



FULTON COUNTY CENTER FOR REGIONAL GROWTH

Fulton County Center for Regional Growth
Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors
Friday – January 26, 2024 – 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 (arr. 8:31), Denis Wilson, Jack Wilson

Directors Absent: None

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

Other Attendees: Carla Kolbe, Tourism Director – Fulton County;
Michael Albanese, Esq. – Legal Counsel;
Scott Henze, Planning Director – Fulton County;
Susanne Collins Vice Chair - Fulton County IDA Board;
Joe Semione, Fulton County IDA Board;
Jeff Persch, Building Inspector – Town of Johnstown

Public Session

Call to Order: 8:27 a.m.

I. Welcome and Call to Order

A. Kent Kirch called the meeting to order at 8:27 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 December 15, 2023, CRG Regular Board Meeting Minutes. Warren Greene moved a motion to approve the minutes as drafted, and Timothy Beckett seconded the motion. No changes were suggested. All present voted in favor and the motion passed.

- B. The Chair asked the Board to review the December 15, 2023, CRG Organizational Meeting Minutes. Terri Easterly 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. None

V. Reports

A. Chair Report – (Kent Kirch)

- 1. The Board members were thanked for attending in person for the Board photo and the guests were also thanked for joining the meeting.
- 2. It was noted 2023 was a very good year and 2024 is poised to be successful as well.
- 3. Susanne Collins and Kent Kirch met in December to discuss coordinating a joint meeting of boards of the IDA, Chamber and CRG.
 - a. Six years ago, a CRG/IDA board meeting was held to get to know each other and it was decided then to have a representative attend each other's board meetings. This has been taking place and the outcome has been positive.
 - b. This time the purpose of the joint meeting would focus on how the groups could work better together and to determine if there is a goal that all three groups could work on together for the benefit of the County.
 - c. This would be a two-hour meeting held at the FMCC Allen House.
 - d. The board commented that these three organizations need to be working closely together with consensus on where money should be spent in the County as funds are limited. The directors agreed that this was a good idea.
 - i. Also, the groups should review if funds are being spent in duplicative ways and if efforts are being duplicated.

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.
- b. A meeting will need to be called soon for a general review of CRG's policies and a discussion on CRG's check writing policy specifically. Also, to review pension contributions to a retirement plan as stated in the Employee Handbook. (Desirée Perham will schedule this meeting.)

3. Finance Committee

- a. The financial position was reviewed with input from CRG. The cash position is in good shape, as is revenue. It was noted that building expenses are way down with the sale of the building.
- b. The proposed 2024 CRG budget was reviewed line item by line item with input from CRG. Input was also provided by Phil Beckett, CRG's accountant, to clarify items as needed.
- c. Adjustments were made to three separate line items to be a bit more conservative.
 - i. EPA Admin Fees adjusted down from \$8,000 to \$6,000
 - ii. City of Gloversville contribution decreased by \$5,600
 - iii. Marketing & Advertising DDS decreased by \$5,000
- d. The Finance Committee voted to recommend to the CRG Board of Directors that the budget be approved as amended.
- e. The board asked if this impacted CRG's County budget. The CEO stated that the County Budget is set and was reviewed and approved by the CRG Board in June of 2023 and moved forward to the County for approval in December with a few minor changes. Those were incorporated and were part of the Finance Committee's review.
- f. The Board noted that the line item for Print was significant and should be reviewed to ensure there was good value for the investment. A large portion of Print is reimbursed by the County. CRG noted that multiple items are included under Print, the magazine is one, media, email blasts etc. The Board requested clarification on the breakdown.

4. Audit Committee

- a. This committee has not met since the last Board meeting and plans to meet in February to review the annual audit.

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

- a. This committee did not have a meeting this month.

Conclusion of Committee Reports.

