

Economic Development, Tourism, Housing, Planning & Transit Committee
Committee Meeting Transcript

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Informational Meeting

LOCATION: Powered by Zoom Meeting by Dialing (646) 558-8656,
Meeting ID: 975 1863 7199

PRESIDING OFFICER: Chairman Brian Cahill

LEGISLATIVE STAFF: Fawn Tantillo, Laurie Lichtenstein

PRESENT: Legislators Lynn Archer, Thomas Corcoran, James Delaune,
Herbert Litts, III; Mary Beth Maio and Abe Uchitelle

ABSENT: None

QUORUM PRESENT: Yes

OTHER ATTENDEES: Legislator Tracey Bartels, Deputy County Executives Evelyn Wright and Marc Rider Timothy Weidemann, Director of Economic Development; Lisa Berger and Fran DePetrillo Department of Tourism; Alan Macaluso, Director of Information Services; Tomasine Oliphant, Director of Employment and Training; Sajaa Ahmed Director of Ulster County Area Transit (UCAT); Connor Gillis; Ellen DiFalco

Committee Members 00:03

I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

Chairman Cahill 00:24

Thank you, everyone. I'll accept a motion to approve the minutes. I'm assuming everyone had an opportunity to read the minutes from the last meeting. That was on October 6. And I will accept a motion to approve those minutes.

Legislator Maio 00:43

I'll make the motion.

Chairman Cahill 00:45

Okay. Miss Mary, Mary Beth and Tom, I guess?

Legislator Corcoran 00:48

Sure.

Chairman Cahill 00:49

All in favor?

Committee Members 00:51

Aye.

Chairman Cahill 00:52

Okay. I'll post, anyone. Great. All right. So, tonight, we're going to get budget presentations from three departments. We're going to get Information Services, Tourism, and Employment and Training. So, we're going to do is go first. That's how it's written on the agenda. So that's how it will go.

Fawn Tantillo 01:10

Oh, Mr. Chairman, Lisa Berger had requested if she could go first tonight, Evelyn said she had another meeting.

Chairman Cahill 01:18

Okay.

Lisa Berger 01:21

If that's okay with Alan. Does that work for you, Alan. Thank you.

Chairman Cahill 01:25

That's fine with me if it's good with everyone else. Okay, so go ahead. And Lisa, thank you, and welcome as the Tourism Director, by the way.

Lisa Berger 01:31

Thank you so much. It's wonderful to be here with all of you as the Tourism Director. I'm going to walk you through some information about tourism in Ulster County right now. And, and then we can take a look at my budget. So, at the proposed budget. So if we could get the next slide fun and be great.

So, I just wanted to cover with you a little bit about the tourism labor market. And I'm sure that you're all aware that the leisure and Hospitality sector is the third largest overall employment sector in Ulster County, it ranks just behind EDS and Meds, and retail trade as the third largest employer of our own residents. So, it's important for you guys all to know that in this pandemic, the Travel and Leisure Industry has really taken it on the chin. It's been very difficult. The shutdowns have been difficult no matter what kind of business you're operating in the tourism and hospitality sector. And statewide, there have been more than 350,000 jobs lost, the most of any sector in the state.

The good news is the Ulster County tourism and hospitality sector has largely recovered from job losses. September's loss actually only showed a 3.3% reduction in our workforce. But more importantly, our private job creation in this sector grew by 1%, which is very notable.

Okay, next. Thanks. Thanks, Fawn, for anticipating; you're really good at this. All right. Next slide.

Fawn Tantillo 03:22

Now I'm having a problem. Got it, there we go.

Lisa Berger 03:26

All right. And so, statewide, COVID caused a 73% drop in tourism spending. Currently, the state is brought he brought in \$14.4 billion in visitor spending. And for the same period last year, the state actually had \$52 billion in their coffers from visitor spending. So, that net loss is \$38.1 billion, which is staggering to think of. And it's one of the reasons why the state is having so much difficulty. Tourism spending in Ulster County was a record \$651.5 million ,or half a billion, in 2018. And that was an increase of 11% over the previous year. That's the last year for which we have numbers from the state. They had numbers that they were probably ready to release and then the pandemic hit. So, we have not seen any numbers.

Lisa Berger 04:28

Next slide, Fawn.

Fawn Tantillo 04:30

Ooh, I'm sorry.

Lisa Berger 04:31

Back one.

So, I want to talk to you about our Occupancy Tax through the third quarter Ulster County has collected just over a million dollars, those same three quarters in 2019 brought in 1.4 million. So we're looking at a loss of \$441,000 which is 30% less than 2019.

Things though seem to be improving as we're winding down the year, through quarter, the second quarter, our Occupancy Tax was actually down 37.3%. And so, if you look at where we are now, at 30%, there has been a recovery. And there's an expectation that October is going to be very robust. And so, that would be fourth quarter.

If I can...I can, I'd like to add in here, I don't think it's part of this slide presentation, that I also had a chance to look at some numbers that the Comptroller put out. And he showed extremely good sales tax revenue for Ulster County, in the month of October, I believe it was. It was a 21% increase. And that would track with what we were hearing was incredible visitations. So, I just wanted to, you know, put that out there.

And to say to you what we did when I was speaking to the Director of Finance, about sales tax revenue to the county, he was saying that as far as drivers of sales tax, car sales is number one, then transportation. And then right behind that would be all the industries affiliated with the tourism and hospitality industry. So, I just wanted to share that with you guys.

As you know, we look at fourth quarter, it's going to be really weather dependent as to how we do. And consistent messaging that we're a great destination. I do think, though, that we are an attractive two hour drive from metropolitan New York City, Long Island, New Jersey, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania. And I also think that the Governor's newest testing mandate, and not having this 14-day quarantine, and banned states should be helpful to visitation, especially expansion markets, like Philadelphia, and DC.

And these are some of the results of the work that Rick and his wonderful team did last year. I think that they really speak for themselves. So, booked direct lodging referrals were up by 23%. The digital ads are performing at 120% above industry benchmark. And I just want to point out to everybody that that was a direction that the department really went into heavily last year, at the suggestion of the Legislature, as well, as the suggestion of the County Executive. So, it's really turning out quite well to take that approach.

Social effort, social media is turning out, again, to be a good place to put our money into. And you can see overall, the Instagram, Facebook and Pinterest all saw increases. And working with influencers, people who have large followings on social media, has also turned out key results for the department. So, we feel as though those results, given the pandemic, are really pretty remarkable. We're very satisfied with that.

Next slide.

I do want to quickly here segue to the 2021 advertising and marketing contract. I'd like to let you all know that there were 14 respondents to the RFP. Two companies were interviewed and Belo, the company that we have been working with over the past few years, the ones who created the "Seek for Yourself" brand, were ultimately selected.

And we have before you a proposal for a contract \$382,000. And that contract, in addition to design, ad placement, and social media work, they will be redesigning our website and making it ADA compliant. And they will be working together to get our listings in up in a manner that won't be so labor intensive. We're trying to put together our content management system such as Salesforce, and the back end of the website and they're playing a big role in that.

And I'd also like you to know that we that they are helping us get prepared for an online travel guide with selected print supplements. You know, maybe a winery and brewery trail, maybe a hiking and biking type thing we're not we're working with them to figure out exactly what that's going to look like and how it is going to be supported. And, and we want you all to know that the approach is going to be to layered digital approach, after digital approach, after digital approach. So, that's the way we were going with Belo and with this contract

They're a full service agency, it was very much the feeling of the people who sat on that RFP, that their national stature was really beneficial to the Ulster County brand. The committee also felt as though although

we saw RFPs from 14 respondents, the Belo RFP answer what and their creative was head and shoulders above everybody else that we talk to.

So, I know that, you know, there's usually a little bit of like, a little bit of questioning about, well, there was nobody in Ulster County or in New York state who is as good as this out of market company. And I would say that there probably is, but there, they might not be worked, but there might be working for somebody else. We did not see anybody who is better than Belo was. Belo hands down, gave us the best proposal, the most creative, if you will. And they are a full service agency, dedicated to us, which allows them to be almost like additional hands for the department.

And so, on to the next.

I do want to let you guys be aware of some major projects that are on the horizon. After the first of the year, the Hudson House Distillery will be opening and that is in the town of Esopus. It's on 9W and it will be overlooking the Hudson. And it's they're going to be making Starbuck, a Black Creek Bourbon and Black Creek Rye.

The Kingstonian has proposed 32 rooms 8,000 square feet of commercial space that includes a restaurant and retail shops that will be important to the tourism industry. There's another accommodation in Gardiner called Wildflower Farms, which is has not yet broken ground. We've spoken to them a bunch of times. That's 62 rooms, spa restaurant and working farm.

119 Canal is in Ellenville. It's a boutique hotel, and they've had a wonderful summer. They've done some really great things out in Ellenville. And there's a lot of interest in Ellenville, in Ellenville area for hospitality businesses. And I hope to be able to come back and tell you guys a bit about all the things that are on the horizon sometime soon.

