

Fairgrounds Task Force
Tuesday, February 22, 2022 - 8:30 pm

Roy Holzer - Chairman

Chairman Holzer called this Fairgrounds Task Force to order at 8:30 with the following in attendance: Robin DeLoria, Derek Doty, Shaun Gilliland, Roy Holzer, Jim Monty, Matt Stanley, Meg Wood, Jim Dougan, Mike Mascarenas and Holly Aquino. Davina Winemiller was excused.

HOLZER: So, let's call this Task Force to order, we'll start with Holly's report, go ahead Holly.

AQUINO: Yup, it's a fairly short report, first page is just everything that we have on the books so far. Second page, a little financial information, revenues and expenses, just to remind you what the budget is for 2022 for the fairgrounds, right now and a summary of news and activities.

I did a lot of networking this past month. Westport Chamber of Commerce, their economic development committee, met with Adirondack Harvest, virtually, connected with Suzanne Maye from LakeChamplainRegion.com, to just kind of touch base with everybody who may have some sort of interest in the fairgrounds.

Updated the website on the County website; our page for the fairgrounds. All of the new forms are on there. Dan Manning did go over there and approve them before they got put up there. Got our first one submitted from Soil and Water for their tree and shrub sale; which is the first thing on the calendar.

Still waiting to hear back from 4-H, I have all of their, so far what they know, that's on the calendar, just waiting for their permit application. The Northern Adirondack Equestrian Club, they are now the Northern Adirondack Barrel Racing Association, so they are applying for their non-profit status and their dates are pretty much all set, they've got their insurance. I just need the paperwork from them and that kind of sums it up.

HOLZER: Okay, questions; for the fairgrounds calendar? How many of these are new events that are coming?

AQUINO: New events, they're all past clients, let's say that, they've all been there before. These are the people who are the typical ones who use the fairgrounds on a fairly regularly basis. The equestrian shows; those are actually new in terms of they're doing gymkhana and barrel racing. Barrel racing is a new event for the fairgrounds and there's 5-6 weekends and one of the ones that's been on here. The Westport Arts and Crafts Festival, they have two dates. They've been there before and they're coming back again this year, so that's good.

HOLZER: Do you have any other organizations or groups in the works, as far as like contacts or trying to entice them to come use the facilities?

AQUINO: Yeah, so right now I think our target audience really is kind of the local organizations. So, that's what I'm doing now, trying to get the word out there. I've got a flyer that I've developed,

so I'd have to share doing some advertising. I know the Westport Chamber's very interested in creating some events. You know there's talk of a flea market and things like that.

HOLZER: Okay and has anyone from the Ag Society reached out to you, as far as help using your expertise to help them market the fair or anything like that?

AQUINO: No, although I do know they reached out to ROOST and I have a feeling they may ask them, I'm not sure, but they invited MJ to come sit on their next meeting in March.

HOLZER: Okay

AQUINO: I did speak with Becky Provost, she's been a good contact, getting the minutes of their meetings when I can't attend. You know, if there's, I've been trying to get information from them, I don't know where they're at in terms of the fair, itself. I know a lot of the other fairs, like Franklin County, Clinton County, they're like all set to go, they've got their entertainment, they've got all their information on their website. So, I'm not sure what the plan is yet, I'm not sure if they know what the plan is yet.

TYLER: I think they got a good idea, because I've seen them put stuff on Facebook on their, What's Happening in Westport, stuff like that.

AQUINO: I am on the What's Happening in Westport.

TYLER: And they have hired a bunch of shows, they went out, I know they went out to the convention, whatever it was, out in Syracuse or wherever and they got a game plan of where they're going.

HOLZER: Which is too bad, because I wished we had known about that, because that probably would have been a good idea to send Holly on that, just for networking and brainstorming.

TYLER: Every year they have that at the same time of year, right, Shaun?

GILLILLAND: Yeah, it's always Martin Luther King weekend.

HOLZER: Is that an Ag Society conference?

GILLILLAND: It's a convention for the State Organization of Fairs.

HOLZER: So that would be...

GILLILLAND; But, it's all fair specific.

HOLZER: So, maybe next year we should look at that as a possibility for you to go out there.

AQUINO: Well, I think that it would probably be up to the Ag Society if they want me there.

HOLZER: We can figure that out and the problem is, like I told you before, even though the fair is run by the Ag Society it reflects on all of us in the County. So, when people think of the Essex County Fair, they're thinking of the Essex County Government.