C. Membership & Marketing Report

Ken Adamczyk: (Report was included with board package)

1. Google My Business showed 17 new people visited CRG's website and 136 new people found CRG's site using Google.
2. Fifty-one people over three counties have registered for the upcoming Microgrant Business Training. About half are from Fulton County.
3. CRG was accepted to receive the MVREDC Catalyst grant, but still needs to apply with required details to be approved for a specific amount.
4. Work on 2024 marketing has begun, and two agency proposals have been received and another is due soon. The national advertising for the year should be in place by the end of January.
5. Mailing of the 2024 *Initiatives Guide* is underway. It will go out regionally, nationally, and internationally.
6. Facebook is up another 17. Post reach is down.
7. The new one-page membership flyer that Kent Kirch assisted on should be sent out soon with a solicitation letter for membership. (Hand out of flyer was provided to all present.)
 - a. The flyer contains headlines of what CRG does and lists accomplishments for each to help the public better understand who CRG is.

Conclusion of Marketing and Membership Report.

D. Gloversville Downtown Development Specialist Report

Jenn Donovan: (Report was included with board package)

1. Update was provided on the DRI.
 - a. The second story of the Glove City Lofts is going up. Expected completion is Summer of 2025. They are ahead of schedule with the mild winter.
 - b. Trail Station Park is complete except for the bath changing area.
 - c. Other parks will go out to bid in March with construction beginning by the end of the year.
 - d. The Glove City Brewing project was terminated by the developer. However, the funds will stay in Gloversville and will be transferred to another project.
2. 2024 DDS Goals have been established.
 - a. Promote the DDS through networking and marketing.
 - b. Reach more developers through networking at the state and county level.
 - c. To establish a relationship and discuss tourism concepts for Gloversville. The DDS has met with Carla Kolbe. Tourism is a priority for the County.
 - d. Better understanding of the BOA and how it can help current projects and bring in more. The City has gone through the study process and a letter has been submitted to the Department of State which is close to the final part of the process.
 - e. Quarterly updates on the DRI for the Common Council.

3. Visited the Co-works in Amsterdam for ideas on downtown networking. On February 7th, the first monthly downtown networking event for businesses will be held in Gloversville.
4. Attended and networked at the Legislative Breakfast in Albany. The Business Council and State Conference are both coming up soon. Bizwomen Mentoring Monday will also be attended.
5. The Board asked for an update on the two Comrie properties at the end of Harrison St. The CEO stated that the City of Gloversville took title to one property, but the owner of the other site paid the back taxes. The plan is to review the environmental issues and use the next phase of EPA grant funding to begin the remediation and site demolition. The City is on the second or third draft of a study on Harrison St. This process will take time.

Conclusion of GDDS Report.

E. Chamber Report

Geoffrey Peck, as Chair of the Chamber Board

1. A Governmental Symposium was held last week with a strong turnout. Local politicians were very transparent and spoke about work force development, unfunded mandates, and healthcare issues.
2. Working on a grant with FMCC.
3. There is a good plan of calendar events for the year.
4. Handing off Tourism to the County has been helpful and allows the Chamber to focus on members and the membership programs. Coordination with County Tourism will still take place.
5. The Walleye Festival cutoff is later in the month and is not determined by the Chamber. The Chamber is the administrative body for the event only.

Conclusion of Chamber Report

F. Fulton County

Scott Henze – Planning Dept.

1. The County passed a resolution to attend more CRG meetings this year.
2. Route 30 sewer project bids were opened, the low bid was \$20,000 below the \$8M budget. The low bid is currently under review. The award will be made at the March Board of Supervisors meeting with project startup in the spring. No traffic issues are anticipated.
3. An entirely new County Development Strategy is being proposed. On January 2nd request for proposals were released and are due in by February 21st. The strategy is focused on economic development, housing, and tourism. The goal is to have the strategy complete by the end of the year. There is a long list of stakeholder groups.
 - a. CRG will be included in the RFP interviews when the results are received.
4. Scott Henze will attend the Brownfield Developers Summit on behalf of the County.
5. The County has allocated \$265,000 to CRG for the Johnstown Commerce Park site. An agenda item for the next ED&E meeting includes a request for authorization to use those funds.