And then Buttermilk Falls has a very large proposed project with a new hotel. And conference space, conference and event space. It could fit 500 people. There'd be a working farm, a brewery, and treehouses involved there. So, that's a very exciting project.

I do want to cover with you quickly travel industry trends. Just so that you guys know, socially distance, especially those centering around nature, parks, forests, and outdoors are going to dominate for next year. The RV, camping and car road trip craze from this summer is going to continue we see no downturn on that. And details timely information sharing especially about how customers are being kept safe is of paramount importance to people who are traveling. And immersion experiences, niche in reunion travel, could be new markets, depending on how we do with the vaccine maybe.

And then this is important. There's a shortened timeframe between planning a trip and then going in bound to that trip, and actually taking that trip. And we really think that has everything to do with people being

concerned about COVID rates, about their health, about their safety, as well as how much money they have. This is an economically uncertain time for many people.

So, those are the travel industry trends. I do want to tell you that we are planning on putting forth an aggressively optimistic message. We are going to focus on our partnerships to leverage the money that we have with especially our partnerships with Hudson Valley Tourism and Cats, and I Love New York.

And larger partners, and we may be reaching out developing new partnerships with ORDA (Olympic Regional Development Authority) who runs Belleayre and NYC & Co., we think that we may be able to create new partnerships there that would be beneficial to all people.

And this is a big part of the next part is workforce. That is a very big focus of what we are looking at. I had a wonderful meeting along with Tomatine and some of her staff yesterday, with a group who specialize in customer service training for the hospitality industry. We would like to professionalize and standardize the service that is delivered to people. But more importantly, we recognize the entry level jobs in the hospitality and tourism business very much focus on skills that are transferable. And you know, everybody from banking, to be to being a police officer, to being even a counselor, needs to know how to deescalate situations and deliver good customer service. And so, we are exploring exactly what skills are needed, what the gap seem to be here in Ulster County. And we intend to work with OET and other partners to try to develop some training around customer service. And we believe that will benefit the entire workforce, not just the hospitality workforce.

Other workforce efforts that I am looking to start have to do with making sure that we develop and define career pathways for people in this industry. It is one that mobility is very, very easy through without a degree. There is a wonderful program done by the National Restaurant Association, that teaches people the front of the house and the back of the house when it comes to the restaurant business. And it's actually targeted for young people between the ages of 16 to 24. And returning citizens and people who've had problems with drug and alcohol before. And I'm interested in exploring that.

I'm not sure that all the workforce work that I know we can do here is going to get tackled in one year. But we do think that this customer service training will be not just applicable to the hospitality and leisure industry, but to many other sectors as well. So, I'm really looking forward to digging in and doing that work.

And then that brings up my budget. This, as you can see, the positions, we have four positions in the department. And then let's go to the next slide, which may be hard to see. The numbers are super small. So, I'm here to answer any questions that you might have on the budget. Unless you want me to step you through it, which I'm happy to do. I just need to...

Chairman Cahill 18:29

Yeah, I don't know if anyone can read that from here.

Fawn Tantillo 18:32

Yeah, Fawn. Can you increase the size of that?

I don't think I can from here. Maybe I can get it in the PDF. Give me just one minute.

Lisa Berger 18:43

Okay. All right. That'd be great. Because in the PDF I can...

Chairman Cahill 18:49

So does the...

Lisa Berger 18:50

I have the PDF up if you wanted to let me.

Chairman Cahill 18:53

Does anyone on the committee have any questions? Right away while we're waiting for that?

Chairman Cahill 18:59

Legislator Delaune.

Lisa Berger 19:01

Hi.

Legislator Delaune 19:01

This isn't so much about the budget. Hi, Lisa.

Lisa Berger 19:04

Hi.

Legislator Delaune 19:05

This is really about the marketing efforts. I'm wondering what languages our marketing efforts are going to take. Is it just English?

Lisa Berger 19:17

You know, that's a fantastic question. It's not one that I had thought of. And I'm glad that you raised it. I would say to you that what we do know, because the largest single visitation place, in the entire Hudson Valley, is Woodbury Commons. Is that they literally translate into I think eight languages. And so we minimally probably should be looking at Spanish and Chinese, I would say, but that's just a guess. And it's a great question for our advertising agency.

Legislator Delaune 20:00

So, just a quick one. And that is I live in New Paltz, I'm close to Twin Star Farms. And I can tell you that I've just kind of monitored it over the course of the summer. I cannot tell you how many Korean people from New Jersey and Connecticut have visited that facility. So, I think it would be really wonderful to have something there, that tells the Ulster County story because I'm pretty sure those folks just come and go.

Lisa Berger 20:32

I agree with you.

Legislator Delaune 20:33

And the other question has to do with what exactly what kind of work are you doing with some of the projects that you put up, such as the Buttermilk Falls, for instance?

Lisa Berger

Sure. So, I became aware of the Buttermilk Falls project while I was working in Economic Development. And where that project is so far, is in design and concept phase, he has met with the Town of Marlborough supervisor, we had an initial meeting with some representatives from the IDA. He has not said that he's seeking any kind of a tax abatement. He just wanted to get people, make people aware of this project. And he wanted people to know what it's design looked like, because of course, it is Hudson River-facing, his project. So, that's where we sit with it. It's a large, ambitious project, but it's one of two big ambitious projects that Robert Pollock has in the hamlet of Milton. And the other one involves a mixed use retail workforce housing project, right on the main drag.

Legislator Delaune 22:00

So, yeah, thank you. Just wondering what exactly what role Tourism plays at this point with those projects?

Lisa Berger 22:11

Um, I think that, well, what I would say to you is understanding who their market, who they think their market is, is very important, and us being able to dialogue about really, who they're attracting, the size and scope of their projects, how it fits in overall with other projects that are going on. A lot of times these kind of projects, Jim, are proposed after they've done some sort of feasibility study. So, what I would say to you is, we aren't here to cheerlead for or against a project. But we are here to understand who it is that they think they're going to be reaching. Why they think they have that market. And perhaps to share some information that they don't, that they wouldn't otherwise have.

And, you know, I think that the other role that we play, as they come closer to actual fruition, like let me use as an example, the distillery in Esopus. We play a big role before the launch of a business such as that. We're the ones who are responsible for letting I Love New York know about it, making sure that the Catskill Region and the Hudson Valley Region is aware of it, and that all of their promotional and advertising might be able to be put towards a healthy good launch. So, that's, that's really where we play a role.

Legislator Delaune 23:56

Thank you.

Lisa Berger 23:57

You're welcome.

So, there's the budget. Thank you Fawn for figuring out how to do this. And I guess, are there specific questions? I think if we go to the marketing, to the professional, so if we look at professional services, other fees, that is where you will find the \$382K for the marketing contract. And then the rest of that money is used for marketing placement and for printing of any new kind of brochure that we might be looking to do, and that kind of thing.

Chairman Cahill 24:52

So, real quickly is the overall budget, same as 2020, more or less?

Lisa Berger 24:59

\$100,000 less, Brian.

Chairman Cahill 25:00

\$100,000 less. Okay. Thank you.

Lisa Berger 25:02

You're welcome.

Chairman Cahill 25:06

Lynn, go ahead, Legislator Archer.

Legislator Archer 25:08

Yes. Thank you, Chairman. Yes, I'm just looking at kind of, as of September 30, it looks like your budget was adjusted downward, in tourism, by about \$89,000. So, as of September, and I don't know if there's anything, there were encumbrances and transactions of \$180,000. So, you're still kind of under, I don't know if there's year-end numbers that are going to show up here. But having said all of that, and then looking at the numbers for next year, can you... I know, a big chunk of that is the resolution that's before us, right? We're not going to be accruing any expenses this year for that Cubic contract. It's for next year, correct?

Lisa Berger 25:58

Correct? Yep.

Legislator Archer 26:00

Okay. And so, in addition to that, can you just give me a sense of what else is in that number?

Lisa Berger

In 418?

Legislator Archer 26:08

In four...

Lisa Berger 26:10

In the line that says 43 0045?

Legislator Archer 26:14

Yes, yes.

Lisa Berger 26:15

Yes. So, in addition to the Cubic contract, there is money in, that there's money there that would be used for us to develop an alternative to a travel guide that will primarily be online. But that will, but it needs that will have a map. What we've heard, over and over, is that the map is what everybody likes about that travel guide. So, like I said, we might actually create a brochure that has to do with hiking and biking trails with a map overall, there's money for that.

And I want you to know that there is still about 200 cases of travel guides, I think left from last year. We would use some of that money for distribution purposes. Because it benefits no one for that... to throw away those travel guides. We need to get them out in into people's hands, especially if it's the last one that we're going to do.

