Town of Montgomery Industrial Development Agency Meeting Minutes

Town Government Center

110 Bracken Road

Montgomery, NY 12549

March 8, 2022

1:00 PM

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**PRESENT: ABSENT:**

Jeffrey Crist - Chairman John Dickson – Board Member J. Thomas Jones - Second Vice Chairman

Matt Stoddard – Treasurer

Rick Golden – Attorney with Burke, Miele, Golden & Naughton, LLP

Conor Eckert – Executive Director TOMIDA

Billy Ibberson – Livestream Services (Acquisitions Marketing)

George DeClue – Board Member

Meghan Hurlburt – Secretary

Bob Santo – Board Meeting

NOTE: Conference Call Line – No Calls

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**AGENDA**

1. Call to Order and Declaration of Quorum
2. Approval of the January 11, 2022 Meeting Minutes
3. Public Comment on Items on the Agenda
4. Executive Director’s Report
5. Discussion on potential RFP for Executive Director Services
6. Financial Report
7. Other Business – PARIS update
8. Adjournment
9. Next Meeting Scheduled for April 12, 2022

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**Meeting**

1 - Chairman Jeff Crist began with the introduction of Board Members and other members in attendance. Before the meeting started Chairman Crist recognized with some regret the letter of resignation by Conor Eckert. Conor provided the letter on February 8, 2022, a month ago and he agreed to stay on for a month and will conclude his work with us at the end of today. Secondly Chairman Crist recognized Rick Golden, the Counsel, for his acceptance of another job and will also be leaving the TOMIDA. Ashley Torre will continue as our Counsel.

2 – Chairman Crist – The first item on the agenda is to approve the January 11, 2022 meeting minutes. Any additions, corrections? A motion to accept? Motion to accept made by Tom Jones, seconded by George DeClue. All in favor, none opposed. Motion carried. Moving on to public comment.

3 – Chairman Crist – It’s a brief agenda today but we always open it up to the public for comment. No comments from the public. Moved on to the Executive Director’s Report.

4 – Conor – Thank you Mr. Chairman. For this report I would like to discuss the conference report that’s in the packets. That’s where a lot of the interesting value is. At the end of February, I went to the NYSEDC conference in Albany. There is a couple of key takeaways that I want to report to the Board. By way of site selection, marketing and tools of the trade. A particular interest to the Board, they have a site selector come in who works on foreign direct investment and spoke to the group and they reported that suburbs are still gaining popularity in the site selection community and this trend started during COVID and likely will remain. Communities with reliable water and sewer capacity are positioning themselves for foreign direct investment and they are seeing that interest come from renewed enthusiasm about American manufacturing and supply chain advantages. Access to talent remains a key priority. Once again, foreign direct investment is here to stay in particular in New York, there is a lot of activity. Something I found interesting – if a site selector reaches out to an organization individually, that generally means you are already shortlisted. They wouldn’t reach out to you if they hadn’t already done their homework and that’s something I found interesting. In the future if a site selector does reach out to you, you can assume you are already on a short list for their sites. Any way a community can tighten up project timelines, that’s important, particularly in New York. The next session that I thought had value was the marketing session. It focused a lot on relocating, both corporate and people. So, 38% of people surveyed in this New York survey are relocating to A. have a better life (30% of people who reported the survey are moving to be closer to the family and 27% are moving for larger living space and these factors for people and companies relocating and the cost of living, housing costs, safety in welcoming communities. The last session they call “The tools of the Trade” - When a project approaches a community, understanding the grants and tax credits available, as well as the incentives working with utility providers and also workforce training organizations like the workforce development institute and I included their leaderships contact information in this report. There is also NYPA (New York Public Utility) that offers low cost power for businesses on a seven-year contract.

Chairman Crist - Any comments or questions for Conor?

Bob Santo – As an organization, do we have any relationship with any organization/university or trade school?

Conor Eckert – That’s a great question Bob. SUNY Orange, yes, as a community, we have been more pro-active. We have done workforce collaboration with banking and cannabis. I think there is also an opportunity to work with Marist on a regional basis. I think that driving talent and workforce is difficult to do at the municipal level, being able to market the town as a place where talent wants to be, I think is the most attainable goal.

Bob Santo – My experience, working at Universities, seeing all these incubator businesses, for instance Ithaca. There are all these little buildings, businesses, that are dependent on the University. That’s a trend we should be going on.