Carla Kolbe - Tourism Department

1. Developing a relationship with the DDS for Downtown Gloversville and the Chamber.
2. Focus now is on the winter sports campaign and magazines with the use of a big digital push on YouTube and OTT (over the top - nontraditional marketing streams).
3. The Northville-Placid Trail One Hundred celebration will take place this year. Coordinating with DEC, Adirondack Mountain Club, Adirondack Experience, and Hamilton County up through Lake Placid. There is good involvement of organizations within the state.
4. The NYS Baseball Hall of Fame and Parkhurst Field both have press releases going out and bigger events are in the works.
5. The Belmont Stakes is expected to spill over into Fulton County so networking with the Cap-Toga region is underway.
6. Caroga Arts Council (CAC) initiatives are being worked on and the County is coordinating events at Sherman's Park with Kyle Price.
7. There is a big push for awareness of the Wheelerville Trails.
8. New map concepts are being worked for the Visitor Center and a plan to make it more of a hub for tourists.
9. The seasonal showcase will be worked with the Chamber.
10. Agritourism and Farm to Table will be worked on in conjunction with the Farm Bureau.

Conclusion of County Report.

G. Fulton County IDA

Joe Semione – IDA Board of Directors

1. An organizational meeting was held in January to appoint committee members and designate depositaries.
2. Adam Winstanley renewed a second year of a three-year option to market Tryon.
 - a. CRG will be looped in.
3. The back-up generators are operational, and the sewer has been turned over to the County.
4. Goals for the IDA were set, and one is to meet with CRG and the Chamber.
5. Membership with CRG was renewed at the Tier 3 \$1,000 level.

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.
3. CRG President & CEO, Ron Peters, gave a brief city update.
 - a. CRG meets and talks to the mayors regularly on housing, EPA grants, the DRI and more.

- b. The EPA has a program for projects in the \$10-\$20M dollar range. Gloversville's mayor is looking to submit a project into the EPA's Comprehensive Plan as one of 150 applicants. The plan allows for a range of projects including acquisition and help with lead pipes and lead paint removal in old homes in low-income areas.
 - i. Nathan Littauer has data from a study on lead levels in children due to lead paint that could be used to support the funding request.
- c. CRG asked for a determination from the EPA as to whether the County can try for this funding to complete a section of the sewer line going from Mayfield up to Northville. EPA standards designate Northville and Gloversville as needy areas (likely due to lead in old pipes), but Mayfield is not.
 - i. It was noted that five wastewater treatment plants would be divested as part of the sewer line project which EPA would look favorably on.
- d. CRG also asked about funding for lead pipe removal in Northville.
- e. In addition, CRG asked the EPA about funding options for a sewer line in downtown Caroga Lake.

Conclusion of City Reports.

I. Miscellaneous (Susanne Collins)

- 1. A meeting was held with Anne Boles of the Chamber regarding the joint meeting of CRG, IDA, and Chamber Boards. She was fully on board with the idea, but suggested just the executive committees of the boards convene to keep meeting size manageable.
 - a. FMCC has offered the use of the Allen House board meeting room.
 - b. Kent Kirch will coordinate setting up the joint meeting.

VI. *President and CEO Report*

Ronald Peters:

A. Business Update

- 1. Resolutions - A quorum was present for reviewing and voting on two resolutions. Copies of the resolutions were provided to the Board for review prior to the meeting and shared during the meeting. The Chair, Kent Kirch, introduced the resolutions.
 - a. **Resolution to Approve CRG's Proposed 2024 Budget as amended.**
Motion: Dr. Leslie Ford moved a **motion to approve** the resolution as amended by the FCCRG Audit Committee and Jack Wilson seconded the motion.
Discussion: CRG noted that they would make the recommended changes as discussed earlier in the meeting.
Vote: The motion passed unanimously by the members present.

b. **Resolution to move forward with the 2024 Business Development Marketing Agreement with the County.**

Motion: Timothy Beckett moved a **motion to approve** the resolution as written and Warren Greene seconded the motion.

Discussion: CRG noted that this was a standard contract from the County. Two years prior, CRG requested some changes that were accepted by the County. CRG recommends going with the contract as written this year. In May or June CRG and the Board can look at tailoring the contract for 2025. The new strategy and the joint meeting will feed into new items of focus and a revamping of the contract.

Vote: The motion passed unanimously by the members present.

