I. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Lattimer called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. and welcomed Mrs. Lando as Vice Chair.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: APPROVING THE MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 2, 2020, MEETING MADE BY MR. HANNA. SECONDED BY MS. VAN CAESEELE. ALL BEING IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIES 5-0.

III. DEPARTMENTAL REQUESTS

A. Planning

1. Modifying, Adopting and Consolidating Agricultural District No. 1 District No. 10 – Mr. Sousa explained they completed the eight year review of Agricultural District No. 1. The only thing that is new, was that based upon the review that was done in 2012, we are recommending consolidating Agricultural District No. 1 with Agricultural District No. 10. These two districts combined represent 98,000 acres. After the review, we are proposing adding 293 parcels which will represent another 17,700 acres. Approximately 15 percent represent lands that are in production. The remaining land is vacant or could be used in the future.

Mrs. Ferratella asked will the district have a new number? Mr. Sousa replied it will remain Agricultural District No. 1 and Agricultural District No. 10 will go away and become part of Agricultural District No. 1.

MOTION: MODIFYING, ADOPTING AND CONSOLIDATING AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT NO. 1 AND NO. 10 AS A RESULT OF THE EIGHT-YEAR REVIEW OF AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT NO. 1 MADE BY MRS. LANDO. SECONDED BY MRS. FERRATELLA FOR DISCUSSION.

Mrs. Lando asked why are we doing this? What is the benefit? Mr. Sousa replied the benefit is the amount of time spent by our department; it will take less time to review fewer districts. There will also be less cost for doing the mailings. The end goal is to go down to four districts. We have been consolidating districts for many years and you can only consolidate districts when they are up for review during their eight-year cycle.
Ms. Lattimer asked will there be a decrease in the acreage that is in agricultural production? Mr. Sousa replied probably. We try to add acreage, but there is not too much agricultural land to capture and add. It is a matter of maintaining what we do have and that will be easier to do with four districts.

VOTE ON PREVIOUS MOTION: ALL BEING IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIES 5-0. Resolution Required.

B. County Manager
   1. Contract Renewals – Mr. Wheeler requested authorization to renew the contracts with the Empire Zone for $15,000 annually and with the Hornell Area Humane Society for $8,500 annually.

   MOTION: AUTHORIZING THE COUNTY MANAGER TO RENEW THE CONTRACTS WITH THE EMPIRE ZONE FOR $15,000 ANNUALLY AND WITH THE HORNELL AREA HUMANE SOCIETY FOR $8,500 ANNUALLY MADE BY MR. VAN CAESEELE. SECONDED BY MRS. LANDO. ALL BEING IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIES 5-0.

IV. OUTSIDE AGENCIES
A. Steuben County Industrial Development Agency
   1. 2020 Annual Report – Mr. Johnson stated 2020 started out looking like it was going to be a great year. We had received the highest allocation from CFA and we were looking at several projects which were going to be significant; and then COVID hit. Then our job became serving as a resource to businesses and that demonstrated how quickly we could provide that service and we were able to expand our reach in the County. He stated he would like to give a shout out to his staff as they were critical to this. 2020 started good and then turned into a year of reaction and response.

   Mr. Johnson stated even with COVID, we stayed busy with projects such as Finger Lakes Community Health and Upstate Niagara. They both moved forward with major investments in their facilities and added jobs. We also provided benefits to a new development on Market Street in Corning that converted a large vacant building into a dynamic set of three restaurants and a wine shop in one, known as Quincy on Market. He stated many businesses took this as an opportunity to respond and react to the pandemic.

   Mr. Johnson stated with regard to renewable energy, we closed on a significant number of projects. All of the wind projects received their final approvals. There were four solar projects that were approved by the IDA and will produce 4 megawatts of power. He stated two of the three wind projects began construction. There were some delays related to legal challenges and issues getting people into the State due to the travel restrictions. We do expect these projects to move forward in 2021. There are six other solar projects in some level of discussion. With all of these projects, including the two wind projects, we are expecting they will generate 677 megawatts of power for 2021.

   Mr. Johnson stated the former Corning Hospital site redevelopment dates back to 2011. In 2020, First Heritage Federal Credit Union Corporate Offices moved in. There is also the final construction of the residential unit which is anticipated to be open in the Spring. This total project generated $42 million in private investment. This was a wonderful project.

   Mr. Johnson stated with regard to the Dana Lyon, we are in final negotiation and sale with Providence Housing. This facility has been vacant for many years. There will be a $17.7 million reinvestment into this facility which will provide 49 units of workforce housing. Income is a requirement and will be a requirement in order to lease an apartment in this facility. With the income level requirements, well over 60 percent of the Village of Bath qualifies to rent. This project has been targeted for the majority of the population in the Village. We have worked with the Save the Lyon to include an 8,600 square foot community arts center and that will be licensed to Waterman Arts. Waterman Arts is doing their business plan for the IDA and we will be the lease guarantor. Providence Housing is in the process of finalizing their financing. They did get denied financing in October, and this is their second application, which is due in mid-January.
Mr. Johnson stated we have continued to work with our economic development partners, in particular, Three Rivers with Susan Payne as their new president, on the Retention, Repositioning and Expansion Initiative. We have been meeting with businesses in the targeted sectors. Ms. Payne is performing an initial market analysis. He stated they have met with about a half dozen businesses and he is pleased to say that this program has been well received and more businesses are utilizing this information. We are looking forward to expanding this program in 2021. We have been looking at manufacturing and will be broadening our focus to include health care.