And then on top of that, there's other advertising that may be done to support various initiatives of the of the county. And that's it, and that would be what was left over. So you're looking at, you know, like, I had that number. I think you're looking at about \$30,000. \$36,000. It not a lot.

Legislator Archer 27:50

Okay.

Lisa Berger 27:51

And anything else? Lynn?

Legislator Archer 27:55

No. So, the three, the, the resolution before us tonight, for Belo, is not does not include a travel guide, an online travel guide?

Lisa Berger 28:08

They are not going to do the online travel guide. They are doing, they're redoing our website. They are doing advertising, they're doing creative, they're doing all of that, but they do not design an online travel guide. They're coming up with concepts for us, and ideas. And, you know, if it's, and then we'll take it from there.

Legislator Archer 28:36

So the \$170K, as of September, do you think you're spending the rest of that money?

Lisa Berger 28:42

Oh, you know what that is? That is I Love New York matching funds money. So, you have to spend that money in order to qualify for the program next year. And to get your half back. So, they're having some... I just want to quickly say there had been some thought that the state was going to pull this program, and they are not going to pull this program.

Legislator Archer 29:08

Okay, so you will be spending...

Lisa Berger 29:10

Yes.

Legislator Archer 29:11

...what's remaining this year?

Lisa Berger 29:13

Yeah, we will.

Legislator Archer 29:14

Yep. So, bring the total to \$656K. And so, I see. So, it's about \$100K and change off of that. Okay.

Lisa Berger 29:24

Mm hmm. Yep.

Legislator Archer 29:25

And what did we do about ad buys during a pandemic? This year? I almost feel like we should have seen a reduction in ad buys. And now we're planning for pretty significant ad buys into next year. So, I'm just trying to gauge.

Lisa Berger 29:47

Yeah, my understanding is that the money was funneled into digital advertising and bringing influencers in here. And I would say that both things really paid off once people started to travel. And people started to travel. Again, really not until the middle of July. If you think about who our prime market is, they were

pretty panicked until the end of June, right? But having done all that advertising, creating awareness really, really blew us out in September and October.

And so, that's why we're taking this approach of making sure that each thing that we do is layered and builds on the next. So, like, you are advertising and promoting and putting money into Instagram, the same with Facebook, the same with Google AdWords, what you're laying over top of that is a blog post that then can get lifted. So this is the direction that we're going to move in, that the email marketing becomes more targeted and specific. Those are, that's the way that we're going to move with that. And it takes money to do those things. So, and...

Legislator Archer 31:10

Thank you, I appreciate that. Could you also help me? How do you guys identify influences? Is it through Belo? Or do you have influencers? And do they get a percentage of... how does that whole thing work?

Lisa Berger 31:25

So, we... so, between Belo, and Steph and Fran, you're more than welcome to chime in here because I'm lucky enough to have the deputy who's been in the department and the interim director here. And I and I am actually remiss, if I don't say that she's been an amazing professional colleague and helper. And we are really looking forward to moving forward as a strong team.

And so, Fran, do you want to just quickly talk about how you identify the influencers and who we work with, because it's a couple of different partners?

Fran DePetrillo

Sure, in a normal year, we do have a quarterly social influencer, and this is somebody that Belo does that for us. And they get a small percentage of what they bring in. And that's where we really see huge numbers. And the rest of the writers that come to the area are sometimes writers that reach out to us but oftentimes, Hudson Valley Regional, sent to us, usually through I Love New York, or Catskill Regional. So, we work with the surrounding counties to do a regional trip with these writers.

The majority of the ones that just come singly to do our county and not a regional trip, often reach out to us, ourselves. And this is usually from various different trade shows and media trips. So, that they have the opportunity to meet us to know if they want to come here.

So, we've been fortunate even through COVID, now in this last quarter, especially, we have had a number of smaller writers come and produce some really great stuff from the areas to which we've had the drive market, which was Long Island, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, obviously, New York City.

Lisa Berger 33:24

And I do want to add, Lynn, that the focus moving forward this year is to identify five key markets, and then the top influencers from those markets, and see how we can capture their attention and capture their interest in coming here. So that is a huge focus for next year.

Legislator Archer 33:45

Thank you.

Lisa Berger 33:46

You're welcome. Do you have further questions.

Chairman Cahill 33:51

I have a small question. So, you talked a little bit about developing a an online, a web page or something like that. He did talk about creating a web page or a travel guide online or something like that. And then when Legislator Archer actually said, no, we're not going to do that. So, are we not going to have a travel guide at all in 2021?

Lisa Berger 34:14

So, the proposal is to have, is to not have a printed travel guide. Now that, you know, that that's the, that's right now, the proposal, is to not have a printed Travel Guide. You know, working in some way to do something that would be effective is what we're looking at. And, you know, we are, you know, we're looking at all different options, but right now, the proposal is to not have a printed travel guide.

Chairman Cahill 35:04

So, are we going to have any travel guide? That was my question, not, you know, are we going to have an or no online travel guide? No hardcopy?

Lisa Berger 35:13

We're looking at how we can develop an online travel guide. And I will say this much the person who actually designed this year's travel guide, and did all the ad sales for the department, he and I have a meeting set up for next week, because he says he creates them online. And so, that was, you know, that was a revenue sharing agreement...

Chairman Cahill 35:41

Right.

Lisa Berger 35:42

...there. So I, you know, I'm sorry, I'm hedging my bets. But I don't want to get out in front of me, I myself, I have not had a full conversation with him yet. I don't know what he can do.

Chairman Cahill 35:52

Right. So, my concern would be that if we... or we don't have anything budgeted for a travel guide, basically. You know, and that's a concern, in my opinion, for a county that has consistently had a hardcopy travel guide for forever and ever and ever, right. And now, we're not going to have any travel guide, that's a little concerning. Something to think about. We went back and forth with COVID. I know that, whether we should have one or not, and apparently we shouldn't have, if we have so many sitting in boxes still right?

Lisa Berger 36:26

The only reason you have them in boxes, I need to you know, Rick has been wonderful. Like he's been good about talking to me about a lot of things. So, that the only reason you have them sitting in boxes is my understanding is because they printed late this year, right. That's the only reason why. Okay.

Chairman Cahill 36:46

Yeah. All right. So, I'm still not clear whether we're going to have a travel guide for 2021. So, I'm going to ask that, you know, before you'd make any go further with that going forward, that you come back to the committee and, you know, we'll discuss that in detail, because I know that that's something that the committee is typically very interested in. And I think it has great value, and whether it's online or printed is another issue. But I think that we should, you know, go further with that.

Chairman Cahill 37:12

Any other questions on this tourism budget for this year? I'm scrolling through look. Okay, Tracey. Let's see, Tom, go ahead.

Legislator Corcoran 37:20

So, a question, what would be the estimated cost of the printed travel guide? What has it been normally?

Lisa Berger 37:27

So, there's usually \$100,000 budgeted to it. But there's a but there... their ad sales involved in the Travel Guide. So it returns revenue of anywhere between \$20,000 to \$11,000.

Legislator Corcoran 37:44

Thank you.

Lisa Berger 37:45

You're welcome. And if I can add the print part of it. If you're referring to that being part of the question, that goes into part of the matching funds, that's something that qualifies for the matching funds. So, we see half of that come back through I Love New York matching funds.

Legislator Corcoran 38:03

Right. That's why I think this year it happened late, but it made no sense not to do it because of the matching funds and there was a minimal cost moving forward.

Lisa Berger 38:10

Right, right. And they are moving out, out of the house, since we are the drive market.

Hi, Lynn.

Legislator Archer 38:18

Hi.

Chairman Cahill 38:18

Okay, so, we have Legislator Bartels, and then Legislator Archer again.

Legislator Bartels 38:25

Thanks. I just have two questions. On the issue of the travel guide, do we own the digital content for the 2020 travel guide? I mean, or is that time limited? Or do we have some kind of contractual arrangement that digitally we have to take it down after 2020?

Lisa Berger 38:43

So, that I know of Tracey, there is no digital version of the travel guide on our website, currently. I'm going to go back 100 million years when I was in tourism before, and say, when we used to do the design contract for this, it was always work for hire. So, that you got those master files, and you had them forever.

Legislator Bartels 39:08

I'm sorry, interrupt. But I remember when we had this conversation, and I recall looking online, and seeing it online, and feeling better about the fact that it was actually online. So...

Lisa Berger 39:17

Our current, if I can. Our current travel guide, our current printed guide, there is a version of it on our website. It doesn't have a big click through rate. About 1000 a year, click to it as opposed to hundreds of thousands that click to our regular website. So, what we're finding is people go to our website, but they don't necessarily click on the guide. But you are correct in that our printed guide does appear with a button on our website.

Legislator Bartels 39:48

And may I mean if we don't know the answer today, maybe we could just come back is...

Lisa Berger 39:52

Yep.

