



FULTON COUNTY CENTER FOR REGIONAL GROWTH

Fulton County Center for Regional Growth
Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors
Friday – November 17, 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, Grant Preston, Denis Wilson, Jack Wilson
- Directors Absent: Geoffrey Peck
- Staff Present: Ronald Peters, Ken Adamczyk, Jenn Donovan, Desirée Perham
- Other Attendees: Scott Horton, Chair – County Board of Supervisor
Jeff Persch, Code Enforcement – Town of Johnstown
Joe Semione, IDA Board Member
Anne Boles, Executive Director – F/M Chamber of Commerce

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 October 27, 2023, CRG Regular Board Meeting Minutes. Kent Kirch moved a motion to approve the minutes as drafted, and Dr. Leslie Ford seconded the motion. No changes were suggested. All present voted in favor and the motion passed.

IV. Announcements

- A. ABO required forms for Conflict-of-Interest disclosure and the Evaluation of Board Performance were provided to each director and should be turned in to Desirée Perham by the end of the year. The Fiduciary document will be handled in January of 2024.

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 – (Timothy Beckett)

- a. The Finance Committee met on Thursday, November 16, 2023.
- b. CRG's cash position is great from the sale of the Leader Herald properties. CRG Accounting Assistant, Paul Davis, is looking into current rates for CDs at local institutions to invest a portion of the cash.
 - i. It was stated that Pioneer Bank was currently paying 5.25% interest on CDs handled in a money market account.
- c. The balance sheet is cleaned up with no buildings being owned.
- d. Profit and Loss did not change significantly from last month. CRG will need to continue to seek out projects to maintain profitability.

4. Audit Committee

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

5. Membership Committee (ad hoc) (Kent Kirch)

- a. The committee did not have a meeting this month, but a recap was provided to remind the Board about the outcome of the previous meeting.
- b. There were three main components to the membership review:
 - i. Pricing of membership levels. (Resolution for this later in meeting.)
 - ii. The issue of whether membership should remain part of the organization, which will be discussed more in the near future.
 - iii. Identifying new revenue streams.

- c. The upcoming resolution lays out the proposed fee levels as follows:
 - i. Tier One - \$150
 - ii. Tier Two - \$250
 - iii. Tier Three - \$500 and up
- d. The discussion around changing the donor designation of “member” to “partner” would require bylaw changes and will remain as is for now. 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 9 new people visited CRG’s website and 179 people found CRG’s site using Google. (It was a short time between reporting periods.)
2. Fifteen people have signed up for the next Microgrant Business Training in January 2024.
3. National Apprenticeship Week was a success for the three-county region.
 - a. Day One was a virtual event led by Nicolle Walrath from the Chamber and Summer Edwards from HMO Workforce Solutions with input from educators and other workforce development people. They discussed youth and pre-apprenticeships, and a teacher residency program being offered. Thirty-five participants joined the webinar.
 - b. Day Two was in person at FMCC led by Christie Davis who was joined by Assemblyman Robert Smullen and representatives from New York State’s Center for Economic Growth (CEG) and Department of Labor (DOL). Two proclamations were presented by Jack Wilson, one from the Fulton County Chair of the Board of Supervisors and the other from Assemblyman Robert Smullen. Over forty attended.
 - c. Day Three was a virtual event led by FMS Workforce and included CEG and the Manufacturers Association of Central NY (MACNY). The discussion was around underserved populations being reached (women, veterans, and disabled persons). 38-40 people joined in.
The collaboration was outstanding.
4. Ken Adamczyk was on air with WENT radio’s Talk of the Town on November 4th to advertise the National Apprenticeship Week event.
5. The Daily Gazette started a new podcast, *Getting to Know You*, and Ken Adamczyk was the first guest on November 8th. CRG, grant programs, the apprenticeship event and more were discussed.
6. Facebook followers were up, 1517, and engagements were down a bit.
7. Membership level is currently 70% of the financial goal (81% with Gloversville’s membership included) and 70% of the number of members’ goal.
8. A new membership invitation flyer was shared on screen. It showed the new three-tier levels of membership. No invoices will be sent out. Instead, a letter from Ron Peters with CRG highlights and a results page will be sent to businesses and individuals requesting their support. For active members, it will include their current membership level for reference.

- a. The Board requested the new membership results page be emailed for review prior to being sent to potential members. Only a couple of days would be needed.
9. The last CARES Act drawdown is at the State for review and approval. It was 717 pages long (53MB file) and County Board Chair Horton was thanked for the time it took him to review and approve the material.
10. The *Initiatives Guide* magazine is with the printer now and will be proofed next week. A poster of the new cover was shared with the board and will be given to the County at their January meeting along with copies of the magazine.

Conclusion of Marketing and Membership Report.