AQUINO: Yeah, one of the things, I don't know if they need any help on, is their website, because even last year it was incomplete. Like if you go on the Essex County Fair website, it says website under maintenance and it said that all last year and there's tabs and pages with nothing on them. So, they started it, but it looks like they never finished it.

HOLZER: So, it's still under construction then?

AQUINO: It still says website under maintenance, they have not put their new dates on for this year. So, in terms of marketing, that's something I would highly recommend that they do. I don't know if they have anybody who's been handling that.

TYLER: I'll find out.

DOUGAN: And Holly and myself will reach out to see if we can get a member here at this. I know some of you have.

AQUINO: I did reach out to them about that and actually, I think at the last meeting, I know it was virtual, I think Dennie Westover was on that call, but I don't think he made his presence know. I didn't realize that until later.

HOLZER: Okay, I didn't realize that.

DOUGAN: We need to have more of a working session.

GILLILLAND: Is he moving to Pennsylvania?

TYLER: No

HOLZER: What's that, Jim?

DOUGAN: We just need to have more a work session and more conversation with them.

HOLZER: I agree, I agree.

DOUGAN: As theirs is the biggest event.

AQUINO: Yeah

HOLZER: And a point person, you know, I don't know if Scott's too busy now, if he should delegate someone.

MONTY: Roy, is there a representative from the Ag Society that should be included here?

HOLZER: We started talking about that at our last meeting.

DOUGAN: That's what we're saying.

AQUINO: I think part of their problem, too, is that I believe most of the people have full time jobs and farms. So, I don't know how easy it is for them to attend a meeting.

TYLER: The only time they came here is when I sent Dennie an email that was sent to me, I sent it to him. So, maybe if it was originated from you, the email, they would know, because I didn't send one about them today.

AQUINO: Okay

HOLZER: Okay

TYLER: And he's retired now, so he'll have more time to do that.

AQUINO: Okay

GILLILLAND: Also, I've got Scott Christian on my Town Board, I mean he should be involved, I mean he's the President.

AQUINO: Yeah, I had been actually in touch with Scott multiple times, but I think he was just so busy and he never got back to me and that's when, actually I was speaking to Moreen Roy, because she's, you know, the equestrian club person with all these dates on it and she is on the Ag Society, so it kind of went through her to ask her what's going on and who should I contact and she put me in touch with Becky and she got right back to me, so.

MONTY: Historically, it's been my thought, it becomes an emergency, because they don't participate and then all of a sudden the closer we get to fair time, what's the County going to do, what's the County going to do and just for a two-week period, they shouldn't be limited to their presence being here.

HOLZER: And the reality is, is it's not like this task force, me, as Shaun's designee, hasn't been accessible, because I have gone to meetings.

MONTY: Absolutely.

HOLZER: And I'm very approachable, I try to be social with some of them, just trying to network and stuff.

MONTY: I totally agree, my point is that they need to put some skin in the game and be here and offer some information, thoughts and not second, third and fourth hand.

AQUINO: And I did go to one of their meetings a couple of months ago and I said, I am your point person, if you have any questions, if you need anything, just come to me, I am available to you.

HOLZER: Okay, so as a committee directive, why don't you do this Holly, reach out to Scott on our behalf and ask him, you know, we would really like to have, whether the people are working, we're all working, to try and attend our task force meetings as a courtesy?

AQUINO: Okay

DELORIA: I mean it's more than that, you have to have that collaboration.

TYLER: I don't think they're against it. I think there's just a miscommunication going on, because they're, trust me, they're doing a lot of work. If you went to a meeting, you know the passion they have.

AQUINO: Oh, yeah

TYLER: I think it's just miscommunication. If I would have thought of it and sent Den an email, he would have been here today.

AQUINO: Yeah, I am pretty sure that they knew about it, because I've been in touch with various people, I just didn't get a lot of feedback back from them.

TYLER: I know any time I've talked to Dennie, he's always come.

AQUINO: So, is he the one? Because, I was under the impression that it was mostly Scott.

TYLER: Well, Scott is the head of it, but he's working now and Dennie's not.

AQUINO: Right, so if Dennie's the one that I'm supposed to go to.

TYLER: I think Dennie's, I don't know where he stands in the echelons of the Fair.

AQUINO: He's the treasurer.

TYLER: He's the treasurer, but he's the one that went out to the thing.

DOUGAN: Let's just do a formal request, a letter from our office, requesting that they tell us who the point contact is and who we can, let's make it formal at this point.

