



Choose Columbia

Columbia Economic Development Corporation

MINUTES
COLUMBIA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
Tuesday, January 28, 2020
One Hudson City Centre
Suite 301
Hudson, NY 12534

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Columbia Economic Development Corporation (CEDC) Board of Directors was held at their offices located at, One Hudson City Centre, Suite 301, Hudson, NY 12534 on January 28, 2020. The meeting was called to order at 8:31 a.m. by David Fingar, Chair.

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived/ Departed
Ruth Adams	Board Member	Present	
Russell Bartolotta	Board Member	Excused	
Jim Calvin	Vice-Chair	Excused	
Rick Cummings	Board Member	Present	
Carlee Drummer	Board Member – Ex-Officio	Present	
David Fingar	Chair	Present	
Tish Finnegan	Board Member	Present	
Derek Grout	Board Member	Excused	
James Lapenn	Board Member	Present	
John Lee	Board Member	Present	
Kenneth Leggett	Board Member	Excused	
Carmine Pierro	Board Member – Ex Officio	Present	
Seth Rapport	Board Member	Present	
Richard Scalera	Board Member – Ex Officio	Present	
Robert Sherwood	Board Member	Excused	
Gary Spielmann	Board Member	Present	
Sarah Sterling	Secretary	Present	
Brian Stickle	Board Member	Excused	
Maria Suttmeier	Board Member	Present	
Andy Howard	CEDC Attorney	Present	
F. Michael Tucker	President/CEO	Present	
Lisa Drahushuk	Administrative Supervisor	Excused	
Martha Lane	Business Development Specialist	Present	
Erin McNary	Bookkeeper	Present	
Ed Stiffler	Economic Developer	Present	
Carol Wilber	Marketing Director	Present	
Shannon Baxevanis	N.Y. Transco	Present	
Bill Callen	Behan Communication	Present	

New York Transco Presentation:

Ms. Baxevanis, accompanied by Mr. Callen, made a presentation on the proposed new electric transmission upgrade beginning in Schodack, in Rensselaer County and extending south 55 miles to Pleasant Valley in Dutchess County. This infra-structure project will replace 80 year old skeletal towers with new monopoles, upgrade electric sub-stations and will include a new 345 kV transmission line.

Minutes:

Mr. Lee made a motion, seconded by Ms. Finnegan to approve the December 18, 2019 minutes as presented. Carried.

Annual Housekeeping Resolution:

Mr. Tucker reviewed the various components of the Annual Housekeeping Resolution. A question was asked about the combined Audit & Finance Committee when it was recently decided that these two committees must be separated. It was noted that the passing of this resolution reflects the committee structure that exists as of this date. The formal splitting of the two committees will take place at the annual meeting in April 2020. *Mr. Lapenn made a motion, seconded by Mr. Spielmann to approve the Annual Housekeeping Resolution as presented. Carried.*

Treasurer's Report:

Mr. Tucker reviewed the end of the year balance sheets and the profit and loss statements. Mr. Lee asked for a clarification on the MicroBiz expenses. Mr. Tucker explained that there were costs associated with out of state seminars that staff attended and the number of clients seeking assistance substantially increased in 2019. This increase in clients was seen as positive. He also thanked the staff for their assistance in staying within the budget limits. *Mr. Cummings made a motion, seconded by Mr. Lapenn to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented. Carried.*

President's Report:

Mr. Tucker reported that in 2019, CEDC loaned \$697,000 to 11 businesses, provided technical assistance to 69 business owners, graduated 10 entrepreneurs through the annual MicroBusiness Seminar Series, secured a \$120,000 Grant from the SBA to provide additional technical assistance and secured a \$250,000 loan from the SBA to provide additional small business lending in 2020.

He also told the Board that he has received four resumes for the Project Manager position. He has spoken with two of the candidates and will be contacting the remaining two. He stressed the need to fill this position due to over 40 projects that CEDC is presently involved with. Mr. Scalera suggested that CEDC should be looking at what the impacts would be if the Hudson Correctional Facility were to close. He noted that the population of the facility is greatly reduced, making it a candidate for closure. Mr. Spielmann added that the population at the Berkshire Farm School is also changing. It has been reported that the facility would be receiving juveniles who have been separated from their parents as a result of federal immigration action.

In addition, Mr. Tucker reviewed Columbia County Airbnb visitor statistics. . In 2018, there were 33,200 Airbnb guest arrivals that generated \$5.7 million in host earnings. In 2019, those numbers increased to 40,900 guest arrivals with host earnings of \$7.3 million. He also noted the County had seen an 8.44% increase in sales tax collections between 2017 and 2018 according to the NYS Comptroller's Office. Columbia County's increase was the highest in the Capital Region and the fourth highest in the state.



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Mr. Tucker passed out an article that dealt with what challenges that most rural people want help with. Numerous issues were identified from losing young people, lack of good housing, difficulty in finding good employees and the competition of local retailers with on line shopping.

He noted that he had been meeting with all of the new supervisors and has found them very receptive to the services that CEDC could provide. He is also working with the new mayor in the City of Hudson, to establish a protocol for introducing new prospective projects in the City. Also he noted that the City of Hudson has a number of new Planning Board and IDA members, thus making this protocol extremely important. Ms. Adams noted that the receptiveness of the agency in the public is a result of the staff and their ability to interact with various agencies and individuals.