D. Gloversville Downtown Development Specialist Report

Jenn Donovan: (Report was included with board package)

1. The GDDS joined the mayor on a few occasions to tour various sites in Gloversville with interested developers. Informational packets were prepared to share.
2. A ribbon cutting was held for 44 Lakes Customized Gifts & Designs and the Chamber attended in support. On December 2nd, a ribbon cutting will be held for EmpowHERing Designs on 45 South Main St. at noon. Some of the new businesses will be participating in the upcoming microgrant classes.
3. Last year, the DDS applied to be a Small Business Neighborhood Champion through American Express and received promotional materials for Small Business Saturday and similarly, so did the Chamber. Each visited small businesses on their own and some businesses received double materials. This year, the DDS and the Chamber coordinated the Small Business Saturday efforts and visited downtown businesses together. Everyone was asked to support SBS on Saturday, November 25th.
4. The GDDS is running a Small Business Selfie Contest promotional event where individuals can take a selfie inside a downtown business using their services or making a purchase and submit it for a chance to win a \$50 gift certificate to a downtown business of their choice. This will be cross promoted with the Chamber who is also running a contest.
5. Everyone was reminded that on Saturday, December 2nd, the Gloversville Christmas Parade begins at 5p on Main Street followed by Santa and the Christmas Tree lighting at Wandell Park. Also shared, was a seasonal listing of "Santa sightings" slated at various businesses downtown in November and December.
6. Anne Boles noted that she appreciated the united front with CRG in promoting SBS in Gloversville. The Chamber promotional event included submitting a photo of a receipt from a store in the Fulton-Montgomery region to be entered into a prize drawing. Winners will receive a Chamber Check. It was noted that business owners appreciated the promotional efforts and personal visits.

Conclusion of GDDS Report.

E. Chamber Report (Anne Boles)

1. It was reiterated that the past few weeks involved partnering with CRG for National Apprenticeship Week and Small Business Saturday. The former was very educational and inspiring. The latter had great synergy to achieve common goals.

2. The next *Business After Hours* will be held on December 14th at the Eccentric Club. Email Anne Boles or call the Chamber to RSVP if you would like to attend this holiday networking event.

F. Fulton County - (Scott Horton)

1. It was stated that the 2024 budget process was well underway. It was noted that the tax levy was \$41MM this year compared to \$27MM last year. Committees are finished with their reviews and the full board review is taking place starting November 20th. A tax increase is expected, but it will be less than the 15% stated in the newspaper.
 - a. The budget is down to \$31MM now. Everyone took some cuts and a little over \$5MM in fund balance was applied.
 - b. \$3MM in unfunded state mandates and around \$1MM in contracts will be included. The PBA contract is settled, and the Alliance and General Unit contracts should be settled soon.
2. Sewer District Five, going up to Mayfield and hopefully Northampton, will go out to bid December 8th with a bid opening on December 17th.
3. Elections for the Board of Supervisors resulted in 53% of the weighted vote going to brand new people. It is expected that this will have an impact on consistency and time will be needed for Jon Stead to train the new supervisors in their positions.
 - a. It was noted that some county supervisors are elected on a 2-year cycle and others on a 4-year cycle. This makes it difficult to plan for rotating leadership positions. People in cities should request their mayors change the supervisors to 4-year terms. This needs to change at the state level and is more difficult.
4. Various comments were made regarding the challenges of transitioning new board supervisors and the importance of the role in a county that covers a significant depth and breadth of regional representation in New York State.

Conclusion of County Report.

G. Fulton County IDA - (Joe Semione)

1. Nexus Renewable has received tie-in approval from National Grid for the solar farm located outside of the developed area of Tryon Technology Park. Bids are being received to build the solar farm in 2024.
2. The County is updating the Development Strategy for 2024. Housing is a big part of it and the IDA offered financial support.
 - a. It was noted that \$100,000 will be spent to update the strategy plan, which is a significant investment. In a recent ED&E meeting, it was brought up that stakeholder input is needed, and that the strategy update should be an intra-agency effort between County Planning, the Chamber, IDA, and CRG.
3. Monthly board training with various topics is ongoing. Policies will be reviewed, and the IDA board will also complete board evaluations and discuss the results.
4. Next year's goal includes improving collaborations between the IDA and CRG. Kent Kirch, CRG Board, and Sue Collins, IDA Board, plan to organize a meeting in January of 2024.

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 – A quorum was present for reviewing and voting on the resolutions being presented. Copies of the drafted resolutions were provided to the Board for review prior to the meeting. Grant Preston introduced each resolution.

- a. **Resolution to adopt a lease agreement between FCCRG and H&T Commercial.**

- b. Motion: Timothy Beckett moved a motion to approve the resolution as stated and Terri Easterly seconded the motion.

- c. Discussion: There was no further discussion or comment.

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

- d. **Resolution to adopt the proposed membership drive plan and revised fee structure.**

- e. Motion: Warren Greene moved a motion to approve the resolution as stated and Kent Kirch seconded the motion.

- f. Discussion: No further discussion or comment was made.

Vote: Seven directors present voted in favor of approval, Denis Wilson abstained, and the motion passed.