Legislator Bartels 39:53

If we're not printing a guide next year, to answer Legislator Cahill, his question, if we have at least If we have that digital guide from 2020, you know, we could potentially make some modifications, but at least

there's something that's up on online. Currently, that would take us through at least portion of the year, if we're allowed to. I don't know what their contractual agreement allows. We never not printed a guide. So, I don't know what the time limit?

Lisa Berger 40:19

That's a good question. I don't think there is a time limit, because I think it's ours, we own it. But we've never been in this position before. So, it's a good point, because we could leave it up and continue to track with the click through rate is once there isn't a print guide.

Legislator Bartels 40:34

Okay. Thank you. And then the other question is just, can I get a copy of Belo's proposal?

Lisa Berger 40:42

Yeah, their RFP?

Legislator Bartels 40:43

Yeah, their response to the RFP.

Lisa Berger 40:46

Mm hmm. Okay.

Legislator Bartels 40:48

Thanks.

Lisa Berger 40:48

I have it in my office.

Legislator Bartels 40:50

Okay.

Deputy Executive Wright 40:51

If I could add something, Chairman Cahill. This is Evelyn.

I don't... I just want to say, part of the reason that the plans for the online guide are unclear is that we haven't embarked on the website redesign with Belo yet. You know, we have much of the same content in the travel guide is in the listings on our website. So, there's a considerable duplication there. And I think the first open question is, how can we better utilize both the data that we have about our tourism businesses, as well as the listings that we have on the website? Where does that get us when we do that redesign? And then, what's the, you know, what's the missing pieces that we need to add back in? So, we've talked about the printed maps and different kinds of supplements to it. I think, you know, we want to get through that redesign process and then see, what do we think is missing. Is it something that looks like a guide online? Or

is it something, or is it an enhanced version, an easier to use version of the kind of listings we already have? So, that's the that's the main source of uncertainty where we need to do a little bit more work first to see what we really need.

Chairman Cahill 42:08

Okay, so like I said, Legislator, Legislator Archer, I got you next. But I just like I said, I think that we're going to we're going to revisit the whole travel guide thing, I think, and see if maybe we can discuss that in a little bit more detail. Come up with, you know, some sort of solution there after you've talked to Belo and, you know, because my concern would be that, you know, Greene, Columbia, Dutchess Orange, Sullivan, you know, Poconos, you know, have travel guides, and we don't. So, all right, so, Legislator Archer, go ahead.

Legislator Archer 42:37

So, thank you. The State aid is that... is that I love New York funding in the budget? Okay, Tim. So, if in fact... Will that funding... because you said it, it really applies to, does it apply to just the printed? Or will they help with the development of the website? Will they help with, if we decide to do an online version, I mean, will that will still be recognized by I Love New York as some kind of matching? Or does it have to be printed material?

Lisa Berger 43:16

So, matching funds has this long set of rules and regulations about how you can qualify to get that money back, depending on what media you're using, right? So, to answer your question, in the easiest way. The easiest way to get that money back, is by doing a travel guide. The rules are clear, you're not held up. It's easier to... it's easiest, both to comply and to get approval. And when you move towards using it in a digital format, there are a lot more hoops to jump through. And it's not that it's not attainable. And no matter what, Lynn, we will, we will always make sure that we apply and voucher and do things appropriately so that we can use this program. It is so valuable.

Mmm. Thank you.

Legislator Archer 44:14

It just is not as easy. Thank you.

Lisa Berger 44:22

You're welcome.

Chairman Cahill 44:31

Thank you very much, Lisa I was on mute that whole time. I apologize. Thank you very much, Lisa, I appreciate that.

If there's no more questions, we'll move on to Alan Macaluso for Information Services. Hi, Alan, how are you?

Alan Macaluso 44:44

I'm doing well. Everyone hear me?

Chairman Cahill 44:46

Yes, sir.

Alan Macaluso 44:47

Okay, let me share my screen and see if you can see it. So, let me find it. Can you see my screen?

Chairman Cahill 45:07

Yes, we can, sir.

Alan Macaluso 45:09

Okay, so, let me... Okay, so just quickly do our agenda, we'll just go through the quick overview of the mission statement, go over our organizational structure as it as it will be in 2021. A summary of what our COVID-19 response and the financial impact from that are 2021, goals and objectives. And so, in our department budget and some other performance metrics, for the for this previous year.

So, again, just a summary. So, Information Services, we know we really strive for, by really technology, leadership and governance, to facilitate our citizen access to government information and services.

I mean, so, really what the... when I first got here, we really needed to refine the mission to kind of kind of align it with what we think is the best practices industry-wide, and to kind of elevate the team with us with a mission that allows us to, whenever there's a doubt of what our of our team, whatever, there's a doubt of how they should operate. The mission statement should really guide us in how we are to execute for our constituents, which is our department, our various departments, and, and some public constituents when we need to reach out for instance, RPS, etc. So this is really our guiding principle.

And I think the four main components of it that I'd like to highlight, as a really return to sort of customer service, where we are really a customer service organization by at the heart of it.

Our collaboration skills, like really not just collaboration from, like the collaboration software, etc. But actually, where we try to collaborate amongst our team, amongst various folks with IT, but also collaborate across different departments, in different expertise where we can.

That communication... make sure that we're always clear and what we're communicating to our constituents as well as to each other. And our commitment to both ourselves and our in our in our end users.

Let me move on. So, this will be our organizational structure, our organizational structure. The items in red are defunded roles, that will be defunded, either some are defunded now, some will be defunded, there's dates attached to them, when those folks retire. So, we are looking at total of 90 defunded positions in 2021. And one part time computer analyst.

Chairman Cahill 48:03

So, Mr. Macaluso, before you move off of that chart there, that looks like a substantial cut in personnel from where I sit here.

Alan Macaluso 48:14

And some of those positions where, again, positions that were either reclassified or we never had a chance to backfill due to COVID-19 and were defunded. Some are retirements that were we that... But you're right, there is a substantial hit to the team, and we're trying to realign our resources internally to make sure that we can continue to deliver.

Chairman Cahill 48:41

So, do you think that that will have any kind of impact on your deliverables?

Alan Macaluso 48:48

My hope is that we will continue... we will... Yeah, one of the things we're looking to do to help mitigate that loss is to look at some of our internal procedures, like for instance, procurement, and automation with sort of ticketing, alignment of resources with customer service where, where we can field tickets, not just from our staff, but up to the management staff as well. We're trying to trying to reorganize how we front load the ticket response so that we can streamline some of that... the incoming requests that come in.

Our purchasing we've streamlined over the last couple of years to make it almost exclusively digital. We have gotten some assistance from purchasing as well. So, that has helped streamline the purchasing component of this .

We have hired some excellent staff that have been helped identify some of our efficiencies, or greater efficiency, some gaps. And again, this comes back down to our collaboration, and within a team to help identify some of the hurdles and to help streamline procedures.

Alan Macaluso 50:04

So, the short of it is that, you know, we're looking to kind of try to close a lot... as many of those gaps as possible. You know, that I think there will be some challenges as we move forward. We're losing some key deep subject matter expertise in, for instance, our voice system. Izzie is going to be retiring. But we're backfilling that with someone who is ramping up quickly. And we hope to also leverage some of our consultants in the voice, Newcastle for example, to help kind of shepherd him into a more self-sustaining role. We have our RPS Application Analyst who's also retiring but we're actually hiring for that role as we speak. So, we should have backfilled for that come the end of the year, and have that person up to speed by the time that that's that position, retires.

So, I hope that answers your question. I think that we will experience challenges, I will not deny it. But I again, a part of our objective, is again, to look at our standard operating procedures and try to streamline them, refine them, automate where we can, and, and leverage some other external resources that we could, again, from purchasing and others who might be able to help, again, help guide us and streamline even further.

Chairman Cahill 51:36

Thank you very much.

Alan Macaluso 51:41

Okay, next slide. So, summary. So, COVID-19, or the you know, one of the first things we had to do was to get the test site set up. So, with the assistance of Kingston Equitable Internet Initiative to have a mobile wireless service, we used, we partnered with them, and they were able to provide high speed internet access to the test site over radio frequencies. And we got that site stood up in three days for a walkthrough and then five days to go live.

Subsequent to that, also, right around the same time, probably within the same the same time we deployed a parallel Emergency Operations Center, we moved it and then we didn't move up, we stood up a parallel EOC in the Health Department, plus a 12-station Call Center at the Department Health so that the, the health professionals and the EOC could really be in proximity to each other for operational continuity. And we did that in it over the weekend, which, you know, took, you know, you know, pulling out VoIP phones and switches, and getting plumbed up and finding desktops and laptops and other tooling to kind of get that that stood up with. And also with the help of Buildings and Grounds, we were able to stand up the EOC and the 12-station call center within a weekend.

