

CEDC board to have 3 new faces

By Katie Kocijanski Columbia-Greene Media | Posted: Monday, December 21, 2015 12:30 am

GREENPORT— The Columbia Economic Development Corporation's board of directors will have three new faces come January.

Following the resignations of former board members Mike Benson, Mary Bartolotta and Paul Colarusso, the corporation has been actively seeking new prospects to fill the seats.

“With John Porreca stepping down at the end of the year, we still have more vacancies to fill on the board,” said Jones. “I have 8 to 12 people who have expressed interest so far.”

After interviewing three candidates, Chairman Tony Jones and Interim Executive Director F. Michael Tucker announced the names of the new recruits at the organization’s Tuesday meeting.

New appointees include Russell Bartolotta, owner of Klein Kill Fruit Farms in Germantown.

Columbia-Greene Community College President Jim Campion said Barolotta represents the agribusiness sector of businesses in the county.

Michael Polemis has a background in international maritime trade and was a driving force behind the establishment of the Columbia Land Conservancy, based in Chatham.

Current board treasurer and recently re-elected Hudson Supervisor Sarah Sterling will also continue her involvement.

Jones said Sterling has a background in real estate development and art investment.

Among her other talents is being a fine art photographer.

The need for new board members began after longtime members David Crawford and Bruce Bohnsack, chairman of the Columbia County Industrial Development Agency, each stepped down from the board this year.

"We'll be interviewing people on January 14 and 21. We hope to bring you candidates at the January meeting," said Jones.

Following the discussion about new board members, Tucker discussed the county's success with the state grants acquired from the consolidated funding application process.

Overall, Tucker said he believed the county did very well in terms of the different projects funded.

This includes the \$1.3 million awarded to the Hudson Opera House for the restoration of various parts of the theater and a \$500,000 grant received by the Hudson Valley Creamery to expand its goat milk production.

Board members were impressed by Redburn Development Companies' acquisition of a \$1.5 million grant to develop the Hudson Hotel at 41 Cross St.

"These guys have had a lot of success in Watervliet and Troy," said Tucker. "Ted Guterman and I met with them recently to see what the project is about."

The historic building was built in 1876 and is currently used for storage. The hope is to redevelop it into a 56-room boutique hotel with a fitness center and rooftop space.

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