AQUINO: Okay

DOUGAN: There has been lots of conversations, it's time to make it formal, we both have the same goal; okay? Which is for the fairgrounds to get utilized more, let's do that, we'll put it on my letterhead and we'll get it out.

HUGHES: Good, make sure I get a couple of that, please.

GILLILLAND: Yeah, I mean they're one, there's two others that I don't see a lot of, one is Cornell Cooperative Extension and the other is Soil and Water. They also ought to either be, selectively brought in for discussion or open up the meetings for them to attend, too. Holly, have they come back with anything about Adirondack Harvest Days, there?

AQUINO: Yes, actually I had a phone meeting with Adirondack Harvest on Thursday, I believe. We had quite a long conversation. We did speak about Adirondack Harvest, they're not sure which way they're going this year, so they don't have a date even set this year.

GILLILLAND: And the other thing, too, is Extension and Soil and Water, because I got a feeling that they're going to start an Environmental Field Days.

AQUINO: Yes

GILLILLAND: So, these are planning issues, they probably ought to be openly invited to come discuss this, is my thought.

HOLZER: So, Jim in the same letters could we do one to Cornell and Soil and Water and just kind of make it a blanket invitation and the more the merrier, anyways?

DOUGAN: Yes, as users of the fairgrounds facilities in the past, major users; okay? You know with this new position can we get a point contact, and can we, this is when our meeting schedule is, it's this Monday of the month and we would like to have you join and if you can't please contact, Holly, ahead of time to discuss new issues and items to at least be brought up to this Committee.

HOLZER: The other thing, either Holly or yourself, Jim, could we have available the ROOST report that was done for our new Supervisors?

DOUGAN: Yeah, I can send it.

HOLZER: Yeah, I mean not everything in that report would apply today, but at least it would be a good one, just something, I mean when Shaun first stuck me with this Committee, I was reading all this stuff, trying to figure out.

AQUINO: That's what I am doing, too.

HOLZER: Because I don't have the same emotional connection as someone like you or Ike, so, I'm trying to learn it, as much as possible and get some kind of game plan here that we don't have a regular business plan, per se, so, that's closest thing that we have right now. That doesn't mean we're not going to formulate one and identify what we want to do, because we certainly want to make, have this area used better than what we're doing right now. We want to have a better working relationship with the Ag Society that we're happy with. Anyways, any more questions for Holly before I move onto the next thing?

DOTY: Roy, I'm assuming that in Holly's report, the total estimated expenses of \$200,000.00 does not include what we talked about previously, of getting those horse show rings back into shape?

HOLZER: No, it wouldn't include that, I believe.

DOTY: So, they are County expenses and then there are Ag expenses? I am trying to figure out who's responsible for what, here.

HOLZER: I'll have Jim explain a bit here.

DOUGAN: So, what Holly has showed on that, that quick summary of the budget, is the overall expenditures in the Essex County budget for the fairgrounds in 2022 is \$200,000.00, roughly and the estimated revenue is \$52,000.00. So, a lot of what she's showing is there's about \$100,000.00 worth of work that are actual building improvements this year. So, this budget is quite a bit bigger than it was in 2021, because we're painting Floral Hall, we're replacing the backflow preventer at the main water service. We've got another, like, \$14,000.00 in this year's budget that is especially for marketing, printing, some expenses for Holly to travel places to meet with people and try to get more people to use it. It's a small dollar amount there, but there is no, there's nothing in this budget for salaries, other than Holly's; okay?

So, you know work that Buildings and Grounds does to mow the lawns or fix electrical outlets or DPW does to, you know, do storm damage projects, there's no money there for that. It's kind of always run that way and so in last month's report, Holly gave you kind of a breakdown of what, at least what DPW spent. DPW is a different fund; okay? I think some of us have had this discussion before, similar to your towns where you have to have highway separate from general, same thing. So, whenever DPW does work out there, we do track it, so the fairgrounds knows what it is, I say DPW, whenever Highway does work out there. Whenever Buildings and Grounds does work out there, it's a general fund expense, so I have to go back through timesheets to give you those exact numbers and we're doing that now and I expect by next month to be able to tell you what Buildings and Grounds labor was out there. So, does that answer your question, kind of, to tell you where the budget is? We, you know, we've also had the Town of Westport in the past has helped us with, for example, that York Rake, and I know you suggested a Johnson Rake, which would be easier, but, so, we get some help from them, as well, that all goes into.