We also use some of the ArcGIS, which is the GIS tooling and some of their data management solutions. And we were able to build the dynamic COVID-19 data aggregation and processing system that you see in the dashboard you see on the COVID-19 website. There's also a much more feature-rich ArcGIS dashboard

as well, that allows you to kind of slice and dice the data. And we did that as well as we moved through the first couple of weeks and months of COVID-19.

We had to quickly repurpose a lot of existing stock that has been had been on tap for departmental refreshes. As well as purchasing additional laptops and Chromebooks and mobile devices to help enable some of the remote workforces and get folks working remotely.

Given the remote capabilities and the challenges that that presented, we also had to evaluate and onboard a number of different collaboration and conferencing solutions. Again, to help facilitate the remote workforce to help really kind of jumpstart and really crash course into remote collaboration technologies.

We also worked with the Recovery Service Center and sourced and onboarded a cloud-based three-on-one Citizen Request Management System which is to send their product is called Qsend. Again, that is used for the Recovery Service Center for... as the front entry point for capturing metrics around the COVID-19 response. Given the sheer numbers of folks who are working remotely and the capabilities that the AV collaboration tools and the conferencing tools required, we increased our bandwidth to one gigabyte to help support that surge in the network usage. And then we also scaled and operationalized our virtual private network and remote desktop capabilities, again, to... so that folks get access county systems.

Any questions on that before I move on? Okay, and these are some of the costs. So, in that response, we had to really look at our budget, look at some of some of the existing equipment that we had, some of the communication, and we had to onboard. Again, as I said, we onboarded some services that we didn't have prior. Zoom, for instance, would be one of them. Some Microsoft Team's capabilities, which would be one of that testing supplies, which we need to buy some equipment for the mobile testing site in Tech City. We had to purchase additional VoIP phones for various capabilities, including the call center. And so, professional services initially in the COVID-19 response, which was we had to pivot a few times in the call center capabilities. And one of the comp one of the professional services item was some ticketing and tracking capabilities. That was that we that was a vendor that came in did that work.

And does any... any questions on this?

Chairman Cahill 56:38

Just give me one second to scroll through. Make sure no one has their hand right here. Legislator Archer. Good.

Legislator Archer 56:42

Thank you. Thank you. Is a... does... Are the computers in this number on total COVID costs? Didn't you have a whole set of computer equipment that was earmarked as COVID?

Alan Macaluso 56:58

Yes. So this...

Legislator Archer 57:00

That's not in here, correct?

Alan Macaluso 57:01

IT equipment. That's the second line.

Legislator Archer 57:06

All right, because I... I'm showing for computer equipment. That's COVID... that's been marked as COVID on the special COVID line in your budget, at \$324,588. Am I miss reading something? And this is, this is... I'm sorry, let me step back... is a total for, and the budget was amended \$545,617 for COVID-related computer equipment.

Alan Macaluso 57:38

That seems extremely high.

Legislator Archer 57:41

Well, maybe we... maybe I'll... I'll need to check that. Because I'm getting the 18. I've got... you had about \$18K in supplies and change, right. No, you have \$ 7. All right. So, could I get a copy of this page just so I can verify?

Alan Macaluso 58:01

Absolutely.

Legislator Archer 58:01

And that would be great. I guess I didn't see it. Was it in our OneDrive?

Alan Macaluso 58:08

I did not.... I sent it to Fawn early... later this afternoon?

Legislator Archer 58:13

Okay, so... So, yeah, I just I your numbers are not jiving with what I have. So, maybe we have an error. So we can maybe reconcile that.

Alan Macaluso 58:24

I did go over these numbers a couple of times today to make sure that they were right. So, yeah, I would be more than happy.

Legislator Archer 58:29

It could be it could be on my end. So, I just wanted to check. Thank you.

Chairman Cahill 58:33

And Fawn, if you wouldn't mind, any attachments that you receive for tonight's meeting, could you please put them out on the OneDrive for every... so, everyone has a chance to look at them. Thanks.

Legislator Archer 58:42

Great, thank you.

Alan Macaluso 58:44

I move on.

Fawn Tantillo 58:47

I apologize. I just didn't have a chance. I got these during your last meeting and while I was monitoring that.

Chairman Cahill 58:52

But that's no problem, whatsoever. I don't see anyone else with any questions. Alan, please go ahead.

Alan Macaluso 58:57

Okay. So, our 2021 goals and objectives. So, we have two Capital Projects in the works. One is an end of life network switch upgrade. There are a number of network switches throughout the county that our end of life throughout the coming year. That Capital Project is... we will begin executing on it in the beginning of the year.

And some PC replacements for a number of windows seven machines. We had been kicking the can down the road for some time with just some extended support for this Windows 7 machines. But given the risks that Windows 7 presents and to kind of get in front of that as quickly as we can, you know Burt recommended a Capital Project for that. So, that's what that is.

We also will continue to... we have a grant fund. We have \$113,000 in grant funding from the Department of Homeland Security and the New York State Board of Elections for cybersecurity enhancements. So, there's a variety of both services, and product, and technology that's going to be deployed. So, we'll continue with, with those enhancements in 2021. We're also, that project kicked off in 2019. So, we've done some remediation on the BOE infrastructure that's going to continue on to the end of 2020. And into 2021. As we kick off, some of the projects that are funded by that grant.

We will continue to expand our Cybersecurity Awareness Training. We see breach attempts regularly. Fortunately, we have a number of products in place and services that help mitigate that. But I think the biggest, the biggest risk point is end users. So, we want to make sure that we keep people informed and aware. And we'll continue to expand on that in 2021.

One thing that we're going to do, which is been on our list for some time, but I think with COVID, and with the elections, and the risk that that was pretty publicly apparent with various ransomware attacks and breaches, that are... we've kind of bumped up to the top of our list the two-factor authentication for a number of different critical systems. So, that'll require not just a password for these environments that are required, not just a password, but a randomly generated code. And again, the point of that is to help prevent unattended access by bots and other types of nefarious techniques.

We're looking to expand our cloud-based disaster recovery solution for the New World financial system, we've prototyped it this year, and it went pretty well. And we plan to extend that in 2021. And also, given the publicity of a number of ransomware attacks, we will be looking at some of our key data to move it up to offline storage. So, that in case, you know, heaven forbid, we get a ransomware attack ransomware attack, we can restore our data back to a clean version. And what the one of the techniques for that is to get clean copies in an offline, what they call air-gapped storage, off into the cloud. So, that's one thing that we'll be looking at in 2021, as well.

And, you know, as we know, we don't know when COVID-19 will end. And but I think we've learned a lot in the last six or eight months. And we will continue to expand a streamline our remote workforce technologies and collaboration technologies.

We're working to redevelop the County Internet plus the number of departmental websites with some improved and expanded capabilities. We're looking to explore, based on what happened with the COVID-19, radio-based Internet technology. We're looking to explore some wireless internet options to serve as county locations and assist the planning department in their Ulster County Broadband Initiative.

We continue to identify and convert legacy applications into more contemporary web-based solutions. As you know, our print usage has gone down dramatically. And also how we use our printers and our multifunction devices has also changed. So, we're looking to continue to explore a streamline print management and some digital signature capabilities. I know you know, we're doing some more digital signatures, I think of some more formalized ways of handling contracts, etc. with like, like a Digi Sign, for example.

And we will continue to explore municipal outreach by shared services where we can. Any questions on that?

Chairman Cahill 1:04:19

No, I don't see any. Go ahead. Thank you.

Alan Macaluso 1:04:22

Okay, so, here's our 2020 overview. So, I try to kind of give you a perspective on what our 2020 budget look like what our 2021 budget will look like and the deltas between so you know where we're making where what the impact was.

So, our biggest impact is in our personnel and personnel related expenses. So, with the number of retirements and that are both that have happened this year, and they'll continue to in 2021, we're looking at, you know, roughly \$614,000 in personal related expense reductions.

Chairman Cahill 1:05:09

Hmm.

Alan Macaluso 1:05:13

That's biggest, biggest hits in our budget.

Chairman Cahill 1:05:18

I work at IBM, and that's a busy chart.

Alan Macaluso 1:05:24

I had to clean it up.

Chairman Cahill 1:05:25

Yeah, it's hard. It's hard. There's a lot of stuff there. I hear you. I mean, I just got to, you know, say that I, you know, I can't, I wouldn't. I wouldn't be honest, if I didn't say I'm concerned about three staff reductions in IS. And I just hope you really, you know, there's a plan in place to ensure that, you know, we're not going to miss anything because of that, you know?

Alan Macaluso 1:05:52

No, I agree, I would be, I would be remiss to say I wasn't concerned. But again, we are lucky, we have some, some of our newer staff are really quite skilled. And we've done some cross training with them. And we are hiring a new person for our Real Property system who also brings a lot of contemporary skills. I think one of the objectives that we would like to see this person do would be to not just take over the Real Property system. But again, look at ways that we can create greater efficiencies in that process, freeing that person up their time for swivel desk into some other capabilities within the department. So, I share, I'm not maybe as concerned as you, but I do share some concern that our staff reductions are going to give us some pain points.

