

AGRICULTURE, PLANNING, TOURISM & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES – APRIL 23, 2019

AGRICULTURE, PLANNING, TOURISM & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

PRESENT: Skellie, Idleman, Hicks, Fedler, Shaw

AGRICULTURE, PLANNING, TOURISM & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

ABSENT: Campbell, Rozell

SUPERVISORS: Henke, Moore, O'Brien, Hogan

Debra Prehoda, Clerk of the Board

Chris DeBolt, County Administrator

Renee Bouplon, ASA

Laura Chadwick, Real Property Tax Svcs. Director

Dan Martindale, Deputy County Attorney

Laura Oswald, Economic Development Director

Brian Gilchrist, Executive Director Cooperative Ext.

Public

AGENDA AS PRESENTED IN COMMITTEE NOTICE:

- 1) Call to Order
- 2) Accept Minutes – March 19, 2019
- 3) PDR Program Update - ASA
- 4) Yellownote Video – Exploring Antiques
- 5) Other Business
- 6) Adjournment

Chairman Skellie called the meeting to order at 1:00 P.M.

A motion to accept the minutes of the March 19, 2019 was moved by Mr. Shaw, seconded by Ms. Idleman and adopted.

AGRICULTURAL STEWARDSHIP ASSOCIATION: Renee Bouplon, ASA, updated the committee on the following items:

- They are up to 133 conservation easements on 22,500 acres. They are in a capital campaign to raise funds to get to 24,000 acres by October 2020 but stated they will far surpass that number. Currently working about 25 projects for 7,000 acres. Four Washington County projects funded at the end of last through the State Farmland Protection Program. They have been working hard on Dairy Transition grants for cow dairy only and three funded from Washington County: Lyndon Home farm on Bunker Hill in Greenwich, Adams farm in Whitehall and Chapin family farm in Hartford and there are more on the list. The funds for this Dairy Transition grant are starting to run out and recommended urging the Governor to put more money into this Dairy Transition grants. Gearing up for the next round of the farmland protection funds. Probably hiring a project manager by fall. Offering two paid internships this summer.
- Held a healthy soil workshop and it was well attended about 25 people.
- Save the Date – Forever Farmland Supper Saturday, July 20th and Landscapes for Landsake October 12th – 14th.

Laura Oswald, Economic Development Director, addressed the following items with the committee:

YELLOWNOTE VIDEO – EXPLORING ANTIQUES – Viewed a video on the Washington County Tourism website, www.washingtoncounty.fun under articles Exploring Antiques with @theyellownote. This was attached to a Mannix article and 18,000 people have watch it and over 8,000 watched from the beginning to the end. The intention is to make a shorter video. They planned to make another video this year on the arts. This exposure is phenomenal.

Explore Washington County Farm Stands – The Economic Development Director stated her office wrote a grant to produce a card/brochure intended for distribution to food pantries, doctors' offices, etc. around the county, and at the Welcome Center on the Northway, on file. The grant amount was for \$2500, LEAP was able to get another \$500 grant and \$300 from printing line in her department's budget. Five thousand were printed and 3000 of the Mooves! that encourages exercise.

Census of agriculture released last week, handout attached. Gained on the overall numbers of farms in the County but lost about 4000 acreage; smaller farms. Number of hired workers has declined. Value of farm sales has declined and showed a loss mostly at farm sales over \$100,000. Less 1/3 of our dairy farms but more cattle farms. All but 16 counties lost population with Saratoga County the fastest growing and Washington County declined 3.5% population. Upstate counties are losing population at a faster rate than downstate. We need to find ways to invest. Biggest change is people moving out of state.