Membership Update:

Ms. Wilber updated the Board on membership . She reported that since December 2019, to date CEDC has received \$18,760 which she believes is ahead of last year's. She noted that there are numerous businesses that she would like to contact, but she just doesn't have the time. She passed out a list of businesses and asked each member to identify which ones that they may be able to assist with contacting

2019 Committee Discharged Duties:

Mr. Tucker outlined the list of Committee Discharged Duties for 2019. *Mr. Lapenn made a motion, seconded by Mr. Cummings to approve the document as presented. Carried.*

Portfolio Review:

Ms. Lane stated Mr. Calcagno was nearly to the end of his loan payments. She noted Serenity Wellness was 4 months in arrears.. She stated the SBA loan would need to be written off. *Mr. Lapenn made a motion, seconded by Mr. Cummings to pay off Serenity Wellness' SBA loan with CEDC funds. Carried.*

Mr. Spielmann made a motion, seconded by Mr. Lapenn to approve the portfolio report. Carried.

Committee Reports:

Audit & Finance Committee:

Approval of UHY LLP as Corporate Auditor and Accountant:

Mr. Lapenn made a motion, seconded by Mr. Spielmann to approve UHY LLP as the CEDC auditor and accountants. Carried.

Division of the Audit and Finance Committee:

Draft Audit Committee Charter:

Mr. Tucker explained to the Board the need to separate the Audit & Finance Committees. This split will result in the need to have separate charters for each of the new committees. Mr. Lapenn made a

motion, seconded by Mr. Rapport to recommend the Draft Audit Committee Charter for adoption by the Board as a Bylaw amendment at the April annual meeting. Carried.

Draft Finance Committee Charter:

Mr. Lapenn made a motion, seconded by Ms. Finnegan, to recommend the draft Financial Committee Charter for adoption by the Board as a Bylaw Amendment at the April annual meeting with the following additions:

- *the purpose statement be amended to more accurately define the purpose of the Committee.*
- *items such as the annual budget, the review of profit & loss statements, etc. be added to the description.*

Mr. Tucker said he would address those comments and rewrite the purpose statement. Carried.

Executive Committee:

Nothing to report.

Governance and Nominating Committee:

Procurement Policy:

Mr. Tucker outlined the changes in the proposed Procurement Policy recommended by the committee. *Mr. Spielmann made a motion, seconded by Ms. Sterling, to adopt and re-affirm the policy as presented. Carried.*

Whistleblower Policy:

Mr. Tucker reviewed the draft Whistleblower Policy. He outlined the procedures for and to whom complaints should be directed. He also noted that he believes that any person who has a complaint should contact the person he or she is most comfortable with and that we all have the obligation to report that information to the Board Chairman or the designated Ethics Officer.. *Mr. Spielmann made a motion, seconded by Mr. Lee to approve the draft Whistleblower Policy as presented. Carried.*

Proposed By-Law Changes:

Mr. Tucker informed the Board that the proposed amendments to the agency's bylaws will be discussed at the next meeting. He wants to have another opportunity to scrutinize the proposed amendments with Attorney Howard before presenting them to the Board.

Loan Committee:

Portfolio Review:

Ms. Lane presented the report on the SBA and CEDC Loans. In the SBA portfolios, two loans are in default. She asked the Board to approve the write-off of the Serenity Wellness loan as required under SBA regulations. *Ms. Finnegan, made a motion, seconded by Mr. Stickle to write off the Serenity Wellness loan. Carried.*

Ms. Lane also reported that a consultant has been hired, using technical assistance funds, to assist Abraxas Tacos, LLC with the marketing of their business which has closed.



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Workforce and Education Committee:

Committee Chairman Lapenn requested that Ms. Wilber update the Board on the Junior Career Institute program funded by the Berkshire Foundation grant. Ms. Wilber reported that the class which had 13 students from five county school districts, graduated from their training on Saturday, January 25, 2020. She noted that many of the CEDC Board members attended as well as board members of the Berkshire Foundation. A special thanks was given to Dr. Drummer for her assistance and participation. The next phase of the program for the graduates will be paid apprenticeships being arranged by Columbia County Chamber of Commerce President Jeff Hunt. Next year this program will be expanded to include school districts in Greene County. The Board gave Ms. Wilber a round of applause for a job well done.

Mr. Lapenn asked about the Career Jam. Mr. Tucker responded by saying that he has met with the consultants that put on Saratoga County's Career Jam and hopes to have ours sometime this fall. This program will be available through the cooperation of the Columbia Greene Community College and BOCES. He noted that he has talked to our Greene County counterparts and they have agreed to pay for half of the \$15,000 cost.

Other Business:

Mr. Lapenn inquired as to what the Board's next step the New York Transco presentation will be. Mr. Tucker indicated that no action would be taken on a letter of support at this time. Mr. Rapport voiced his concerns that any negative issues should be identified ahead of issuing any letter, so that as a member he could answer any concerns that may be addressed to him.

With no other business to be conducted, Mr. Spielmann made a motion, seconded by Mr. Cummings to adjourn the meeting. Carried. The meeting adjourned at 9:50am.

Respectfully submitted by Edward Stiffler, Economic Developer