2. Grant Programs

- a. The MEG business training program has completed three of four sessions. Fifty-one people attended. Anne Boles attended and during the marketing session there was good interaction with students wanting information about Chamber programs.
- b. The CRG Countywide EPA grant application is in for \$500,000, waiting for award notices to be announced. CRG is considering sites in Johnstown to use this funding if approved.
- c. The \$300,000 EPA grant is very near completion. Phase Is are complete and Phase IIs for Skip's Garage in Northville and Fashion Tanning in the Town of Johnstown are being reviewed by the EPA.
 - i. Currently in the process of identifying the contents of about 120 drums on the Fashion Tanning site with assistance from Timothy Beckett and Townsend Leather in hopes of minimizing sampling and lab testing expense. The plan will be to apply for a grant through MVEDDs EPA program to cover any testing and disposal costs. Their program is not up and running yet.
- d. Five hundred thousand was drawn down from the EDI-CPF grant for the JCP site purchase. The closing on the property purchase is complete and close out of the grant can begin.
- e. NY State released a list of grants available through various ESD programs. CRG will review these to see if any might work for Fulton County. There may also be opportunities for grants targeting rural areas in the USDA program that come out every couple of years.

3. Business Marketing

- a. There are thirty-nine active loans in the funds administered by CRG. CRG will be sending a loan checklist to each loan committee to make it easier to identify terms, conditions, and special conditions. This consistent format will in turn make it easier to finalize the commitment letters and move forward to closing.
- b. Registration is open for the Brownfield Developers Summit. Keynote speakers are being sought out. The commissioner of ESD is one and Elise Stefanik is another, but Elise may be difficult to schedule so a Plan B is in the works. Fulton County sites will be marketed at this event.

4. Business Inquiries/Business Leads

- a. Three RFPs were received this month. They want more power than is available. One was for 10 mega-watts (MW) with a 3-year ramp up to 400MW, 100% renewable. Another, for 10-15MW, may have been a fit for the Johnstown Commerce Park but it isn't ready yet and the RFP timing is tight.
 - i. It was noted that Montgomery County sold 1,000 acres, that was previously a dairy farm, for a massive solar project.
- b. CRG is working with the City of Gloversville and a developer on capital stacking for a market rate housing development. Also meeting with a developer and the City of Johnstown on a possible housing development. State and federal market occupancy rates are tied to their funding. Eighty percent of market rate is preferred to low-income subsidized housing.
- c. The NANO loves NY team will be getting a coalition together soon. With Micron coming in to the White Pines site, there should be opportunities for Fulton County to attract suppliers in the third or fourth tiers.
- d. CRG, IDA, and the County met and discussed working together and upcoming plans.

5. Miscellaneous

- a. CRG goals review of 2023 results. The goals for the building were met along with revenue goals. The board received this information in advance so it was decided to review the exceptions to save time.
 - i. The board asked what is needed for the Strategy/Business Plan to move that forward and CRG responded that it was predominantly more time that was needed. The Board offered their assistance.
 - ii. In the Relationship section it states, add two new developments per year. The Board suggested this may be an unrealistic goal. CRG stated this is an aspirational goal and is good for a target provided it is understood that it is a difficult one to achieve.
 - iii. Under Job Creation/Retention it states it is being worked on and has a goal of 25 jobs. The Board asked if this was a realistic number. CRG noted that it is dependent on what is going on in the market and can be tricky to quantify. No major job losses took place this year and a couple of retentions and expansions did. The Board suggested CRG tweak the way this goal is written.
 - iv. Creating a source of revenue for CRG with Workforce Development did not have any discussion around it and should be reworked for 2024.
 - v. The Board asked if the quantity of tradeshow attendees makes sense. CRG stated that it is important to be where the EDOs are to network and build relationships as it is the contacts that provide leads. The team spreads out who goes to which conference to optimize coverage and keep costs inline. The board suggested that CRG make a concerted effort to review tradeshow travel plans each year to ensure the trips are necessary.
 - vi. On reporting, the Board was satisfied with the monthly reports, but would like to see a direct connection to the goals document at least twice a year, in June and January. It was also suggested that it be set up like as a tier three program and add responsibility/accountability to include staff members.