TYLER: Did I tell you when I asked you about plowing that emergency spot off for the helicopter...

DOUGAN: You had already done it.

TYLER: We did that and within two hours the helicopter landed there. It was, the timing was just right.

DOUGAN: Don't do it anymore, because you probably caused the emergency.

MASCARENAS: Jim, do you have an estimate of labor that the prisoners provided?

DOUGAN: I really don't, but up until the last two years, they did the majority of all lawn mowing and all painting of the fences and those things.

TYLER: Fixing barns.

DOUGAN: Yeah, a certain amount of that. You know, we, in the past, we've had people through Soil and Water have volunteered to cut up some rough sawed lumber and those guys then build fences out of it. We buy some paint and they paint it.

TYLER: I mean before you got here, they redid a lot of those horse barns and everything. They worked on a lot of work and they had a guard there with Scotty and they did a lot of work in those barns. Those barns were in disrepair, bad and they did a lot of work there.

DOUGAN: Yeah, so I don't have a number, I would have to basically sit down with Scott, who was always the guy who was there with those crews when they would show up and try and get an idea. I believe it was historically, it was two days a week.

MONTY: It was more.

DOUGAN: Or more, but two days a week, I would say, all summer.

MONTY: I would think you could get that information out of Corrections, because they had to document it.

TYLER: They had to, yeah.

MONTY: I don't know, I can call Bud.

HOLZER: Is anyone still down there?

MONTY: Well, he's the superintendent, but he might be able to find it, because we had to document it and send reports to Albany, every week.

TYLER: You're going to find it's a lot of money.

MASCARENAS: Yeah

DOUGAN: Well, when they bring 9 to 13 people at a time.

HOZER: Which gets to our next, it's a great segue into page 3 of Holly's report. Last month we talked about doing some kind of part time maintenance position out there, a dedicated position that wouldn't be hidden in Buildings and Grounds or DPW's budget and now that we don't have the inmates, I'm certainly advocating for some kind of dedicated position there. Logistically, I need to talk to Dan Palmer to see if, what we could actually afford to create, you know a part time position. Now, Jim when we were looking at these numbers, were you thinking about one of your existing, redeploying one of your existing employees, would be this just be an advertised position?

DOUGAN: It would be an advertised position. I mean moving somebody from what we have right now, doesn't, if I had people available, I'd probably do more out there, if I could, now. So, this would be advertising it. We're trying to figure out, you know which one of those scenarios might make somebody the most interested in this time when we're struggling for employees.

HOLZER: So, if we went with the full-time, 52 weeks, but 20 hours a week, what kind of work would you assign them during the winter months out there?

DOUGAN: Well, similar to what Ike just said about plowing out there. There is a little bit of work out there to be done on that. There may be, you know, there may be some buildings that's some work that can be done in the winter months. Otherwise, they'd have to probably come into our crew. I think we if we did 20 hours a week we would, if you have a flexible enough schedule, a lot of that 20 hours could be spent there at the fairgrounds, after snow events; right? If we had a flexible enough schedule. But, there would be weeks that in order for them to get their 20 hours in they would probably have to come over to the Highway Department or Building and Grounds and do something else.

HOLZER: Okay

DOUGAN: And those are, this is straight up, at that Grade 6 hourly wage. Grade 6 is what we call a maintenance person, is the entry level, maintenance, Buildings and Grounds type position. We wouldn't have any big fringe expenses, like if it's part-time or full-time temporary; which is what the last one is, it wouldn't have opportunity for health insurance or anything like that, but it would a certain amount of Social Security and FICA that would be on top of this.

HOLZER: Right

DOUGAN: But, this is just really raw numbers to give you guys an idea.

HOLZER: Right, comments from anyone?

STANLEY: Are we looking to find and build more programs at the fair?

HOLZER: Yeah, absolutely

STANLEY: So, I don't know so much at this side of the County about how we are, if we're farmer market, like if there's a lot of farmer's markets down this way, but it would be kind of cool to do something similar that's in Keene at the fairgrounds and then you start building clientele that may come to the fair, like be part of the fair. So, if there was a weekly farmer's market on the fairgrounds, may generate revenue and create awareness.

AQUINO: Yeah, we should talk to Adirondack Harvest about that. There's only so many farmers and they already participate in lots of farmers markets, you know from May to October, they're kind of everywhere on different days, so I think it's kind of hard for a small farm to be at every single farmer's market. So, if you have a farm that traditionally goes to the Keene Farmer's Market and they only have one day a week to do it, I don't know if they're going to do another one in Westport, especially if they're doing another one in Saranac Lake, as well. So, we just kind of get a feel for that from Adirondack Harvest, I think.