Chairman Cahill 1:06:43

So, does the... I'm just trying to refresh and it's been a long time since I asked these kind of questions of the county. Do you folks utilize any contract professional contract personnel to do specific tasks, certain program skills, or something like that?

Alan Macaluso 1:07:00

So, yes. so well, we have one contractor who use it as an old employ Pat Murray, and she comes in and helps with her Real Property system, but she is retired. And I think her goal is to stay retired. So, I can't rely on her, which is one reason why we're looking to hire a person that will take on that role.

Alan Macaluso 1:07:19

We do have some contractors for like our networking support some of our server and virtualization support or security support from an app called CD20, it used to be called CPI. So, we use them to help with a lot of the projects: switch maintenance, switch management, firewall rules, server builds, they help with our infrastructure strategy to do some cloud-based backup and cloud-based disaster recovery, we're using CD20 on that as well.

Alan Macaluso 1:07:51

And again, a lot of what we do is you make sure that those efforts are, are documented and captured and cross-trained for our team so that we don't lose that expertise.

Chairman Cahill 1:08:01

Gotcha.

Alan Macaluso 1:08:01

We do have some professional services, contract arrangements that we have maintained and will continue to maintain. I think before COVID-19, we were looking to cut some of that back, but I think as COVID-19 hit, and as the result of some of these workforce reductions, we're going to maintain their levels.

Chairman Cahill 1:08:19

Great. Legislator Archer.

Legislator Archer 1:08:22

Thank you. Alan, you got... it looks like you, you're doing a lot of cross training, retraining, and leveraging the resources that you do have. So, I applaud that. We just came out of budget meeting, and I just want to put this out there. We have, if I, if I'm correct, the maintenance line, which is 4690 ends up being all the contracts for all the systems that we utilize, is that correct?

Alan Macaluso 1:08:50

That is correct.

Legislator Archer 1:08:51

So, that's a pretty significant hit. Let me just ask the question. With the team, you're building in the skill set, are there any opportunities to bring some of the work in-house in a way in an effort to shave some ongoing maintenance costs? Because that keeps going up and it doesn't change? And have you thought about, or is there an opportunity to bring some of that work in-house with some of the folks that you've brought on board?

Alan Macaluso 1:09:26

The short answer is... it's not a short answer. Some of those maintenance costs are pretty vendor-specific, meaning for things like say the New World Public Safety System, they're very specific. And the maintenance activities that go on. It's pretty specialized.

Legislator Archer 1:09:47

Contractually, you have to go through the vendor to get the modifications, correct?

Alan Macaluso 1:09:52

Correct. Correct...

Legislator Archer 1:09:54

So, when you're looking at... I'm sorry. So, when you look at it new systems, do you look at it with that thought in mind that is there an ability....? I mean, because it seems like when we look at these contracts every year and the renewals, they're pretty significant. And they never go down, they always go up. And so, is there, is there a methodology or consideration and looking at different applications that would allow you to, you know, do the work in-house? Or are... then are we just tied to one person knowing it? But you do a lot of back training, so... cross training. So, I'm just curious.

Alan Macaluso 1:10:35

So, I mean, when we... certain, I think some of the enterprise applications are, I think they're hard to tease out the maintenance piece of that. But for instance, for what we're working hard to, to sunset, some of our legacy A is for 100 applications, and then there's a lot of maintenance costs, that would just keep kicking that down the road. The sooner we can get some of those products off those A is for 100s have their own maintenance costs, and the software that's associated with it have their maintenance costs, those will go away.

And for instance, one thing that we're looking at is, I mean, first of all, it's a lot of cloud-based solutions for some of these, some of these products, not the Enterprise Application products, but for some products that we're looking to take advantage of which would, again, the maintenance then gets wrapped into a subscription, for example. And then we just have... we just we can maintain the structure. There's no

maintenance of hardware, there's no maintenance of software, that's part of the subscription costs. So, there are opportunities like that, that we're looking, we continue to look at.

Legislator Archer 1:11:48

So, what would it, what would it take to be able to execute some of those opportunities? And what would the cost savings be if we did some of those things? I mean, you sound like you're reviewing them, but it doesn't sound like they're embedded in your budget for next year, is that correct?

Alan Macaluso 1:12:11

Say that again?

Legislator Archer 1:12:12

So, some of the things that you're thinking about, that you think will allow you to do more in house and streamline and, and realize some savings... is some things you're kicking around, but they're not really in your budget at this point? Correct?

Alan Macaluso 1:12:28

Correct.

Legislator Archer 1:12:29

So, is there some, is there any one thing that you feel like if you put a little bit towards it, you could realize a great return? And we should be thinking about or, no?

Alan Macaluso 1:12:43

Um... I mean, I think we should be thinking about all opportunities. Like I think part of it is, again, is to understand, I understand the question. Some of it has to understand what is the application being used. In some cases, if there is some applications are being used by one person, but it's on this legacy system, that we've been kicking down the road for a while, it's becomes beholden on us to really figure out how to get that product into another form. So, that that one or two people can use the product. Some of these products...

Background noise 1:13:17

[Inaudible]

Alan Macaluso 1:13:17

... are so embedded in the operation of a department that it's hard to tease out, if that makes sense.

Background noise 1:13:26

[Inaudible]

Deputy Executive Rider 1:13:26

Alan, the tax system is one of these correct?

Alan Macaluso 1:13:30

Correct. Yep. So, you know, the tax system, that I think it's Trust and it is an AS400 application. And I know that Burt is looking to replace that. But that... besides the software that's on it, it's the hardware maintenance costs around the hardware, plus the vendor that is a that has been engaged to support the product. Because IBM doesn't support it any longer. So, these legacy costs that come with it, that we're looking to expedite the migration to something more sustainable.

Legislator Archer 1:14:10

Thank you.

Alan Macaluso 1:14:18

And any further questions, as you'll see, some of it, you might see some of this in the next slide.

Chairman Cahill 1:14:23

Yep. I don't think there's any more questions, go ahead.

Alan Macaluso 1:14:25

Operating expenses. Again, I've got to try to show it 2020 versus 2021 and the deltas between them. In some cases, we you know, we've cut, our like recipe to cut our professional services and education training. There's a lot of free stuff out there that we're trying to take advantage of, and some cross-training that wherever we can. We have some professional services that we're no longer using like for the support of the pool for example, WIFI and... and let me get my spreadsheet and...

Sorry, I closed my spreadsheet but, and you know, our rentals and leases, that's for our printers, office supplies, conferences. We're not... won't be taking any conferences, our travel expenses, those are being cut to zero. Our communication expenses, one thing that we've done to try to try to claw back some cell phone usage... we got it... we have some new plans for our cell phones. And we've decommissioned some services that were no longer... that no longer needed. So, that is a savings there, and some maintenance costs.

And we are we've scaled back dramatically our computer equipment replacements from our budget, hence the Capital Project that will... so, that's coming out of our budget and some software related expenses as well.

Chairman Cahill 1:16:09

Anyone have any questions as I scroll through; doesn't look like it. Thank you.

Alan Macaluso 1:16:16

Okay. And just some, you know, quickly just go through. So, you know, from year to date back in early October. So, we took in about 2,471 tickets, and at close 2,382. Again, the top incidents, by departments, Social Services and Emergency Communications are by far the top two.

So incidents are break/fix. So, if someone's reporting an issue with product or service, that's what brake/fix is. That's what an incident is. Printers not working, etc., password is expired, for example. Equipment requests, software requests for new product, new services, a new printer, those types of things, those are requests. So, you can see, it's a little misleading, but we get a lot of requests come in, but the Finances and Social Services, were the top for 2020. Again, we got 3,600 and change, of requests last year, pretty sizable.

And again, just sort of quick breakdown of where we see a lot of our efforts going to supporting printers, or you know, VoIP phones, desktop computers, enterprise apps, etc. And...

Chairman Cahill 1:17:48

So, Alan, real quick question. So, that's fine. It's perfect there. So, is it possible that you we could look at something like using a Slack or something like that, or some sort of messaging system that has an integrated phone to get rid of the desk phones, I mean, something like, that is that considered?

Alan Macaluso 1:18:08

I mean, in fact, we are doing that now. We... it's one of the communication expenses that we have, we actually, onboard recently was Microsoft Teams has a component where you can get a local phone attached to your, your Microsoft Office 365 account. It has to be assigned, but in theory, you can, but you can make voice calls through your team's account. It's got a, you know, also call the number directly. But and there are other services where you can just use your cell phone, if you have a county-issues cell phone, that becomes sort of like the... your, quote desk phone.

So, there are options that we're exploring to kind of move off the, or at least, investigate how to move off the VoIP system. And the VoIP system is pretty legacy, and antiquated, and costly. So, we are looking at ways of streamlining that.