2. Grant Programs

- a. There was a delay in approval of the last Microenterprise grant draw request. CRG is working on the issue with the County Treasurer and is expecting it to be resolved soon. The money should be released at that point and CRG can proceed with a new grant program. The ED&E Committee approved moving ahead with the 2024 MEG Grant Program, and the Board of Supervisors are expected to approve it soon as well.

- i. CRG will have the grant writer, Nick Zabawsky, prepare a cost sheet of grant writing expenses, which are covered by the grant, and what the shortfall will be. Typically the shortfall is around \$5,000 which CRG is paying out-of-pocket. CRG plans to discuss this with the County and request they assist with covering the administrative shortfall costs.

- b. A Countywide EPA Brownfield Site Assessment grant was submitted for \$500,000. If this is approved in April, work will begin on assessing a few sites in Johnstown.

- c. The current \$300,000 EPA Assessment grant is nearing the end. Fashion Tanning Phase II lab results are being finalized and the Skip's Garage Phase II report is being completed.

- d. CRG met the EPA Technical Assistance (TA) grant consultants from Vita Nuova, at the Fashion Tanning site. The site was toured to gather information needed to complete a proposal and a reuse plan to develop the site. Scott Henze

attended as well to provide input on infrastructure along with a few county board members. Several contact names were provided to the consultant to interview for development ideas. The final proposal and reuse plan should be completed in the next calendar year.

- e. A FAST NY grant was submitted for the amount needed to cover the remaining engineering study costs for the 30A site. County support still looks good for covering the upfront costs as the grants have reimbursable-type draws.

3. Business Marketing

- a. One small loan was closed for the City of Johnstown Loan Fund. Johnstown is looking into additional funds for that loan pool and should know more in a couple of weeks.
- b. A JDA loan was closed last month. CRG is looking to loan out the remaining funds to businesses in the six-county area.
- c. The Mohawk Valley Brownfields Developer Summit will be held April 23 & 24 of 2024. Fashion Tanning will be added to the list of brownfield sites available for development.
- d. National Apprenticeship Week sessions went great, and Ken Adamczyk did a excellent job of coordinating the various organizations participating. Also in the workforce development arena was a SUNY Poly tour held for Northville students. The tour went well. SUNY Poly's hope is to engage the students and entice a few to apply. CRG is working to create and fill better jobs in Fulton County which will take time.

4. Business Inquiries/Business Leads

- a. No RFPs were received this month.
- b. CRG is working with a developer on a 73-unit market-rate housing project and will be meeting with the developer and a banker in the next couple of weeks.
- c. 52 Church St is moving along very well. The foundation is in and some framing may yet begin before winter. Summer of 2025 is the planned completion date.
 - i. Talk on the street was that this is a Section 8 project, but it is not. There is a portion that is subsidized, but it is a small percentage and is nearly on par with market rate, some at 60% and some at 80% of market rate. To receive tax credits for NYS Housing a portion of rentals need to be at lower rent rates.
 - ii. Kearney Development has a good reputation and builds and manages their developments. They currently have five operations underway.
 - iii. This spring Kearney Development will be looking into advertising to artists in places like Caroga Lake. A dozen are reserved for Lexington, which is required. "Affordable" is a level for a first-year teacher or new police officer, not low income.
 - iv. CRG will refer to programs as Housing Developments not Housing Projects which has a bad rap.
- d. A buyer interested in a downtown Johnstown building pulled out of the deal after receiving inspection results. CRG is working to find an alternate location for this consortium of lawyers that is looking to expand. They are not interested in major renovations prior to move-in.
- e. A consultant called and is working to put all tech properties and businesses in New York State on a map. CRG submitted the route 30A property and suggested the IDA send over Tryon Technology Park. They recently changed the criteria and 10MW of power is no longer mandatory.

- f. The County/Planning/CRG/IDA meeting has been difficult to coordinate due to busy schedules and travel.
5. Miscellaneous
- a. Ron Peters wanted the Board to know how incredibly proud he was of the CRG team and all they are able to accomplish. This past month, the \$500,000 EPA grant was submitted, a multi-hundred-thousand-dollar workforce grant was submitted, and the FAST NY was submitted for the remainder of the engineering costs for the 30A site. All in addition to the regular business that needs to take place. The DRI is a marathon process that Jennifer routinely works very hard at to keep it progressing forward. The Board gave a round of applause in agreement.
 - b. The IDA Board representative, Joe Semione, commented on the high level of productivity CRG operates at and complimented the team on the productivity and accomplishments.
 - c. CRG's Board noted the importance of defining a mission and goals and having discussions around them. They are an important tool the Board uses to direct the team. Also, it was stated that the CRG Board appreciates the partnership and input from the IDA and their participation in the board meetings.

Conclusion of the President and CEO Report.

VII. Adjournment to Executive Session

None needed.

VIII. Wrap Up

No additional comments were made.

IX. Adjourn Meeting

At 9:36 a.m., Warren Greene moved a **motion to adjourn** the meeting which was seconded by Timothy Beckett and passed by all present.

Respectfully Submitted,



Terri Easterly, Board Secretary



Date