HOLZER: Does Willsboro have a farmer's market?

GILLILLAND: Yeah, we do, but the Adirondack Farmer's Market Association has the umbrella over all the markets and they're the ones that provide the insurance and everything for them. So, they run Keene, they run Saranac, they run Willsboro, they run Etown and all this other stuff, but the key on that is getting somebody who wants to be the manager, because that's the biggest thing. But, one of the advantages, I think of doing it there is we would, could actually make it cheaper to run a market there, because it's umbrella-ed under our insurance.

HOLZER: Right

GILLILLAND: So, maybe, Dick Crawford, he lives up, he's a big bee keeper in Clinton County, he lives in Morrisville, he's the President of it and you can reach out to him and see what his thoughts are.

DOUGAN: We've, Holly and I have talked a little bit about something like that, that's maybe not a weekly event to start out, because probably it's going to be such a travel for a lot of people, but something that's a little bit bigger that we just offer to as many local businesses that we can, put it under some kind of umbrella and just make, at least try to get one event; okay?

HOLZER: Right

DOUGAN: Rather than a weekly event.

HOLZER: Start it with like maybe one event or one in July and one in August and you know, you know Willsboro's population, Westport's population jumps up during the summer months, so you would have more people to draw from.

DOUGAN: Similar to the Harvest Festival itself, piggyback off of that. That's one big event and the same kind of people involved, but reach out to small local business; okay and give them a place to market their goods, really basically free of charge; right? I mean that's what we're talking. We want, yes, we would love it to grow into something that we can make revenue off, but right now let's just get people interested in the fairgrounds.

HOLZER: Right

GILLILLAND: Pre-pandemic, Adirondack Harvest Festival, they sold tens of thousands of dollars' worth of business.

TYLER: It was fantastic.

GILLILLAND: It was massive.

AQUINO: I spoke to Adirondack Harvest about this year. What happened, you know, obviously, last year, they had more of a weekly farmer's trail to visit. The farmer's loved it, they actually preferred that than bringing all their wares to the fairgrounds, because they didn't have to be away from their businesses, they didn't have to pick up all their stuff and bring it and then bring it back. So, they kind of liked that. Now, Adirondack Harvest did just recently put out a survey to all the farmers to see if they wanted to continue that or see if maybe they want to do a little bit of both.

HOLZER: A combination?

AQUINO: Yeah, a combination, like maybe one date do the farm trail and then another date do it at the fairgrounds, so they're working on the possibilities.

GILLILLAND: One of the ideas, I'm sorry to jump in, one of the ideas that was going for a long time, until the individual was running it got cancer, but was the idea of the cuisine trails. They went all the way through and got legislation approvals and stuff and just kind of died on the vine, pandemic, he had cancer, but thinking along, like farmers, but if Adirondack Harvest, maybe we can have a sit down, have a discussion with them, such as we have a lot of beef producers and farmers, we have a lot of veggies producers and we have a lot of chefs. I just remember my times in south Texas, I mean every week was a chili festival and they just filled up with those kinds of things and you could use all local products.

HOLZER: So, one of the other things Holly and I have talked about is her attending like your town board meeting, Essex town board meeting. We want to make her position more visible and outreach to those communities that are down in that neck of the woods to see if there's other stuff that maybe we have thought about on this level that the communities would want, try to get some

local support from that area. I know they feel neglected from time to time. So, once we get into spring, I may even attend some of the meetings with Holly just as kind of...

AQUINO: Hold my hand.

HOLZER: No, you're more than capable of doing that stuff on your own, but just as support and stuff and I think it's important just to show that area of the County that we care about their ideas and things.

AQUINO: Just, you know with any event, we have to keep in mind that any vendor that does come onto the fairgrounds they still have to do all the insurance stuff.

HOLZER: But, if they go to those shows and stuff, it should be set.

AQUINO: But, if they're like little small Mom and Pop business that have a shop in Westport or Essex or whatever for them to come up. I mean it's easy, you would think it would be easy.

HOLZER: Also, if we're sponsoring it, they would be, we do the Festival of Colors in Wilmington, we don't make our vendors give us a liability, they're covered under our town insurance. The only issues you would have is if they're doing like a food vendor or something like that that's covered under the Department of Health.

