

**FRANKLIN COUNTY ZONE ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD**

**Thursday April 20, 2006**

**4:00 P.M.**

**Sporck Administration Building**

**Paul Smith's College**

Present: Don Bilow, Paul Cantwell, Steve Hardy, Ben Peets, Nicholas Russell James Feeley, Roseanne Murphy and Martha Weaver.

Paul Cantwell called the meeting to order at 4:10

**Financial Statement:** Martha Weaver reviewed the budget-to-actual for the zone and said that there are enough funds available to pay the cost of health insurance for the new zone coordinator. Nick Russell said that now that there is an accountant reviewing the books that they should be OK.

**NYS GIS Data Sharing Agreement:** Martha Weaver asked the board to approve signing of the agreement that will allow the zone to have access to GIS shape files for NYS that can be included in maps that the zone prepares. She said she was asking for ZAB approval because the contract is very lengthy since some of the information is not available to the general public. Jim Feeley said the County participates. **Motion by Don Billow to approve signing of the contract to participate in the NYS Data Sharing Cooperative Agreement; seconded by Ben Peets; motion passed unanimously.**

**Status Boundary Redesignation; Pending Applications And Zone Development Plan:** Martha Weaver said the first 10 boundary redesignation packets are to be reviewed by the approving committee May 10. She said that at this point we have no idea how the review process will work. She said that she has six business applications for certification pending that can be reviewed by the ZAB once the Albany office gives their go ahead, which will be when they finish their legal review. She is sending in Friday the last of the additional information Albany had requested from the zone. Martha Weaver reported that she is still working on the zone development plan and should have a draft to the board soon.

**Recruitment of New Zone Coordinator:** Paul Cantwell reviewed the process to find a replacement for Martha Weaver. He asked about the health insurance.

Nick Russell asked what was considered full time for health insurance coverage.

Jim Feeley said that it was 35 hours for the County. At 17<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> the County offers some limited benefits. He said employees pay a share of the cost depending on date of hire.

When asked how many hours Jeni Scott works Martha Weaver said twenty eight to twenty nine. She also said that the IDA personnel manual does not address either part time staff or Empire Zone staff. She thought the ZAB might want to ask the IDA to fine-tune their personnel manual.

Don Billow asked if the IDA picks up the full cost of health insurance and Martha Weaver said yes the IDA does.

Paul Cantwell asked that the board discuss their relationship with the IDA. He said the two agencies share office space and there has been some sharing of equipment.

Paul Cantwell said that Brad Jackson's idea of the relationship is the same as three years ago. He also said that the IDA has so many projects currently that they have little interest in marketing the county to additional firms. He asked Martha Weaver to describe the relationship.

Martha Weaver said that there is no synergy in the relationship. The coordinator position was collocated with the IDA because it was felt that the two programs would work together effectively. There has not been as much overlap as expected.

There was a discussion of the limited partnering that occurs with the IDA and the Empire Zone.

Martha Weaver said she will be available to mentor the new coordinator and that administration of the program could be subcontracted for a while if needed. Camoin Associates, for instance, has administered the Watertown zone for over a year now -- with some substantial cost savings. Ben Peets remarked what a good job Camoin has done for Tupper Lake.

Jim Feeley explained what organizations the law allows to be the administrative entity for the zone. In Franklin County he said that would be the IDA, OneWorkSource or ComLinks.

The Empire Zone program is a joint program between Empire State Development and the NYS Department of Labor. The zone legislation empowers the Zone Administrative Board (ZAB) to designate the zone administrative entity, so the ZAB is reviewing the administrative entity relationship before announcing the job. In Franklin County the possibilities are probably the IDA, OneWorkSource or ComLinks.

Paul Cantwell said the ZAB should approach these organization to get some feeling of what their interest would be. There was no sense in pursuing it if they have no interest. Jim Feeley said that OneWorkSource had expressed some interest.

Nick Russell asked if the IDA director was obligated to administer the program.

Jim explained that the County contracts with the LDC to provide administrative services for the zone program.

Nick Russell observed that that could then be some one else and Jim agreed and said it must be a community based origination.

Martha Weaver added that the ZAB designates the administrative entity by resolution.

Paul Cantwell asked what the terms of the County contract are and Jim said "a calendar year."

Paul Cantwell asked if there should be a committee, but said it was hard for everyone to get together. He said he would like to have talks with these entities and how they would envision the program working.

Jim explained that Com Links has some business development programs and would have the capacity. He said the program needs to go forward and the administrative entity needed to realize that they had no command and control over the zone coordinator.

Nick Russell said that it was important that it is perfectly clear to the new person coming in what the expectations are and who they are report to. Its unfair to the person to find out once they are onboard that there are several bosses, several different directions and priorities. Want to make sure that is cleared up before anybody is hired.

Ben Peets agreed that you want to make sure that you're stove-piped; you can't have someone working for three or four different bosses.

Roseanne Murphy said that what the State wants is a professional that can promote the program, and that Martha has done that, as well as handle all the paperwork and technical requirements and work with businesses. You need someone to work full time at the position. She said Franklin County Zone's website is outstanding and that she uses it as a resource all the time.

Jim described OneWorkSource's co-location of employees from many different organizations and how they had overcome all the turf issues. When Paul Cantwell asked who should be contacted there, Jim replied Jim Calnon, who is a Franklin County employee.

Martha Weaver commented that the zone program requires a full time person, but that there are a number of the things she does such as marketing and visiting employers that are not just narrowly empire zone. She said that when she goes to trade shows she is alone and remarked that the zone coordinator and IDA director in Essex County are a team all the time.

Nick Russell said that we need to explore some options. Paul Cantwell asked if there should be a definite committee or should meetings be set up and a small group of the board attend. He said that he would like Martha to play a role in that by answering some questions they might have.

It was agreed that meetings would be set up with ComLinks, IDA and OneWorkSource for a small group of ZAB members to attend.

Nick Russell said that the ZAB will need to work on an advertisement once it is determined who the administrative entity will be.

All were in agreement and the meeting was adjourned.