

# Choose Columbia

Columbia Economic Development Corporation

**MINUTES**  
**COLUMBIA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**  
**Tuesday, September 27, 2016**  
**4303 Route 9**  
**Hudson, NY 12534**

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Columbia Economic Development Corporation (CEDC) Board of Directors was held at their offices located at 4303 Route 9, Hudson, NY 12534 on September 27, 2016. The meeting was called to order at 8:30a.m. by Tony Jones, Chair.

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Russell Bartolotta	Board Member	Excused	
Rick Bianchi	Treasurer	Excused	
Jim Calvin	Board Member	Present	
Jim Campion	Board Member – Ex Officio	Present	
David Fingar	Vice-Chairman	Present	
Tish Finnegan	Board Member	Present	
Triona Fritsch	Board Member	Present	
Kate Johns	Board Member	Present	
Tony Jones	Chairman	Present	
James Lapenn	Board Member	Present	
John Lee	Board Member	Present	
Jim Mackerer	Board Member – Ex Officio	Present	
Ed Nabozny	Board Member – Ex Officio	Excused	
Michael Polemis	Board Member	Present	
Robert Sherwood	Board Member	Present	
Colin Stair	Board Member	Excused	
Sarah Sterling	Secretary	Present	
Andy Howard	CEDC Attorney	Present	
F. Michael Tucker	President/CEO	Present	
Lisa Drahushuk	Administrative Supervisor	Present	
Martha Lane	Business Development Specialist	Present	
Erin McNary	Bookkeeper	Present	
Ed Stiffler	Economic Developer	Present	
Carol Wilber	Marketing Director	Present	

**Chairman's Report:**

Mr. Jones informed the Board Mr. Stiffler and Mr. Tucker had been working on a comprehensive mapping project showing county-wide broadband coverage. He stated the maps had been unveiled at the county broadband meeting held the previous evening. The information would be reviewed on a town by town basis. He informed the board at the October broadband meeting, the broadband providers would be speaking to the committee. Mr. Jones asked Mr. Stiffler to review the maps for the board.

Mr. Stiffler stated CEDC had contracted with Don Meltz to do the mapping. He reviewed the maps and explained what each showed. He stated the next step would be to add census blocks allowing better identification of the underserved areas. Mr. Jones stated the project was moving quickly, noting the crux would be once the project was broken down by town. Mr. Stiffler informed the board; over 31,000 people in the county were considered unserved or partially unserved. Mr. Jones stated that would initiate a discussion about the definition of underserved.

Mr. Fingar asked if the census blocks used were round 1 or round 2. Mr. Tucker stated he believed round 2 were used. Mr. Polemis asked if the question of affordability would be addressed. Mr. Tucker noted the providers were working under different oversight authorities. Time Warner/Charter were reporting to the FCC due to their merger. The other providers were overseen by the NYS Broadband office. He noted the issues of affordability and availability would arise and those questions would need to be managed.

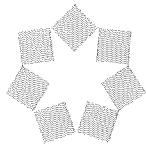
Mr. Fingar stated that currently the technology was being provided over three different pathways; Copper wire, which was quickly becoming outdated; Cable TV lines and fiber lines. He noted that the goal of the project was to achieve 100 mb availability. He noted that as faster speeds became available applications were designed to require more bandwidth. Mr. Calvin commended staff for the quality and detail of the work presented.

Mr. Jones informed the Board that Mr. Tucker had organized 2 days of meetings on behalf of Hudson Valley Creamery in order to inform them of what would be required as the company changed from processing curd to processing fresh milk. Mr. Tucker had met with Architectural Cast Stone who had purchased a building in the Commerce Park. The business planned on employing up to 50 people and anticipated being open and running by March 2017. He stated Mr. Tucker had also met twice with Camphill Ghent who was currently exploring strategic options of a potential expansion.

Mr. Jones noted the newest Microbusiness class had begun and he would ask Ms. Lane to give a brief update later in the meeting. He noted the Governance and Nominating Committee had met and would be recommending a candidate for a board seat.

**Minutes:**

*Mr. Calvin made the motion, seconded by Ms. Sterling to approve the minutes from August 30, 2016. Carried.*



# Choose Columbia

Columbia Economic Development Corporation

## **Treasurer's Report:**

Mr. Tucker reviewed the Treasurer's report for the board, noting the aggregate net income totaled \$50,000, with operating expenses under budget by \$24,000, reflecting the budgeting for a full time Executive Director. The line for consultants was over budget by \$13,000, reflecting hiring himself as President.