AQUINO: As long as the County Attorney is fine with that, absolutely.

GILLILLAND: He will be fine with it, don't worry about it.

HOLZER: No, because a lot of them are just like retired people doing arts and crafts.

DELORIA: I ask that question, because we had to, because we had a couple of vendors that were making edible food products and they weren't certified with the Department of Health.

HOLZER: Well, no, that's what I just said, the Department of Health, they have to have.

DELORIA: We essentially stopped two of them from coming, because they just choose to not to.

HOLZER: All those wagons are supposed to be...

DELORIA: And unfortunately, I mean they were great, these ice cream sandwiches, but if you're not, you know we don't need that liability.

AQUINO: No, no and anybody who would serve food has to have the Department of Health certificate that they have to give us before they're allowed to show up.

DELORIA: They chose unwisely.

GILLILLAND: You can do a very short term one.

DELORIA: It's a one-day event.

GILLILLAND: You get a one-day license and stuff and if you get an organization to do it, like Adirondack Harvest, they have, that's another umbrella of insurance on top.

DOUGAN: Let's talk to the Health Department, I don't want to take responsibility for anybody doing that, but if we have small businesses and we at least know enough about the process to get that done, in your position, to just say, it's this, this, this and this is the steps, this is who you contact, that may help us in the future, as well.

DOTY: Other than agriculture, food related revenues and without stepping on individual towns, I would like to understand, in the summer and fall are there weekly music festivals, because that draws enormous numbers and with the parking that that fairgrounds has, even if you set up a bluegrass or rock and roll or whatever, those are huge events where so many people come at a couple of bucks a person to get in, you might increase your revenue by \$20,000.00 - \$30,000.00 over the course of the summer. I don't want to bring this idea up, if you down in Westport you run something already.

AQUINO: The problem with the fairgrounds is whenever there's an event that goes on there, we don't make any money from the gate. So, we don't make any revenue from any event that goes on there, except the rental fee; which is minimal.

DOTY: So, why not?

MONTY: So, maybe we need to include that in different events and raise the revenue.

HOLZER: Well, let's not lose sight here. The reason why we're doing this isn't, at this point, for the County to make money, it's to create activity on that end of the County. So, I don't care about the rent so much, more than I do, you know, making sure, like I love the idea of the music fest. I think we could tie it in with the craft brewery place there and try and start out small, maybe a weekend, we have a campground out there. The bigger issue would probably be figuring out the water and Department of Health regs, like they're hitting us with these days.

MASCARENAS: The bigger issue is there is a fee with that. So, if you're going to bring in 10, 15, 20 bands and have a music festival or that kind of thing, you got to pay them.

HOLZER: Yeah

AQUINO: Well, I don't think any kind of event would really be managed by the County.

MASCARENAS: Well, that's my point.

AQUINO: Yeah

MASCARENAS: That's what I'm getting out. So, any outside agency that would rent the facility, typically, would take that risk of loss.

HOLZER: Well, okay, so, you say it wouldn't be run by the County, but I also think that it's up to us to provide the groundwork, cultivation and planting the seed. So, if for a year or two we had to start it to show it could be successful and then get private enterprise that's the way we ultimately would want to go.

MASCARENAS: Mental Health had a good event there a few years back where they had a music event and they raised quite a bit of money on that, we got the rental fee on it. It was a bluegrass type thing that they did there and that was pretty successful. But, yeah, it turns into a budget issue; right? So, if you're going to have an event, we should have so much money set aside to be able to have events.

HOLZER: Right

MONTY: And we can't keep dipping into the DPW budget.

DOUGAN: Until 5 months ago, until 5 months ago you didn't have a person in this position. So, this is growing pains; okay? Everybody, I think those are all places that we want to go, if you're going to be in that business, you're at risk, government, you know, we're at risk all the time, but usually we're just at risk for complaints, I guess, rather than financial, put money out there to get a group and if you make money, you make money. So, I think it's something that we're working towards; okay? I believe in the first year goals that we setup, that it was just about getting more people there, getting more excited and the more people that see it and get excited, the more those opinions maybe a potential. You know, it's a, Holly and I have gone around and around, you guys have hired her and she's been very critical of how buildings look, I'm remembering what we've done in the past 5 years and she's beating me up steady and I remind her how few people that I have to get out there and how little of a budget, but we're trying to make it better and so, I think it's all a goal. It's all a goal.

HOLZER: It's like you and I spoke and I spoke with Holly about this, we need a starting point.