- vii. The Board would like to see the goals document down to four pages.
 - viii. The Board asked if there was a way to track RFPs that were missed opportunities due to various factors like insufficient power availability. This could be useful for the Board of Supervisors to understand what is holding development back. Further board discussion suggested that it would be better to state a goal that would circumvent or correct a deficiency than to report obstacles.
- b. Potential goals for 2024 were reviewed.
- i. CRG needs revenue so new projects needs to be a goal.
 - ii. Holding a joint meeting with IDA/Chamber/CRG should be a goal.
 - iii. The notes on goals from the Board Retreat should be incorporated.
 - iv. A building where CRG will be housed should be a goal.
 - v. Managing other properties was mentioned but it was agreed that CRG is not staffed for that.
 - vi. Adaptive reuse should be considered as a goal in addition to new sites.
 - vii. Ron Peters will draft his goals and run them by the Board for next month.
 - viii. The Board Chair suggested the Board discuss and select two to three key goals for CRG to focus on for 2024 starting by creating a list of possible goals.
 - ix. Other potential goals: Pursuing grants (need to define what type of grant). Workforce Development. Johnstown Commerce Park development. Three-organization relationship building. Housing. Support for a Johnstown DDS. Board diversity (need a local business owner, gender/racial diversity). Advocacy (for things like power).
 - x. Next month this list will be discussed some more.
- c. Committee Appointments
- i. Finance and Audit Committees need one or two people. Kent Kirch and Warren Greene volunteered. The Board agreed to these appointments.
 - ii. CRG can only appoint city loan fund committee members for positions designated for CRG. These positions do not have to be filled by a CRG Director; a member of the community could be appointed. Other positions are filled by the City Council or Mayor depending on the agreement in place.
 - iii. It was noted that the CRG bylaws need to be updated to include the Past Chair on the Executive Committee.
 - iv. If the EDC Loan fund needs a committee member, Dr. Leslie Ford is willing. Grant Preston needs to be asked if he will continue serving on the EDC Board/Committee since he is no longer on the CRG Board. Terri Easterly will take Grant's place if he does not want to remain on the EDC Committee.
 - v. It was noted that Travis Mitchell is currently on the MEG Committee but he is often unable to attend. The Board suggested that Ken Adamczyk recommend a few past recipients of the microenterprise grant for the Board to consider appointing.
 - vi. Executive and Governance Committees are set.
 - vii. The Board asked if the County has appointed a CRG Director yet and they have not.

- d. The Board evaluation results have remained consistent over the last few years. Board sets clear and measurable goals and Board exercises appropriate oversight have been flagged and both can be addressed with the goal setting and review plan discussed earlier. The other item had to do with the Board having adequate information and time to prepare. The Board stated that if board packages have sufficient detail and are sent out in advance of meetings this one should be adequately addressed. The Board approved the posting of the evaluation results on CRG's website and sending a copy to the ABO.
- e. The MVREDC 2023 Strategic Plan was in development earlier in the year, and CRG was asked for their input and had a significant role in developing the plan. CRG shared input for the plan that was obtained from the Board. The final Strategy Plan included Wheelerville Trails, Northville-Northampton Museum and Visitor Center, and the Johnstown Commerce Park which were all mentioned several times and shown on maps.
 - i. CRG pointed out that it is important to be a part of this plan since listed projects can be flagged in grant applications as part of the State's overall plan which improves the scoring and chance of being approved for funding.
- f. The Fulton County Development Strategy RFP was covered earlier in the meeting by Scott Henze.

Conclusion of the President and CEO Report.

VII. Adjournment to Executive Session

- A. An Executive Session was requested for the purpose of discussing particulars of a now confidential funding source and to review a contractual issue.

A Motion to Adjourn to Executive Session was moved at 10:04 a.m. by Warren Greene and seconded by Timothy Beckett.

A Motion to Return from Executive Session was moved at 10:27 a.m. by Warren Greene and seconded by Jack Wilson

Action Taken:

None.

VIII. Wrap Up

It was stated that an FCCRG Projects meeting was not needed and would be cancelled for January.

IX. Adjourn Meeting

At 10:27 a.m., Timothy Beckett moved a **motion to adjourn** the meeting which was seconded by Denis Wilson and passed by all present.

Respectfully Submitted,



Terri Easterly, Board Secretary

2/29/2024
Date