

Watertown Empire Zone
Administrative Board Meeting
July 2007

The Watertown Empire Administrative Board meeting was held on Wednesday, July 25, 2007, on the 3rd floor of the City Municipal Building, 245 Washington Street, Watertown, New York.

Members Present: Chairman Peter Clough, James Fitzpatrick, Robert Lawlor, Joanne St. Croix and Joseph Butler.

Also Present: Juliana Pyron of Camoin Associates

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting was called to order at 4:30 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made by Mr. Lawlor to approve the May ZAB meeting minutes. Motion was seconded by Mr. Fitzpatrick and carried with all voting in favor thereof.

AUDIT OF EMPIRE ZONE CERTIFIED BUSINESSES

Ms. Pyron told the Board that after looking at businesses annual reports, those that did not reach sixty percent of their stated goals will be reviewed. She commented that it would take a little while to review applications for the affected businesses. Ms. Pyron also reminded the Board that sometimes the BARS may not be filled out correctly and that some reasonable explanation may be found but after this review some businesses may be decertified.

Mr. Fitzpatrick suggested examining where the businesses currently stand to use as a guideline.

Chairman Clough asked if letters have been sent to businesses yet.

Ms. Pyron said they had not.

Chairman Clough inquired if it would take long to look at who is in compliance. He added that it is in the best interest of the City to keep as many businesses running as possible and that the Board should do anything it can to help.

Ms. Pyron responded that it would take at least a few weeks.

Chairman Clough asked if when a business is reviewed, will Randal Coburn, Director of Empire Zones, be notified.

Ms. Pyron replied that she believed that the state would make the recommendation for decertification then the Board would vote on the recommendation. She also said that the benefits given to a business are equal to the jobs created.

Chairman Clough asked where our Zone stands in comparison to other counties.

Ms. Pyron said that Franklin County has only 25% of the number of certified businesses that the Watertown Empire Zone has. There are approximately 200 certified businesses in Watertown.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if the state could decertify over the Board.

Ms. Pyron responded that she believed they could but that the Board could provide input. She added that a business can also appeal any ruling.

Mr. Butler asked for clarification in an email.

Mrs. St. Croix, as an example, asked if a certified business, currently not claiming benefits could receive benefits after they completed a construction project.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked why the state would let a business stay certified if they are not receiving benefits.

Mr. Butler replied that they may be kept since they are not costing the state any money.

Mr. Fitzpatrick commented that the Board will have to meet more often to discuss the certifications.

Chairman Clough asked Ms. Pyron to keep the Board up to date.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Mr. Butler reviewed the 2006-2007 profit/loss sheet, including income and expenses. He suggested putting some of the money in savings into a CD.

Chairman Clough said that should be discussed at the next meeting.

Motion was made by Mr. Lawlor to approve the report. Motion was seconded by Mrs. St. Croix and carried with all voting in favor thereof.

FUNDING

Chairman Clough told the Board that funding from the City is going down by half and funding from the Town is being cut as well. He added that this is the time of year to ask the County for \$5,000 and wondered if the Board should.

After discussion, the Board said they should not.

Mr. Butler asked how much money is received from the state.

Mr. Fitzpatrick said about \$7,500.

APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATION

Bolton's Pharmacy

Ms. Pyron said they just acquired a new business, Northern New York Infusion Inc.

Chairman Clough asked where the equipment will be located.

Ms. Pyron said the equipment will be located at the pharmacy. She said they will be creating a total of five new jobs, one new person per year. Ms. Pyron added that they have the lab facilities to clean the infusion equipment and to fill prescriptions.

Motion was made by Mr. Lawlor to approve the certification application for Bolton's Pharmacy. Motion was seconded by Mrs. St. Croix and carried with all voting in favor thereof.

Washington Street Properties

Ms. Pyron reviewed the application with the Board. She added that the owner would receive a refund on property taxes. Ms. Pyron also said that the business does not meet the 15:1 cost benefit ratio but because it is downtown, it does not need to.

Motion was made by Mr. Lawlor to approve the certification application for Washington Street Properties. Motion was seconded by Mr. Fitzpatrick and carried with all voting in favor thereof.

STATEWIDE ZONE CAPITAL CORPORATION

Ms. Pyron reviewed the information with the Board and said that James Conroy, Vice President, recommends that each board pass the resolution.

Chairman Clough said he recalled that Mr. N'Dolo had thought this was a bad idea.

Ms. Pyron replied that this was given to her by Mr. N'Dolo. She explained that the expansion is to include other Zones for low interest financing for their businesses.

Mr. Butler asked if this was similar to the Watertown Trust.

Chairman Clough said it was originally, and that funds from all old Zones would be pooled so any Zone can apply for the funds.

Mr. Lawlor suggested that the Board table this resolution until more information is available.

Ms. Pyron said Mr. Conroy would be willing to come to a meeting to answer questions if needed.

GREAT LAKES CHEESE

Ms. Pyron told the Board that Great Lakes Cheese is doubling its production and employment. She discussed the Zone benefits with the Board.

NEW BUSINESSES

Ms. Pyron announced that there are potentially two new businesses that will be opening in the industrial park, including Ferguson Waterworks and a hatchery.

MARKETING BROCHURE

Mr. Fitzpatrick said he would forward something to Ms. Pyron on Friday (July 27). He told the Board he has some buildings in mind including 1st National Beef & Brew, Renzi's and Fort Drum (the 10th Mountain Division).

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Lawlor, seconded by Mr. Butler and carried with all voting in favor thereof.

Meeting adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

Amanda C. Lewis
Deputy City Clerk