CRG's accomplishments would be included in the donation outreach letter.
 - i. There was some discussion around changing the donor designation of "member" to "partner". This would require bylaw changes and needs more thought.
- i. The Board was asked to think about the recommendations and CRG will put the new membership concept in writing for review in November.
 - i. CRG requested that the membership program changes be finalized in November to give the staff time to make the necessary modifications to marketing materials.
- j. Revamping the corporate structure and bylaws will be investigated further as a separate issue.

Conclusion of Committee Reports.

C. Membership & Marketing Report

Ken Adamczyk: (Report was included with board package)

1. Google My Business showed 20 new people visited CRG's website and 161 people found CRG's site using Google.
2. The next Microgrant Business Training will begin in January 2024.
3. National Apprenticeship Week is November 13-19, 2023. A flyer promoting the local initiatives being offered during this time was provided to the Board.
 - a. Two proclamations were received for the events. One from the Fulton County Chair of the Board of Supervisors and the other from Assemblyman Robert Smullen.
 - b. A three-county team effort will conduct events on three of the five days designated to highlight the importance of apprenticeships.
 - i. Day One focuses on youth and pre-apprenticeship which will be led by the Fulton Montgomery Regional Chamber of Commerce, BOCES, and WDBHMO Working Solutions.

- ii. Day Two focuses on registered apprenticeships in new and emerging fields. This event is in person and streamed, lunch will be provided. The event will be led by FMCC, Department of Labor, MACNY, and CRG. The press will be attending as well, Chairman Horton was asked to attend if possible.
- iii. Day Three is virtual and will focus on apprenticeships for underserved populations (women, veterans, and disabled persons). Presentations will be led by FMS Workforce and CEG, Albany.

The collaboration has been outstanding. CRG is coordinating and everyone involved is working hard.

- 4. CRG attended the Innovation Summit which was a good event. The venue was smaller, so the event was scaled down from previous years, but still very interesting. Feedback was provided to Fuzehub that keynote speakers should include other business types besides microchips, or the diversity of attendees may decline. The input was appreciated.
- 5. A dual ribbon cutting was held in Broadalbin on a Sunday for My Paw Place and Trucksterant. The dog grooming/boarding facility is in a renovated old bank building and looks amazing. The food trailer business received a microenterprise grant and is currently operating at Great Sacandaga Brewing. Steve Murray, Mayor of Broadalbin, attended the grand opening, the owners invited other attendees and the media was also present.
- 6. CRG attended the Partners for Workforce and Economic Development Conference put on by the New York Association of Training and Employment Professionals (NYATEP) and the EDC. Some good connections were made and there was a very diverse group of meeting topics.
 - a. Discussions included the NYS EDC legislative group that reviews IDA operations statewide and another on multi-family housing.
- 7. CRG's Facebook followers increased by four people, engagement was down slightly.
- 8. Membership letters were sent out and numbers went up from the 50's to 70% of the financial goal, 80% if Gloversville's commitment is added. Membership numbers are closing in on last years' level at this same time of year. (It was noted that the slides contained errors and not all the numbers updated for this month.) One more push will be made before the end of the year.
- 9. The Microgrant drawdown #12 and final drawdown for the CARES Act is with Nick Zabawsky to process the paperwork which is extensive as eleven businesses are included. This will head to the County for review and signoff soon. The program is ending, and closeout needs to take place in November. All the excess administrative money was allocated to businesses that were eligible for more funds but were initially given less to ensure money was available for all potential applicants.

Conclusion of Marketing and Membership Report.

D. Gloversville Downtown Development Specialist Report

Jenn Donovan: (Report was included with board package)

- 1. Hometown Heroes had a goal of ten new banners for the year and currently twenty have been purchased and more are being requested. Main St. and E. Fulton are mostly covered. There were about 75 spots available in total, a count of open spots is planned.
 - a. A testimonial page was added to the website for those with banners that choose to include them. They are in a pdf version that can be printed.

2. The City has a city website, and the DDS has its own Downtown Gloversville site which is focused on the downtown area. The shopping guide with a list of businesses is included on the site. The target audience is someone that wants to move to Gloversville or develop a business downtown as opposed to residents.
 - a. There is an availability page listing open spaces for businesses.
 - b. Also, a transforming Gloversville page with updates on the DRI, BOA and LWRP including site sheets and synopses.
3. Social media activity includes an increase in followers on Facebook and Instagram. TikTok only has fourteen followers but gets lots of traffic checking out the videos. X (previously Twitter) has 34 followers.
4. Traffic has increased on the website, mainly due to the weekly blog and events page. Most of the traffic comes from Facebook but visitors from Google spend more time on the site. The most popular blog piece was on Glove City Lofts which was also blasted out on social media and by email.
5. A Google Business Profile was created for the Downtown Development Specialist and there have been forty hits since August.
6. Good news on Downtown Revitalization Initiatives (DRI), the Glove City Lofts project has made great progress on the site demolition. The target opening is slated for the Summer of 2025. People are already inquiring about how to apply for apartments. Closer to the opening date, there will be a manager onsite accepting applications up to a deadline and then a lottery system will be used. Applications are not being taken yet.
7. The Schine Memorial, a DRI project, went through an environmental review as required by the State. An asbestos study is needed, but otherwise they are in good shape. The architect plans to have construction documents ready by the end of November and a target date of April to begin construction.