And if you look at the Recovery Service Center, I don't recall how many, how many call takers there are, but they're all virtual. So, that's kind of a model. In some in many cases, we see ourselves going to. But again, there's a lot of legacy hardware and procedures that we have to tease out and move, move towards. There's a lot of options with RingCentral, as it gives you an example. And some other cloud-based vendors that can provide cloud-based VoIP systems. Again, it's something that we need to step through carefully. So, that we don't... it's not disruptive.

Alan Macaluso 1:19:24

But we are we are exploring some options that are built into... you mentioned Slack, but Microsoft Teams has a similar kind of... their competitor to Slack, and it does have some voice options which we're we've already begun exploring this year. We will continue to roll that out in 2021 as we, as we see, as we see departments with needs and conferencing needs, and etc.

Chairman Cahill 1:20:11

Thank you. Anyone else have any questions? I'm going to scroll through see if I see any. Nope, I don't see any.

Alan, thank you very much. It was a very thorough presentation. I appreciate it. And if anybody on the committee has any questions, feel free to contact Alan. And again, we'll have this on the OneDrive to look at that presentation. Correct? Right.

Okay, so we're now going to go to Employment and Training and Tomasine Oliphant will be giving her presentation, Tomasine Oliphant, thank you very much I'm saying thank you for being patient. It's a pretty late meeting for us here.

Tomasine Oliphant 1:20:53

Okay, thank you so much for having me. I appreciate it.

So, I just like to, you know, which I apologize that I have on my slides, but before it goes to the next slide, Fawn, I just like to share my departmental overview. I have it written and I can throw that in the slide.

So, the Ulster County Office of Employment and Training is co-located with the New York State Department of Labor to operate the Ulster County Career Center under the Federal Workforce, Innovation and Opportunity Act, via law.

The Ulster County Workforce Development Board is the system operator for the Ulster County Career Center. The mission and vision of the Ulster County Career Center is to ensure that every Ulster County business has access to a skilled labor force. And that every Ulster County resident has access to job training opportunities that lead to high quality employment, or career advancement.

And under County Executive Pat Ryan's economic initiative to recover, reopen and realign Ulster County economy, OET has been assigned to take lead in the effort to support job seekers and businesses looking to rebuild their workforce.

So, I just wanted to start with that, especially, as you can just understand how we had to shift through the pandemic. So, as I said, the Ulster County Career Center is co-located with Department of Labor. And

when the pandemic hit, the local New York State Department of Labor staff, they all were assigned to work remotely on the UI issue.

So, the OET team here, we were alone with, you know, managing the Career Center space. And we still had an influx of unemployment issue, unemployment insurance concerns. So, my team had fielded over 500 calls, ensuring that they got to a New York to State Department of Labor staff. So, that was one way we had supported the county.

We also supported the county with making sure with... partnering with the Recovery Service Center to make sure that there was continued updates on how to apply for unemployment, the pandemic assistance, just any updates that we received from the Department of Labor. I made sure the Recovery Service Center had that information to share with the public.

And we had to redesign our service delivery. So, we turned to only services by appointment because, since the Department of Labor was not here. We had to basically close down that side of the Career Center. But we still served individuals by coming in by appointment.

So, we put our intake forms online. We put all safety protocols in place with plexiglass made sure we were set up for the reopening. And we also provided... we've developed partnerships to provide virtual job readiness opportunities. So, I'll just go through our services.

So, virtual input person appointment services, you know, we still provided resume guidance, interviewing skills, virtual workshops on that. We posted on our website, and training opportunities, we still continue to support our customers who wanted to get into training by connecting them with opportunities.

So, one opportunity we were able to partner with, especially since a lot of our training providers had closed down. Since a lot of the training providers provided in-person training, we needed to find trainings that could be remote.

So, Coursera is an online, you can go back to but Coursera is an online learning platform. They were providing on Coursera for Workforce Recovery, a partnership with local governments, so, I was able to get this partnership. And so, we have outreached to over 12,000 individuals on unemployment through our One Stop Operating system. So, we were able to access those individuals on unemployment and get them out this information. We also shared other training opportunities, but we really wanted to be able to provide this online learning opportunity because, you know, especially with transportation, or childcare barriers, they were able to use this to be able to upskill rescale.

So, there's a whole bunch of different courses, whether it's tech or business skills. It was specifically designed by people in workforce development, and in partnership with the Coursera team to offer this opportunity. So, it just had ended, the free enrollment period. So, we have currently 434 actively taking classes. And, and they have until December to complete those courses.

So, I have one of my staff members actively reaching out to those individuals to make sure that, you know, we see success from this. That, you know, people were able to upskill to get new jobs, are they able to get these training to, you know, and, you know, get jobs from those training courses as well.

Since we had so many free licenses, I did offer this to Ulster County personnel as well. So, we have a total of 46 Ulster County employees to be able to upskill because, you know, in this day and age, you know, we may need to, you know, have different skills, and this is a free opportunity for our own employees to be able to have, like better, you know, Excel skills, or whatever digital literacy skills that they may need to help function in their jobs currently here at the county.

Chairman Cahill 1:26:32

So, real quick, real quick question, do the, do the county employees get the full catalog of Coursera? Or are you limited to just to job training? Because I know, I've used this for years. And it's really unbelievable, some of the stuff that's out there.

Tomasine Oliphant 1:26:48

Yes, it's the full catalog so far. I don't know. I know, it's very small business, 4,734 courses. And I know Google even has an IT certificate in there as well. So especially, you know, so it's really great courses, John Hopkins. Even the COVID tracing is on there. And a lot of individuals have taken that. So, it I know that our... that we've used that. And that was prior to so our COVID-19 team, you know, they have used Coursera to get that training that that was paid by the state.

Chairman Cahill 1:27:23

Thank you, you're welcome.

Tomasine Oliphant 1:27:25

You go to the next slide. And so, I want to share about what training opportunities that we provide through our wheel of funding.

So, we have occupational skills training, on the job training, and paid internships. So, our occupational skills training, we do an individual training account with where we pay for if individuals want to go to like CNA training at Ulster BOCES, or any other training through SUNY Ulster. We are hoping to expand and build

our training providers, we just made a great partnership with Albany Can Code to launch Kingston Can Code. So, you can go ahead and click again.

Especially through this pandemic, we saw a need that people need digital literacy skills, how can we help them? How can we go remote, if they don't even know, you know, some of their customers don't even know how to have the skills to use a computer. So, we saw that need. So, I partnered with them to offer a digital literacy course where they were able to provide individuals who were lacking those skills. To get savvy and comfortable using the computer. You can go to the next slide.

And so, for our... our training services data so far, and 2020, we've trained 42 adults, dislocated workers and youth, including three on the job training contracts. and are on the job training contract that has an opportunity where there's an employer who may have a job opening. And so, we're able to match them with an individual that they can train on the job. So, they would pay in a wage like \$15 an hour. And after that, three months, that six month opportunity, that partnership, that contract, they would be officially hired and we would be able to pay from our... we'll have funding 75% reimbursement to that employer.

So, it's a win-win We're able to help an individual get trained on the job training, plus an actual job leading to employment. And the business wins because they're able to get 70%- 75% reimbursement.

With occupational skills training, just to give you guys you know, some overview of courses, Class A and Class B commercial driving courses, LPN, CNA, oil heat, air conditioning, phlebotomy, a lot, you know the courses at the Green Careers Academy, surgical tech, the digital literacy front end web development, JavaScript, building manufacturing. And our training providers include ultra-low SES commercial driver training school, SUNY Ulster and Albany/Kingston Can Code. And the OJT is included pest control, manufacturing electrician and office manager.

So, I wanted to showcase, you know, just that the new training that we... that was launched for the fall, that we put a few of our students in, Front End Web Development, it's going very well, we're getting great feedback from the individuals, and that's totally remote. So it's a great opportunity, especially with the tech sector right now. Being so prominent, and, you know, that even, that you can work remotely, anywhere. So, we hope to continue to partner on Kingston Can Code initiative and continue to help individuals get into tech, especially women, and individuals of color who may not have the opportunity, otherwise. So, they have been a great partner. And we're so glad for this opportunity. Also veterans. So, we also marketed this to veterans, and there's also additional assistance for veterans. So, we're really excited about this opportunity to continue to partner with them into 2021. Next slide.

So, our Young Adult Employment Program is a great program that we have ages 16 to 24. So, these are any youth that are out of school, they could have their high school equivalency diploma, or they we can help them get that. So, we pay their... the same thing, occupational skills training. Through this program, we can do paid internships where we can pay them up to \$15 an hour, as long as we have a worksite supervisor

willing to provide. That could be three months or longer. And sometimes it leads to a job or sometimes it just gains experience.