Mr. Johnson stated through the course of 2020, we were able to negotiate a contract with the County to help support our infrastructure operations and we brought in J.C. Smith on a part-time basis. Mr. Smith has been meeting to finalize the timeline for the Hammondsport sewer project. All funds are in place and we are hoping we can go out to bid in 2021 and start construct. Mr. Johnson stated Mr. Smith has been a great addition. We have also secured funding for the sewer project in Prattsburgh and are working on finalizing financing. We do have some gaps and are talking with our partners on how to close the financial gap. We are confident we will find resources in 2021 to do that project. Mr. Johnson stated they have also been working with the Town of Bath on a water quality project around Lake Salubria, with discussions on how to expand the infrastructure and improve access to economic development.

Mr. Johnson stated our 2020 projects generated $10 million in PILOT revenue with an approximately $2 million benefit to the County. He stated our numbers are delayed one year and we have the 2019 numbers. So in 2019, our projects supported 7,137 jobs with a payroll of $834 million. There were 292 new jobs added and these projects leveraged $68 million in private funding. He stated he will report on the 2020 numbers when those are completed in March.

Mr. Johnson stated to quote Henry Ford, “Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success”. He stated 2020 was a year where we had to come together with our partners. Our relationships we had were critical in moving projects forward and keeping businesses open and operating. I would like to thank Mr. Wheeler for his continuous support, as well as the County. He stated 2021, once we get through the pandemic, will be a good year. Thank you for all your support.

Mrs. Lando stated congratulations to Mr. Johnson and his staff as you have done a great job in communicating. There is not another IDA in the State that does what you do. For Dana Lyons, is Providence Housing the same company that was looking to do St. Vincent’s in Corning? Mr. Johnson replied yes. They do developments all over upstate New York. They have low-income housing and also do middle-income housing. The type of housing they do really depends on the community. These were tax credit projects. They will require individuals leasing apartments to demonstrate that they have income coming in.

Mrs. Lando asked has there been any action on the lot in Corning that borders Riverside? Mr. Johnson replied Fred Arcuri, through Corning Enterprises, has been working on that. It is a good parcel and has a lot of potential. At this time I cannot say as Corning Enterprises has taken the lead.

Mrs. Ferratella asked do you have an update on the foundry site in the Village of Painted Post? Mr. Johnson replied tonight the Village of Painted Post Planning Board will be holding a meeting where Tioga Container will be presenting the final noise and vibration studies that they had to complete. The expectation is they will receive their final site plan approval at the February meeting with the hope to start construction when the weather breaks.

Mr. Van Etten asked do you have an update on the loan program? Mr. Johnson stated I don’t have specific numbers, but I can get them to you. That program was not as utilized as I thought it would be. We lent out about half of the money. There seems to be a little renewed interested in that and we should see some renewed activity. For 2021, we will need to reassess and look at how we can adapt to meet the needs of the businesses going forward. For the IDA, our intention was to make sure the money supported Steuben County businesses. I want to work with REDEC and the committee to look at ways to get money back out on the street to support our businesses.
Mr. Swackhamer stated with regard to the solar projects, I was talking with engineers a couple of months ago and they were saying there was not a way to get rid of old solar panels. Are we protecting ourselves from cleanup and maintenance once these projects are done? Mr. Johnson replied late summer we had a discussion and our board decided that part of our requirements would include a decommissioning plan and bonding in place to get rid of projects if they were not operational. Most of the plans we are seeing are part of the local municipality site plan approvals. We need to see that in place before we will approve. We definitely have the same feelings and we want to make sure there are protections in place to protect the community.

Mr. Swackhamer asked how many acres are these solar projects? Mr. Johnson replied there is a total of 20 – 30 acres. They are small community solar projects of about 5 – 10 megawatts. Ms. Staats commented they are actually 20 – 30 acres per project. Mr. Johnson stated we have four projects. Most of the communities have become adept at their community solar laws and require decommissioning in place. We are almost acting as a secondary protection.

Mr. Potter stated with the solar projects there are concerns about their closeness to neighboring properties. Are there any setback requirements? Mr. Johnson replied we do not have them. The individual municipalities are talking and getting more adept in their planning process and looking at other community solar laws. Many of the new laws have a setback requirement, however, I cannot tell you what they are. We are also encouraging municipalities to look at renewable energy laws to include something for battery storage. These are large-scale batteries; tractor trailer size.

