



# Choose Columbia

Columbia Economic Development Corporation

## MINUTES

Minutes for the meeting of Columbia Economic Development Corporation and the Columbia Development Leasing Board of Trustees held at the Columbia County Chamber of Commerce offices located at 1 North Front Street, Hudson, New York, **Tuesday**, July 29, 2014 at 8:30am.

### ATTENDANCE:

Mary Bartolotta  
Rick Bianchi  
Bruce Bohnsack  
Jim Campion  
Tom Cappadona  
David Colby  
David Crawford  
Bruce Finn  
Tony Jones  
Don Kline  
Sharyn Richards  
Robert Sherwood  
Colin Stair  
Sarah Sterling

### MEMBERS EXCUSED:

Bill Better  
Paul Colarusso  
Greg Fingar  
Patrick Grattan  
Michael Vertetis  
Scott Wood

### REPRESENTATIVES:

### STAFF:

Lisa Drahushuk  
Ken Flood  
Martha Lane  
Carol Wilber

### COUNSEL:

Andy Howard

### PUBLIC

Joe Gentile  
Patti Matheney  
Ellen Thurston

Mr. Crawford called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m.

### **Minutes:**

Mr. Crawford asked if there were any changes to the minutes of June 24, 2014. With no changes proposed, Ms. Bartolotta made the motion to approve the minutes as previously distributed. Mr. Finn seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Mr. Flood informed the Board that Jon Cohen of Behan Communications had asked to reschedule his appearance in front of the Board because of a family obligation. Ms. Sterling asked to see a copy of the contract with Behan in order to have more discussion. She stated she felt there may be a potential conflict of interest with Ginsberg's. Mr. Flood stated he would distribute the contract to the Board members. Mr. Crawford stated the firm had been hired to do general public relations and not specifically for Ginsberg's. Ms. Sterling stated she was unsure Behan was the right public relations company.

**Treasurer's Report:**

Mr. Flood noted that revenue was in line with the projections. He noted the next County check was due shortly. He stated bank fees and late fees on loans were above anticipated levels. He informed the Board that at the September meeting the budget process will begin. He noted he would like to review some amendments to the current budget regarding technical assistance and in consultant and professional services. He noted one employee had gone part-time allowing some savings. Mr. Finn asked if the line item on legal fees for AeroCity was what had been spent in the collection of the loan. Mr. Flood noted that was the total. With no further question, Mr. Finn made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report. Mr. Sherwood seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

**Marketing Update:**

Ms. Wilber stated June and July was spent raising awareness of CEDC as well as placing a greater emphasis on public relations. She stated she had distributed 4 press releases which had been covered in 9 articles. She had sent out 8 e-blasts, which had shown a good open rate. She noted she also reviewed the average click rate on e-blasts which meant people were opening the links and paying attention to the content. She stated the email database had grown from 425 to 875 with the assistance of her part-time intern.

Ms. Wilber noted the July newsletter would be distributed Thursday, July 31<sup>st</sup>. She stated the website was updated continually with news articles. She stated that Google Analytics had shown an increased number of visits to the website page views. She stated she was working with a website company to get more people to visit the site. She stated she had met with the local radio station and had discussed the possibility of a regular show.

Ms. Wilber stated she had met with Register Star representative to secure a monthly column which would begin in the Fall. She stated the business visitations had begun. She and Mr. Flood had visited Grazin' in Ghent with Supervisor Benvenuto, 2 businesses in Germantown with Supervisor Craig and Supervisor Bassin asked them to visit Ancram Mills.

Ms. Wilber stated she had scheduled a community outreach economic development roundtable for September 18 at Columbia Greene Community College. She noted this was a followup to a initial meeting held for town economic development committees. She noted the CEO Roundtable would be held in early October and details of the event would be published in the July newsletter. She also announced in November a CEDC open House would be held. This event would be open to the public with a goal of meeting the CEDC Board and staff.

Mr. Jones asked if the source of the additional names on the email database compared to the Chamber of Commerce. Ms. Wilber stated it did. She stated all local officials and key businesses were included. She stated she gets names and addresses from Ms. Lane and her loan clients as well as names from the functions she attends.

**Behold! New Lebanon:**

Mr. Flood stated CEDC had received the request from the organization to act as fiscal agent until they received their 501(c)3 designation. The Board had requested a check to ensure the 5% stipend requested from Behold! would cover CEDC's costs. He stated Mr. Vanderbeck had



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stated it would be sufficient. He had requested Behold! submit only checks for donations to CEDC. Mr. Howard had drafted an agreement which had been acceptable to Behold!. He stated he was asking the Board for final approval, noting he would ask the Board for re-authorization in 12 months. Mr. Howard assured Behold had gotten formal approval from the New Lebanon Town Board for the relationship with CEDC.

Mr. Flood stated he had received another such request, but had asked that organization to wait to see how this first trial proceeded. Mr. Jones asked if the liability issue had been addressed. Mr. Howard stated a hold harmless agreement had been executed on the deposits and the payments. With no further question, Mr. Crawford asked for a motion to approve CEDC acting as the fiscal agent for Behold! New Lebanon. Ms. Bartolotta made the motion, which was seconded by Mr. Bohnsack. The motion was approved unanimously, with the exception of Mr. Campion, who abstained from the vote.