DOUGAN: Yup

AQUINO: Right

HOLZER: It doesn't have to be the entire facility all at once. When I was developing my store in Wilmington, that we did for 22 years, that was very successful, I went a little bit at a time. It wasn't like a, let's do it all at once type thing. We need to like work on the entrance there. We need to create a little bit more curb appeal, we need to, you need to know you've arrived somewhere and then just take a couple of buildings, start with that and then build upon. We also need to be

reaching out to an organization, the music idea, I love it, you know the farmers. Anything that we can go out there, get some noes and find out why organizations or groups are saying no, so we can tinker with it, but we need a starting point and it doesn't have to be holistic, in my opinion, I could be wrong.

TYLER: I agree with you, Roy, I think a starting position would be refurbish that Cornell Building that would be a great point.

HOLZER: Yeah, how is the fundraising going from your town?

TYLER: We didn't start one.

HOLZER: I thought they did.

TYLER: No, why you got to be so negative about it?

HOLZER: I'm not being negative.

GILLILLAND: Hold on, I have one thought on this, on the music events and things. I don't know anybody that's got a golf course in their town, non-profit comes in and wants to hold a tournament, because that seems to be the way everybody wants to raise money, but this is an alternative that non-profits can go and do that is probably something that we should think about tapping into. The Wounded Warrior Project, the Fair, all these different ones that are always doing these fundraisers and of course the chicken dinners and things.

On the building, it's a question for you, if you don't mind, have they started their analysis on that?

TYLER: The report?

AQUINO: The Crawford and Stearns?

TYLER: It should be done, if it's not done already. I just haven't, I think it's pretty close to being done.

GILLILLAND: Okay

AQUINO: Because that would be tremendously helpful.

HOLZER: And we're still waiting from Elise on where we can spend the money; right?

TYLER: From what I hear, yeah.

GILLILLAND: I got a text from her, just before she came on the Regular Meeting and said that it died. That the Committee had said no, because we made a change in it and they killed it. I went

back, then I got an email from her staff that said, it's still in the budget, it's still coming. So, I called them and said I heard from the boss that it was dead, that's not what we heard.

TYLER: Everything I heard is because there's the budget situation in Washington, they're just piecemealing together, so there's no big budget that it was part of.

GILLILLAND: We'll get it, if they pass the budget for, of course we're like on the 3rd or 4th resolution, if they pass the budget it will be in there, if they don't then the staff is telling me it will roll over to '23.

TYLER: Right

GILLILLAND: It should survive.

TYLER: That's what Jonathan told me.

DELORIA: Roy, speak to the bands, before we get too far away from that, Newcomb is in its 5th year of doing, Bands on the Beach every Wednesday in the month of August, where we invited these vendors that I was talking about, we got a guy that sells wine from Otter Creek Wines and he comes all the way over and he does that. We allow one of the school classes to use the pavilion and they provide, just, you know, the dinner, whether it be the pulled pork sandwiches and whatnot, but we pay for the bands, ourselves, the town does.

HOLZER: We do.

DELORIA: So, budget-wise, you're talking \$650.00 a band for 4 of them.

AQUINO: The problem is and those are all great ideas and the fairgrounds has potential for a lot of things, it's just that we don't have an event planning department that can put all the time, effort and you need a budget to put that together. So, we have to go out to...

DELORIA: Or use Shaun's idea of getting these non-profit organizations to acquire the facility for the day and then they provide the band and the entrance fees or whatever.

AQUINO: Right and that's where I come in with the marketing to try to get network to everybody to let them know what we have now.

DELORIA: Like I say, 5 years now and Newcomb's a small town, let's face it, but we probably bring in a 100 people a night.

HOLZER: We have a very successful summer concert.

DOUGAN: Your Chamber brings yours; right?

HOLZER: No, the Town of Wilmington does ours.

MASCARENAS: You guys get a grant, though, too, from the arts?

HOLZER: We go after everyone and their brother. So, actually it was my first round as Town Supervisor, I started the Music on the AuSable, we called it back then. It was at our town beach, we keep the lifeguard. So, it's been going over 25 years now, every Thursday night at our town beach we do the concert. Sometimes we get several hundred, of course it's on the beach and the fairgrounds, I think we're looking more at like a one-day, like Saturday music festival.

DOUGAN: Do you have a bandstand down there?

HOLZER: We put them on the pavilion.

DOUGAN: You have stuff at Ballard Park?