Mr. Tucker noted the new initiatives budget line was planned to be utilized by the institution of the strategic plan. He noted that the cost of Don Meltz who will be producing the maps for the county broadband committee would be taken from that line. Mr. Tucker stated that the legal and accounting fees were over budget. He explained the accounting fees had increased due to the transition to the consolidated financials and risk assessment, while the legal fees included loan collection. He stated any legal fees that were generated due to loan collection should be allocated to the loan account. *Ms. Finnegan made a motion, seconded by Mr. Lapenn to approve the Treasurer's Report. Carried.*

## **2017 Draft Budget:**

Mr. Tucker informed the Board the Audit and Finance Committee had discussed the draft budget and had suggested some changes which he outlined. *Mr. Lapenn made a motion, seconded by Ms. Finnegan to approve the budget as presented. Carried.*

## **President's Report:**

Mr. Tucker stated he had met with Architectural Cast Stone. He stated the company was moving forward with their project. He stated the company was seeking assistance with their employee search. Mr. Tucker stated he would be working with Columbia Greene Community College, and the Workforce Investment Board in order to help the company obtain skilled workers. He had requested job descriptions for the positions from the company and stated he suggested the company could partner with RPI and CEG to take full advantage of those resources. He stated Architectural Cast Stone supported the Strategic Plan.

Mr. Tucker asked the company why they had not taken advantage of the approved IDA benefits, noting he had done an analysis that showed the company could save \$200,000. He stated they had responded they had obtained Excelsior Tax Credits through NYS and had expressed concern about any possible negative perception by the community, if they had taken additional benefits.

Mr. Tucker stated he had met with the City of Hudson IDA regarding the proposed contract for CEDC services. He stated the board had asked further questions and he offered to wait for a decision until after the Redburn closing.

Mr. Tucker stated the office was busy and struggling with the role of concierge. He stated had had received calls from Behold New Lebanon, PS 21 and Philmont Beautification as well as several other companies making inquiries. Mr. Jones stated companies were still contacting CEDC despite the current low profile. He stated CEDC would soon begin a more aggressive marketing of the loan program, but stated the company required the capacity to react to the increased requests.

Mr. Tucker drew the Board's attention to the Register Star's article on the SBA program, noting it would be included along with a letter and some information regarding the CEDC loan fund and sent to the 86 manufacturers in Columbia County.

### **Committee Reports:**

#### **Audit and Finance Committee Report:**

Mr. Jones stated the budget had been discussed and recommended for adoption by the full board with the previously outlined adjustments. He stated the risk assessment had been reviewed by the committee and would be reviewed at their October meeting and then referred to the CEDC board.

#### **Executive Committee:**

Mr. Jones stated there had been no Executive Committee meeting.

#### **Governance and Nominating Committee Report:**

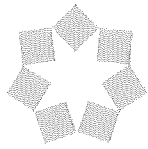
Mr. Campion stated the committee had interviewed Dr. Maria Lagana Suttmeier and had recommended her election to a CEDC board seat. *Ms. Sterling made a motion, seconded by Ms. Finnegan to elect Dr. Suttmeier to fill a CEDC board seat. Carried.*

Mr. Jones informed the board CEDC should have a workgroup focusing on workforce development. He stated in the past several board members had expressed an interest in serving as part of a group focused on workforce development. He noted Ms. Fritsch and Mr. Polemis had both expressed an interest. He asked the board members who were interested in serving as part of that group to please contact him.

Mr. Jones stated a first review of the employee manual had been done by the committee a second review would be done at their October meeting and brought to the board in October. Mr. Tucker stated he had met with the staff to review the manual and it had been a difficult meeting. He stated the Staff had picked up on items that required correction and he noted that there were other low cost benefits that could be added.

#### **Loan Committee:**

Mr. Jones stated the loan committee had not met. He asked Ms. Lane to give a report on her current Microbusiness class. Ms. Lane handed out a class schedule and roster. She noted that two classes had taken place out of the seven, with the third being held later that evening. She stated the class was very diverse in all ways. Mr. Jones stated he had visited one of the participants businesses, Fahari Bazaar, noting the business was an unexpected find in Chatham. He stated it added vitality and excitement to Columbia County.



# Choose Columbia

Columbia Economic Development Corporation

Mr. Lapenn asked the status of the Vanderbilt House loan. Mr. Jones stated no further information had been received.

## **Business Retention Visits and Membership:**

Ms. Wilber informed the Board that the current number of members totaled 59 with total contributions of \$44,100, which included pending payments of \$2,725. She explained the financial reports reported the actual payments through August 31<sup>st</sup> while her totals reflected actual and pending payments through September 27<sup>th</sup>.

She reported she had conducted 33 business visits, including PGS Millwork, ADM, Craftech and the Chamber of Commerce. Ms. Wilber stated she has scheduled future visits to American Goldleaf, American BioMedica, Lebanon Valley Speedway, Gaskins and Berkshire Bank.

Ms. Wilber stated all businesses mentioned the lack of available labor force and lack of skilled labor. They also expressed a need for high speed internet. She stated the information was entered on an Excel spreadsheet, with more detailed notes in a Word document. She stated if appropriate, staff followed up on the visits. She stated she had uncovered three to four possible IDA/CRC prospects and two possible lending opportunities.

Mr. Jones stated board member referrals for the visitation and membership program were important. He noted CEDC was on track to meet the membership goal for this year, but noted next year's goal was higher. He asked the board to keep referring potential members.

## **Public Comment:**

*Having no other business to discuss and no public comments, a motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Fingar, seconded by Ms. Sterling. Carried. The meeting was adjourned at 9:37 a.m.*

*Respectfully submitted by Lisa Draushuk*