## **Authority Budget Office Requirements:**

Mr. Flood stated the Executive Committee had discussed the board compliance. They had asked Mr. Flood to send a letter to the non-compliant board members asking them to become compliant by the end of year. They would be directed to call Mrs. Drahushuk if they had any compliance related questions. Mr. Crawford added, the letter would direct them to resign after the first of the year if they chose not to become compliant.

Mr. Jones asked Mr. Flood if Committees were required by the ABO. Mr. Flood stated that they were, noting an Audit, Governance and Finance Committee were all required. He stated the members of the committees were required to be independent, and stated he would be asking Mr. Howard to assist in determining independence. Mr. Flood stated he anticipated the committees would be in place by the end of the year. He noted that the IDA and CRC held their committee meetings before the regular board meetings, but suggested that CEDC with the larger Board should have separate meeting dates for the committees.

Mr. Bohnsack asked if the Board evaluation sheet could be modified in order to be more effective. Mr. Flood stated it was possible to modify the form to reflect what the Board wished to evaluate.

## **Airport Development:**

Mr. Flood stated he was working with the airport committee chairman, noting proposals for development would be run through the committee. He noted they had a discussion regarding new hanger development. He noted they had also discussed running water and sewer to the airport as well, with an estimated cost of over \$1 million. The airport committee asked Mr.

Flood to work with the County Attorney's office in order to produce a plan that would meet all legal requirements. He stated he would be meeting with Richmor in order to obtain their input.

Mr. Flood stated the airport master plan suggested the layout of hangers. He noted that was the first priority of CEDC in order to satisfy the demand for T hangers. He stated he anticipated some participation of CEDC, CRC or the IDA in a public/private partnership to develop hangers. He stated the development of the east side of the airport would be a jumpstart to development.

Mr. Bohnsack asked if it were necessary to get the new engineering firm on board prior to beginning. Mr. Flood stated that was not necessary. He noted it would be efficient, but noted there was a great deal of work to do prior.

#### **Board Nomination:**

Mr. Crawford stated that James Reynolds of Mid-Hudson Cablevision had suggested an employee of his company be nominated to the Board after he resigned. He noted he was the largest internet provider in the County and felt it could be helpful with the current broadband issue. Mr. Reynolds had suggested David Fingar if the board would agree. Mr. Jones asked Mr. Flood to circulate Mr. Fingar's resume to the board prior to a vote. Mr. Flood noted he had a brief bio on hand and he would forward it to the board. Mr. Bianchi asked if it would be a problem having brothers on the board. Mr. Flood stated it was not. Mr. Crawford stated the issue was brought up at the Executive Committee and Mr. Howard stated there was nothing in the by-laws prohibiting brothers serving on the board. Several board members expressed their opinion that David Fingar would be an asset to the corporation.

#### **Other Business:**

The Loves project continued to work with DOT and the latest estimation of the beginning of construction was September.

Mr. Flood informed the Board that the Catamount project received a negative declaration on SEQR. Mr. Cappadona asked the status of Premier. Mr. Flood stated they are doing well and increasing employment. He noted a Consolidated Funding Application had been submitted for equipment. Mr. Cappadona felt the business would be a good candidate for the Startup NY program as would Harney Teas. Mr. Campion stated the focus of the Startup NY program was internships and future employment.

Mr. Flood asked Mr. Campion to update the Board on Startup NY. Mr. Campion stated that the program had been well advertised, and directed the Board to go to the website for program specifics. He stated the program was designed to be a tool for economic development in Columbia and Greene Counties, by aligning business needs with curriculum units. He stated university centers and research centers were most likely able to utilize the program.

Mr. Campion noted each college was directed to construct a Startup NY plan. He noted the targeted business was a new business relocating to NY or a NY business starting a new line. He noted that it was a difficult program to administer, and a business applying would need to be reviewed by the Town of Greenport, union representatives, the Chamber of Commerce and



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Greene and Columbia County. He stated the plan submitted was only the initial part of the process.

Mr. Campion reminded the Board that each college had 200,000 square feet of space to work with which was required to be on the campus or within 1 mile of the campus. He noted that the limitations meant that Greene County was not included in the program. He stated NYS would need to review the problem. Mr. Campion stated he had spoken to several companies, and had thus far found a difficulty finding an alignment between the business and the current curriculum. He noted the process would then require the business obtain approval.

Ms. Bartolotta asked if a new curriculum could be instituted in order to benefit certain businesses. Mr. Campion stated it was possible, but it would need to be approved by SUNY and the NYS Education Department. Additionally, the college would be reviewing the curriculum for student and business demand as well as fiscal viability. Ms. Bohnsack asked if a satellite campus could be established. Mr. Campion stated it could but requesting NYS extend the 1 mile limit would be the best option.

Mr. Flood asked the Board to Enter Executive Session to discuss real estate negotiations. Prior to the motion, Mr. Crawford excused himself from the meeting.

Mr. Bohnsack made a motion to enter into Executive Session to discuss real estate transaction. Mr. Kline seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. Executive Session was entered into at 9:30am. Mr. Cappadona made a motion to exit Executive Session, which was seconded by Mr. Stair. Executive Session was exited at 9:42am.

Mr. Flood asked for a motion to approve the Ginsberg contract of sale on the 33 acres located on Route 66 in the towns of Ghent and Claverack. Mr. Finn made the motion to approve the contract, which was seconded by Mr. Stair and passed unanimously.

With no further business, Mr. Kline made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Mr. Cappadona. The meeting adjourned at 9:44am.

*Respectfully submitted by Lisa Drahushuk*