Conor Eckert – Yes, communities partnering with a county workforce development office to work on a county-wide workforce strategy workforce and talent. You can see communities working with higher-ed and now students are trained in Cannabis and students are trained in financial operations. It’s more of a macro push.

Chairman Crist – Related to that Conor, I don’t know if it’s appropriate to mention that you have been working with Amazon to do some training there, guidance and financing.

Conor Eckert – Yes. So, Amazon offers two programs for communities that that they have projects in. One is “Amazon Future Engineer’s”, so they will partner with K-12 high schools and middle schools to teach coding and engineering programing that we will apply for and also Amazon Career Pathways where they will help finance higher education for their employees. Amazon pledged to deliver workforce benefits to the Town as part of the IDA benefits so that’s something we are exploring.

Chairman Crist – One question – As far as companies finding talent, and the marketing strategy of why people are relocating, with the desire to pay people to work remotely, is there any vision and any guidance on how that is increasingly effective?

Conor Eckert – Yes. The remote work trend is here to stay in some extent. Even though you see some employers push to bring their employees back. The remote work needs to be paired with suitable living options. That’s something the Town is working on with the new zoning.

Chairman Crist – Anything else for Conor? I will note that Conor’s report on the transition with Meghan assisting on website operation and contact information for myself and Meghan with you not being here to take calls and processing applications.

Conor Eckert – Yes. We are lucky to have Meghan and she is equipped to handle the website in the interim and has the e-mail that walks you through the process.

Chairman Crist – Discussion on Future Executive Director: Thank you Conor on your two years of service.

Conor Eckert – Thank you Mr. Chairman and thank you to the Board for allowing me to serve.

Chairman Crist – As far as our process in finding another Executive Director, Bob asked me at the beginning of the meeting, rightly so, we should confirm if we want another Executive Director and I think that’s an easy answer. We have done some work to prepare this meeting. Any feedback from the Board: Matt Stoddard: Thank you Conor. I do believe that this Board needs one and I believe they should have the qualities that Conor has brought to this Board. Without it we would be struggling.

George DeClue – Absolutely, you have to have an Executive Director.

Chairman Crist – There are a lot of requirements you need of the IDA though process of just being in existence. And secondly, to carry out our mission.

(Discussion on Executive Director Job Description with Rick Golden)

* Where to advertise
* Who to send to, etc.

Tom Jones – What is the employee set-up? Is it similar to Conor’s? Is it 10-99?

Chairman Crist – Open for discussion including Supervisor. We can review this with Bernard and Supervisor Maher.

Tom Jones – Benefits, etc.

Rick Golden – Briefly describes job description and benefits. This is NOT a civil service position. Town is at discretion. Changes, adds are entertained.

Conor Eckert – Discussion on application process: Send to Chairman Crist and Meghan Hurlburt.

Tom Jones: Briefly touches on skill levels necessary for Executive Director – NOTE: Applications should be received by April 11, 2022.

Chairman Crist – Motion to plan to move forward to hiring a new Executive Director: Motion made by Tom Jones and seconded by Matt Stoddard. All in favor, none opposed. Other business: PARIS Update:

Conor Eckert – Due at the end of March 2022. Reporting that needs to be done with the NYS Office of the Comptroller. Cannot submit this unless our audit is done. Auditor has been great, we have done everything we need to do we are just waiting on confirmations of projects. Ashely is aware of what we are waiting on and we should be all set very soon pending submissions. Special meeting is necessary to discuss audit.

Matt Stoddard: Discussion on financial report – See back up material.

Chairman Crist – Discussion on Habor House – restart audits by Loewke Brille. Waiting on Non-Profit tenant. Walden Construction Enterprise – not seeking benefits.

Rick Golden – Ashley and I will reach out to them to discuss any issues.

Matt Stoddard – Monies owed to IDA? From Walden Construction – Are there monies owed to IDA Board?

Rick Golden – Just legal fees owed to the law firm. Nothing to the Board.

Chairman Crist – Motion to accept financial report – Bob Santo made that motion, seconded by George DeClue. All I favor none opposed. Discussion on Conor’s e-mail access: Keep the same address just change the password. Conor is to submit a memorandum that identifies any conflicts of interest, outstanding projects, etc. (As per Rick Golden). Motion to adjourn: Made by Bob, seconded by Tom.

Meeting minutes were transcribed and submitted by Meghan Hurlburt.