Conclusion of GDDS Report.

E. Chamber Report (Anne Boles)

1. Upcoming Chamber events include a ribbon cutting today at 11am for Lake View Orchards in Mayfield, CDL's ribbon cutting is on Thursday, November 2nd at 10am which has been moved to 146 Comrie Ave in Johnstown, and The Alpin Haus grand opening on Monday, November 20 at 4pm to celebrate their expansion.
2. The holiday Business After Hours is returning and will be held on November 30 from 5:30 to 7 pm at NBT in Canajoharie and on December 14 at the Eccentric Club in Gloversville beginning at 4:30 pm.
3. The CRG team was thanked for their partnership on a couple of initiatives, National Apprenticeship Week and Small Business Saturday. The latter is the Saturday after Thanksgiving. Swag was obtained from American Express, the national event sponsor, and will be distributed to chamber members and downtown businesses jointly and in person by CRG and the Chamber.
4. The Chamber is working with CRG to encourage businesses to apply for a Hub Zone designation which enables them to be more competitive when bidding on government contracts. A few businesses are showing interest in the program.
5. The Chamber attended the Human Resources Consortium at FMCC regarding inclusiveness and disabilities. The focus was to increase inclusiveness, accessibility, and opportunities in the work force for the disabled. There was good participation and discussions. Information was shared on technology related assistance devices, apprenticeship opportunities for the disabled and special needs, and more.

F. Fulton County - (Scott Horton)

1. The County is currently reviewing the budget. Sales tax revenue has grown at a high rate which has offset inflation and government insurance costs. The capital budget is good, mostly paid for by the drug and tobacco settlement reserve funds. The operating budget starts off at \$40MM of taxable assessment and is driven by labor negotiations (settled with the PBA at a cost of nearly \$1MM) and unfunded state mandates in the millions. There may need to be an adjustment to the taxes, but the Board will decide.
2. The County is operating well, and the fund balance is solid, there are just challenges to be overcome. CRG's work is appreciated and has the support of the County.

Conclusion of County Report.

G. Fulton County IDA - (Susanne Collins)

1. The IDA is incentivizing development opportunities in Fulton County. Changes were made to the UTEP definitions and new PILOT schedules were added for different types of projects, which include housing.
 - a. The term of a housing PILOT will go up to 30 years where the typical was 10 years. The goal is to increase housing stock.
 - b. The CRG Board asked if other IDAs have similar programs. It was confirmed that they do, and review of other IDA programs was part of the process to revamp the FCIDAs incentives.
 - c. It was noted that the PILOT remains with a home, not the buyers.

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. Resolution – A quorum was present for reviewing and voting on the resolution being presented. A copy of the drafted resolution was provided to the Board for review prior to the meeting.
 - a. **Resolution to accept the Finance Committee recommendation to approve the 2024 CRG budget and move it forward to the ABO.**
 - b. Motion: Timothy Beckett moved a motion to approve the resolution as stated and Terri Easterly seconded the motion.

- c. Discussion: CRG is required to submit a budget to the ABO each year by November 1st. However, the County budget, which feeds into CRG's budget, is not approved until the end of the year so the budget developed for the ABO is a best estimate. A 3% increase is used for the future projections. There is nothing that stands out from previous years. It is based on standard funding sources and normal operating costs. The building operating costs were removed, and grants were based on what is currently active. The Board requested that the full board receive a copy of the budget in advance of the meeting in the future.

Vote: All directors present voted in favor of approval and the motion passed.

2. Grant Programs

- a. The CARES Act grant status was covered earlier in the meeting. An application is being developed for a new \$300,000 round of the regular Microenterprise grant program. The application will go before the ED&E Committee on November 1st and if accepted, it will move on to the full Board of the County legislature.
- b. CRG's \$300,000 EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant has been spent down more than 70%, the eligibility threshold to apply for another grant. The Brownfield Task Force met and agreed that CRG should apply for another site assessment grant for Fulton County. The plan is to apply for a \$500,000 grant this time. A few sites have been lined up for Phase I and IIs. CRG has a good working relationship with our EPA contacts and the program is going well.
- c. Two phase IIs are nearly complete. The Skip's Garage site in Northville is clean and can move forward with development plans. The Fashion Tanning site in Gloversville is fairly clean, a few samples remain to be analyzed. The next step is to work with the County and another EPA program to remove approximately 120 drums from the site. Estimates are being developed and local experts are helping to determine what chemicals are in the drums. CRG is looking into funding options to cover the cost of drum testing and removal and scraping of the buildings on the site.
- d. The EPA approved a Technical Assistance (TA) grant for Fashion Tanning this week. This will cover the costs of a redevelopment plan for the site which may include scraping the buildings that cannot be salvaged. After the TA, the site will be marketable for development with a reuse plan in place.
- e. The Board noted that historically, owners of potentially contaminated sites fear cleanup costs and are nervous about working with the EPA. Now, there are so many different layers of funding available that if the process is followed correctly, development of brownfield sites is much more palatable. For instance, brownfield tax credits will give a developer 30-50% back on whatever is built on a site. The Board encouraged CRG to complete the redevelopment of one site so it can be a success to showcase and encourage other site owners to participate in the program.
- f. If anyone knows of a potential brownfield site, they should send a message to CRG so it can be considered for assessment.
- g. It was explained that the cost of Phase I and IIs can be covered by EPA grant funds, but a private owner needs to give permission for the site to be accessed. Phase III funds cannot be used to cleanup a site owned by the individual responsible for any contamination. In this case, ownership of the site would need to be moved to a third party to take advantage of the capital stacking available. This is the tricky part of the process. The program is well funded now.