Creating a Grant Program for the Ag Community – She was approached by Brian Gilchrist, Executive Director of Cornell Cooperative Extension, about creating a grant program for the ag community. There are a few counties that have done this. There is a microenterprise program run by the Office of Community Renewal that allows a county/community to apply for up to \$200,000 and some of the funding can be used for grant administration and programing. The grants range from \$10,000 to \$35,000 to the applicants. We would be able to design the program. For the application to be competitive it should have some kind of focus and the funds can be applied for every few years. We would have to design a program that could focus on agriculture and 50% of the businesses that get funding have to be start up and the funding cannot be used for capital improvements and generally for equipment and operating capital. Would have to develop a training program and show they have had some training on business planning. The grant applicant would have to have about 10% of the total project cost up front. As a program it requires design, apply for it, hold a public hearing, and have a roster of grant applicants prior to submitting the application and require management. This is part of the CFA process. We could have HVADC help on program development and administration. The grant is available and out there. Can use up to 18% of that \$200,000 for grant administration, program delivery and education. Brian Gilchrist, Executive Director, Cornell Cooperative Extension, stated this came out of a recommendation from the Ag and Farmland Protection Plan – alternate sources of funding and Montgomery County is doing this and a few other counties. Ted Berndt, public, stated he attends a program through HVADC and is very happy with it. He was the only applicant out of Washington County. Have to establish program rules. 50% of the money to new businesses. Microenterprise could be the training portion. The grant would need to be written, awarded and managed and we would have to design the project. The County Administrator stated he has some concerns and this would be a significant increase in workload for Economic Development. He doubts we would make much of an impact for all this work. He also doesn't like that we would have to pick awardees and if the Board moves forward with this that the Board not be involved. The County has run a microenterprise program for years but it never offered grants and now we would be offering grant funds for agriculture. CFAs are going to be out the first week of May with applications at the end of July which would require approval to move forward by the May committee meeting. This will be brought up at the next Ag and Farmland Protection Board meeting to see if this is something to pursue this year or sometime down the road.

TRAILS GRANT – FA to Whitehall Section – Starting to get invoices and need an account to pay them out of. The grant revenue was recognized in account A8020.4625.01.

ICC FUNDING – Sewer District – ICC funding went to the Sewer District for the Feeder Street project in Hudson Falls. She took care of most of the administration to make that funding eligible for reuse and now the Sewer District is requesting a change order to contract with CT Male – Jim Thatcher to finalize the administration of this ICC funding. The County Administrator stated that there is already a contract with CT Male as the engineer/consultant for the Feeder Street project. This ICC money is CDBG funds and still has CDBG reporting requirements. CT Male presented a professional services change order for \$7800. No budget amendment is needed. A motion to forward to the Public Works Committee authorization for Joe Brilling, Executive Director of the Sewer District, to sign CT Male change order in the amount of \$7800 for administration of the ICC funding was moved by Mr. Hicks, seconded by Mrs. Fedler and adopted.

CAG COMMITTEE – Washington County has a vacant seat on the CAG committee. Looking to appoint someone willing to attend and interested in this topic, Hudson River and remediation. Suggested possibly someone with an analytical and scientific mind because they are presented with a lot of data. Candidate recommendations: George Allen and Terry Middleton.

OTHER BUSINESS:

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION - Brian Gilchrist, Executive Director, addressed the following items with the committee:

- Ag Statistics – handout attached.
- Ag & Farmland Plan – As part of the plan on the education component, Cooperative Extension, Soil and Water, ASA, Farm Bureau, have scheduled a legislative tour for May 16th for Assemblywoman Woerner and NYS Legislators on the ag committee to tour three or four Washington County farms.
- Six marketing workshops on social media scheduled to start in June. Helping farms tell their story, using social media to sell products, food safety – Ag & Markets, etc. Finalizing dates and times and will have brochure for next meeting.
- Four twilight tours of farms starting the end of June – Ideal Dairy, Marshland, Argyle Hops, and Battenkill Creamery. Limiting to 20 to 25 people.
- Exploring social media – educate people about Washington County and ag statistics.
- Easter baskets with products from area farms posted on Instagram with over 300 people commenting.
- Creating mini tours around Washington County - self guided.

A motion to enter an executive session to discuss the medical, financial, credit or employment history of a particular person or matters leading to the appointment, employment, promotion, demotion, discipline, suspension, dismissal or removal of a particular person was moved by Mr. Shaw, seconded by Mrs. Fedler and adopted. The meeting adjourned from executive session. No action was taken in the executive session.

The meeting adjourned at 2:51 P.M.

Debra Prehoda, Clerk
Washington County Board of Supervisors