MASCARENAS: Yeah, Ballard Park is another one. There are only 3 or 4 in the whole County that are funded by the Arts Council.

HOLZERS: They're great about it, we get like \$450.00 from them, but we reach out to them. The businesses sponsor, we've never had an issue. We have like a \$4,000.00 a year budget and \$600.00 is about the going rate for a band.

MASCARENAS: Countywide your bandstands are untapped resources. Ticonderoga, Moriah, Crown Point they don't have those setup, Schroon Lake, those resources are untapped, including the fairgrounds.

DOTY: I know if ROOST was coming to the table to meet with your group, I would tell them to sit down and offer a countywide approach to this music festival and I'd hit them up for \$20,000.00 or \$30,000.00 to prove that it can or can't work and just make a one-year effort and put some, you know, as a new person sitting here, I can't tell you, looking at \$50,000.00 revenue and \$150,000.00 expenses, beyond that it doesn't make a whole lot of sense. Believe me, I can write you 6 issues right in the Town of North Elba, I get it, but I think there's so much area to improve on revenue.

GILLILLAND: I agree

DELORIA: It's dangerous though, and I just want to add that our golf course does not make money; okay? It costs us money to operate.

DOTY: I got one just like yours.

WOOD: Yeah, we do, too

DELORIA: But, understand this there's also jobs that are attached with that. Those people are coming into Newcomb and they're spending money at our dining establishments. So, it's, you know, our ski center doesn't make any money, the beach doesn't make any money, the golf course doesn't. So, it would be dangerous to look at revenues as opposed to expenses.

DOTY: Only adding revenues, believe me, I understand everything you're saying.

DELORIA: We just raised the rates, but if you raise them too high, you just kicked 50 people off the course, I mean it's a slippery slope.

DOTY: How would you like to have a park district that only takes in \$300,000.00-\$400,000.00, but is expected to pay ORDA \$750,000.00?

DELORIA: I would say that would be a good topic...

HOLZER: They need that advertising for their Whiteface/Lake Placid marketing.

DOTY: So, believe me, I'm not throwing stones here.

HOLZER: Okay, Jim, what did you give, when we created this position, did we have any expense account at all applied to this? I should know this, but.

MASCARENAS: \$200.00, I think.

DOUGAN: We used to have \$200.00 for advertising and printing and we're up to about \$14,000.00 between advertising, printing and then vehicle expense and stuff like that for her to travel on.

AQUINO: There is a small budget for marketing and advertising and postage, yes.

DOUGAN: And I can, we can break that down for you for next meeting.

HOLZER: Please

DOUGAN: So, that you can see the changes, you know, significant, considering the size of the budget.

HOLZER: Because, even though we're not in this to make money, I do think we need to see money to say, okay, we're going to do this.

DOUGAN: Yeah

HOLZER: And then we go out and get the private sponsors for the, you know, if we do the music thing. So, we're, you know, I'm already setting our calendar up for this summer, we're committing,

the town's committing. I'm banking on the fact that people are going to open up their wallets again for us.

STANLEY: If you build it, they will come.

HOLZER: Kind of, yeah.
Do we have anything else to talk about?

DOUGAN: I'll just tell you a couple of projects. One of the big projects that's in the budget is repainting Floral Hall. You know the County invested in structural repairs to that, about 15-20 years ago and so it's painting that building before it gets to look like Cornell. So, that is just about to go out to bid. The actual specifications are down with Purchasing and we should see that shortly and then we are, there's a significant project in changing out, Department of Health, again, the backflow preventer in the vault, right there near where the Nutrition Building is and that is being specified, right now from our engineers. So, those couple of projects that are ongoing. We will do the seasonal water start up, the very end of March or early April. You guys have a new water operator, that's my understanding?

TYLER: No, we hired a second. John's still there.

DOUGAN: John's still there, okay, we'll coordinate.

TYLER: Came from the County, thank you very much.

DOUGAN: He came from Keene, first. So, we will do that.

TYLER: We offered him a lot better job.

HOLZER: Who did you hire?

TYLER: Ryan Hall.

HOLZER: Yeah, he has an impressive resume, we tried to hire him in Wilmington.
Do we have anything else, before we get ready to go in the other room? Alright, we're adjourned.

**AS THERE WAS NO FURTHER DISCUSSION, THIS FAIRGROUNDS TASK FORCE WAS
ADJOURNED AT 9:15 AM.**

Respectively Submitted,

Dina Garvey, Deputy Clerk
Board of Supervisors