- h. For the 30A, Johnstown Commerce Park site, CRG will be applying for a Track B- FAST NY grant to cover the remainder of the engineering cost not approved by the Northern Border program. There are three tracks. Track A is used to have NYS evaluate and approve a site as shovel ready. Track B will allow site assessment and engineering reports. Track C assists with improvements to make a site more shovel ready and marketable.
 - i. CRG is looking for the County to upfront \$770,000 of the project costs. All but \$111,000 are reimbursable by approved grants. The County stated that funding this project is moving forward through the budgeting process, but it is not a capital budget line item so needs to be handled differently.
3. Business Marketing
- a. The Gloversville Loan Fund did not have much activity this month but there was some interest by possible applicants.
 - b. Two loan applications went through the Countywide Loan Fund. One, for Giddy Grow Shop, was closed. The other, for CMK Development, is in process.
 - c. CRG's loan pool has almost doubled in the last few years and is a good program.
 - d. CRG attended the CEG Annual Meeting along with a few Board members. As a result, CEG was recently brought in to meet with a manufacturer in Johnstown to discuss supply chain opportunities in the Capital Region.
 - e. It was stated that the Brownfields Developer Summit will be a good event to attend for anyone interested in learning more about the brownfield programs. The Summit will be held April 23 & 24 2024 at Herkimer College.
 - f. Planning for the Summit is going well, and the planning team is currently working on lining up keynote speakers.
 - g. Work Force Development efforts are going well as demonstrated by the upcoming National Apprenticeship events. Expertise Project will be touring NY Creates at SUNY Poly on November 6th. Media will be covering the tour and anyone attending will see the engagement of the students. MVREDC is looking into the Expertise program now and HMO Workforce Solutions has started working with school superintendents to begin pre-apprenticeship programs and pathways in the schools for advanced manufacturing careers.
4. Business Inquiries/Business Leads
- a. No RFPs were received this month. Site selectors at the national level say NY State is behind with shovel ready sites and good sites are gone. CRG is focusing on getting brownfield sites up and running like the 30A site.
 - b. Capital stacking options will be evaluated for a 73-unit housing development with market rate apartments in Gloversville. The developer and the City met to discuss the plans. Next step is to meet with the developer's banker.
 - c. A buyer's offer was accepted by Johnstown for a significant building in the downtown area. Office space is the planned use. The situation is still in play and capital stacking has yet to be reviewed.
 - d. A Board member was aware of two other commercial properties in downtown Johnstown coming on the market soon and will discuss it with CRG after the meeting.
 - e. Nano Loves NY map surveys were sent out to businesses by CRG to help fill in the gap between the Capital Region and Utica on their technology map. A couple of businesses submitted that should be a good fit along with FMCC. Also, hope to get the 30A site and Tryon included if they meet the requirements.

- f. Ron Peters was traveling and unable to attend the County, County Planning, IDA meeting last week.
- g. It was noted by IDA Board member, Susanne Collins, that one of the goals of the IDA Board was to have collaborative meetings between CRG and the IDA and she requested help to set this up. The CRG Board Chair recommended that an executive level meeting take place as opposed to trying to get both full boards together. The Chamber of Commerce requested to be included as well. Kent Kirch volunteered to work with Susanne Collins to set up a meeting.

Conclusion of the President and CEO Report.

VII. Adjournment to Executive Session

A motion was needed to enter executive session to discuss the pending lease of 34 W Fulton St. where rates are still under negotiation and cannot be publicly shared and to address a personnel matter.

At 9:43 a.m., Timothy Beckett moved a motion to adjourn to executive session, Dr. Leslie Ford seconded the motion, and it was passed by all present.

Terri Easterly moved a motion to return from executive session, Dr. Leslie Ford seconded the motion, and it was passed by all present. The Board returned from executive session at 9:52 a.m.

Action Taken:

None.

VIII. Wrap Up

No additional comments were made.

IX. Adjourn Meeting

At 9:52 a.m., Kent Kirch moved a **motion to adjourn** the meeting which was seconded by Timothy Beckett and passed by all present.

Respectfully Submitted,



Dr. Leslie Ford, Board Secretary

11/17/23

Date