Mr. Van Caeseele stated with regard to low and middle-income housing, individuals in Hornell are struggling to find housing. Are there any future plans to provide or help provide housing in Hornell? We have a new housing development on Fairlawn and in Arkport, but they are pricy. Individuals are really struggling to find low and middle-income housing. Mr. Johnson replied the County commissioned a housing study that confirmed that. I am not aware of any project, but I am happy to reach out to the Hornell City Mayor and the Hornell Industrial Development Agency. We would be more than happy to introduce them to some developers that specialize in low and middle-income housing. Mr. Van Caeseele commented with the Governor’s and State’s restrictions, I don’t know that anyone is investing in housing.

Ms. Fitzpatrick asked do you have an update on Phillips? Mr. Johnson stated I am sworn to secrecy. There are active discussions in Phillips on the future of the facility. Discussions are ongoing and it may surprise many of you, but I am pleased with the direction.

Ms. Lattimer stated I, as a Legislator, and my colleagues value our working relationship with you, Ms. Staats and Mr. Smith and your forthcoming information is always appreciated. I think there is pent-up demand out there and I am hoping for business and job development as a result of that. Mr. Johnson stated the relationship here with the Legislature is different than others and I value that. If there are any Legislators that have questions at any time, please reach out. He stated sometimes there are things that I cannot say as we have non-disclosure agreements.

Mr. Johnson stated 2021 has started out on a very positive note with the interest we are seeing. We do have things in the final stages of development that I think you will be very happy to hear about. I think it will be a positive year for development in the County. We are an agent of the County and we want to make sure our relationship continues to be strong.

V. OTHER BUSINESS

A. COVID Data – Ms. Lattimer stated last month Mr. Mullen had suggested contacting NYSAC to initiate the gathering of information and data on COVID. She asked Mr. Wheeler to provide an update. Mr. Wheeler stated I did reach out to Steve Acquario at NYSAC and Mrs. Smith also reached out to her State Association of Public Health Directors. What we are seeing is that the NYS Department of Health is holding the data very closely. They do have demographics for deaths and I will send that link out. A request had previously been made before we made our request. Mrs. Smith and NYSAC both escalated that request and there has been radio silence.
Ms. Lattimer asked if the Department of Health or the State is impeding the release of information, why can’t the counties voluntarily give it to NYSAC? Mr. Wheeler replied they could. I would say that not every county tracks exactly like we do. I would hope that many have the same data. I don’t think we could get a full snapshot. I can continue to follow up and try to get counties to report that.

Mrs. Lando commented it is so hard to understand that there is a system that everyone provides that information to and it should be fairly easy to get that information out. Ms. Lattimer stated the State doesn’t want to release the information. Mrs. Lando stated if the counties have to enter the information, they could share that with NYSAC.

Mr. Wheeler stated we only have the ability to view our testing and results information, we do not have the ability to view other counties information in the hospital system. The State will share information when they choose to. Ms. Lattimer commented the State holds the purse strings to the hospitals. Mr. Wheeler stated there have been numerous groups that have submitted FOIL (Freedom of Information) requests. There have been requests for the full scope of nursing home deaths and it has been five months and they have not provided the information. I will talk to NYSAC again. If the other counties are not tracking as diligently as we are, there is the potential that we would be creating additional work for them. The State has all those spreadsheets and databases; they could run those graphs within a matter of hours at the most.

Ms. Lattimer stated so in those counties where only the hospitals are doing the reports, there would still be missing data. Mr. Wheeler stated correct. We have a great hospital system to administer and partner with. They are under no legal requirement to comply with our requests except for some case testing, but they are voluntarily providing us with operational and statistical data because they know how important it is to track this at a local level.

B. Goals – Ms. Lattimer reminded the committee that Chairman Van Etten has asked for committee goals. If any of you have any suggestions, please email or call me so I can have those ready. Mrs. Lando commented we talk about goals and either all the committees do or we don’t do them. The HSH&E Committee did goals and I don’t know where it went and also the other committees did not do goals. Mr. Van Etten stated we did this through Mr. Hauryski’s tenure. Unless you set goals and try to work on something that is measurable and achievable, then all we are is a reactionary board. It is good if we can say that is what we would like to do in the next year. Mrs. Lando stated I am in favor of doing it, but I think we should all do it. Mrs. Ferratella stated I agree. The 2019 goals were excellent and we got good information back. That should have been expressed to the all of the committees.

MOTION: TO ADJOURN MADE BY MRS. LANDO. SECONDED BY MR. HANNA. ALL BEING IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIES 5-0.

Respectfully Submitted by

Amanda L. Chapman
Deputy Clerk
Steuben County Legislature

**NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED FOR**
Wednesday, February 3, 2021
9:30 a.m.
Please send agenda items to the Clerk of the Legislature’s Office
NO LATER THAN NOON
Wednesday, January 27, 2021