But this is also another great opportunity. We just made partnerships with SUNY Ulster is Path Program and Ulster BOCES. Trying to make those pathways from those taking the HSC courses into... to flow into our young adult employment program. I also met with administrators at Kingston High School, that if anybody's at risk of dropping out, we have a referral process that we can capture those students as well. And I also just connected with Youth Build, that we can co-enroll our students into our Young Adult Employment Program. And you can go to the next slide.

Chairman Cahill 1:32:38

Real quickly. Back on that... back on that subject. So, is there is there an age limit where you cap off the folks who you will consider young adults? Or is that a little bit flexible to top end?

Tomasine Oliphant 1:32:51

If not, because of the law. So, it's 16 to 24.

Chairman Cahill 1:32:55

16 to 24. Okay, well, that's still pretty good chunk. And then my next question is, have you spoken with the Sheriff and the District Attorney about maybe somehow synching up with them in their Restorative Justice, I'll call it crusade, because that's what it is.

Tomasine Oliphant 1:33:13

Oh, okay. I know we work with the Brighter Futures initiative too. We're working with them, but I haven't really spoken to them. So, I can reconnect... I can connect with them on that. That's...

Chairman Cahill 1:33:22

Yeah. I mean, I just think that that's, you know, it's like a positive step in what they're trying to do. And it might be a good connection, you know, so for this to work together. Thank you.

Tomasine Oliphant 1:33:31

Yeah, definitely. That sounds great. And with our new Green Careers Initiative, this is especially what we mentioned for the 2021 budget. We're starting it now. We have set aside eight spots, in our Young Adult Employment Program for green careers. So, especially with the Green New Deal, and with helping to build up green careers, the Green Careers initiative, we want to help more young people enter into the building trades and have this opportunity. So, we have collaborated. We've just had a meeting with Youth Build. They're wonderful. We're going to be co-enrolling, especially with this Green Careers initiative. And working together.

We have some great contractors that... we work with Citizens for Local Power. And with them... and we've had a lot of their adults, actually, their adult cohort go into the OJT program and or go into the Green Careers Academy. So, what my goal is to continue what I've been doing is really making these community partnerships, in order to, and to make these pathways into our program. But this Green Careers internship is just another part of connecting to our Green Careers Academy as well. Getting young people interested and involved. You can go to the next one.

And then we had our Summer Youth Employment Program, which we weren't sure we were going to have this year. So thank you, Legislator, Cahill for your support and advocating for Summer Youth Funds. So, this funding are from the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, which is administered by the New York State Office of Temporary Disability, Temporary and Disability Assistance. And this serves ages 14 through 20. And it's a summer program.

So, kids from high school can be in this program. It's just a summer program that we use our attendant funding for. And attendant funding pays for the wages paid out to the youth, as well as three part time summer staff. So, I just also want to say I have eight full, I have eight full time staff under me, my deputy director, and then seven other full time staff. And then for the summer months, for the summer months of this program, I have three part time Summer Youth Counselors. You go to the next slide.

So, just wanted to brighten up the day a little bit and give you guys some pictures. To show you how we had to... you can go back really quick. We had to be creative because, you know, we wanted to make sure the kids were safe. We wanted to make sure that we were going to put them in work sites that, you know, that that we're going to be safe. We did a lot of outdoors. We made sure every youth had PPE. We worked with the businesses to make sure that they had PPE, you know, they had what they needed to be safe. We had no COVID breakouts, it was very successful. And the kids really had a great time.

And in order to do outreach during this pandemic, we did a drive through application drive-off at the Career Center. So, my staff, they had gloves and masks, people would come in, we would make copies. They would just come to the to the lobby area. And we just did the drive thru and we got our applications. So, we had to be very creative and doing that as well, to make sure that this opportunity was going to be available for these users, especially during this pandemic when they, you know, need a wage.

So, I can talk about the numbers on the next slide.

So, just to give you a year to year comparison, from 2019 to 2020. So, in 2019, we placed 148. This year, we were still able to play 116, which was still good. Just, you know, in regard to the pandemic. We had a total of 31 worksites. You know, we did have 61 into that 2019. So, that was a little bit of a challenge, but we still made it work. Our total hours worked 12,457. We're able to increase the wage this year to \$13, by \$1. So, it's \$13 an hour. In school youth was 91; out of school youth was 25, which is great. And the number of youth that was able to get employment, or an extension, was 17, which is you know, compared to 2019 wasn't bad.

So, you know, it was I think what made it very successful that I also want to share in the Summer Youth Employment Program. We had three different creative partnerships.

So, we partnered with Kingston Can Code, again, with providing a Front End Web Development Summer Program. So, that was really successful. The kids were able to learn how to build their own web sites.

And we had a partnership with Ellenville High School and Go Beyond Greatness to provide a hybrid job readiness and work site experience. They were able to work with the radio station tech at the school, and that was very successful. So we're especially glad to offer something in Ellenville where those kids are very, you know, separated from most sites that are in here in Kingston.

And we also worked with Kingston High School Brothers at Bard mentees with the brothers at Bard mentors at the Ramapo site. And this was great because the kids were able to get a college course credit. And they were able to be provided with additional mentorship from the Brothers at Bard Mentors. So, they gained life skills training. And they had the hands on experience. And it all went very, very well.

So, we're very, very pleased with how we are able to operate the Summer Youth Employment Program. The board was very, Workforce Development Board, was very pleased with our results. And so, I'm just really grateful that we were able to put on this program. It was a five weeks, so, we had to shorten it from the six week. And we're able to give those who were in the Albany Can Code cohort, we offered them stipends and the other kids got wages. They got, you know, the \$15, \$13 an hour. And with those kids in that program, that we just gave a stipend every two weeks, which was fine for the kids. Does anybody have any questions about that?

No. Okay. And then... go ahead, Lynn.

Legislator Archer 1:40:26

No, no, no questions. But I mean, from all of the things that you're presenting, I mean, I think you've really expanded the programs in this offering here. And it's really quite impressive.

Tomasine Oliphant 1:40:37

Thank you so much.

Legislator Archer 1:40:39

I just wanted to give you some feedback. It's really amazing, and particularly in the midst of a pandemic. So, the best of a bad situation.

Tomasine Oliphant 1:40:48

Thank you so much.

Chairman Cahill 1:40:51

And I don't see any other hands. So, I'm like, keep going. All right, thanks. I have to scroll through on the side. So, it takes me a second. Thanks.

Tomasine Oliphant 1:40:58

Oh, okay. Okay. And our last service, which is near and dear to my heart, is our Ticket to Work Program. I think, Fawn, you can hit the button again. So, you guys can see that.

Sorry, our Disability Resource Services. And Troy Snyder, he is a wonderful, wonderful. I've worked with him I work, you know, previously in the field, and Troy has been an amazing advocate, and truly incredible coordinator by providing services to those who have disabilities. Helping them to support from transitioning from SSI, and SSD, to independence. And he has been still able to serve individuals through this pandemic, by phone and, and by email, and still getting connected, even advocated for someone who wasn't getting their unemployment that really needed it. So, these services are very, very important in our community.. We have many individuals in our community and in Ulster County, who need this... who are on SSI and SSD.

And this program, Ticket to Work, helps them to be able to transition to working while they are still getting support. And also completely transition off of services. And I believe that is the goal of assistance, that we're helping them to empower to be able to, you know, they're getting the assistance to be empowered to then transition independently.

So, right now, we're in this transition to train, you know, our new Disability Resource Coordinator, which is great. And so, you know, as I said, to be able to still offer these services through the pandemic was, you know, it was challenging. And what we also did, we put the Ticket to Work on a webinar. So, Troy did a webinar, and then we did a Zoom Q&A. So that, you know, people interested in wanting to do the Ticket to Work Program could just watch the video. And then he would do a Q&A to see if anybody had any questions and then enrolled in the program. And that was very successful through this pandemic, as well. So, we have we got very creative with trying to do what we can to still reach out to the community. And next slide.

And that's about it, what I have, you know, as you know, our funding is federally funded, it's very secure in that sense. If there is if there is a, if there's anything with our TANF dollars, that there's a reduction, you know, it doesn't affect my staff, the only thing that we would have to adjust is how we do our Summer Youth Employment Program.

So, another point I also wanted to share is that we did launch our Green Careers Coalition where we have a number of partners. And for 2021 vision, is that helping to match our goals to the Ulster 2040 Plan of focusing on sector-based strategies of clusters. So, health care, the green careers, building trades, you know, hospitality. So, focusing, hearing from employers to help us influence our trainings and really bring together

the businesses, and our training providers, and community partners to work on each sector. To really come together and develop training career pathways.

Chairman Cahill 1:44:37

Great. Well, thank you. Thank you very much. That was a very impressive.

Tomasine Oliphant 1:44:42

Thank you. It's my first year, so, I'll be...

Chairman Cahill 1:44:44

Yeah, you did really good. So yeah, so there's no county contribution at all to this... hmm.

Tomasine Oliphant 1:44:53

No.

Chairman Cahill 1:44:54

That is amazing. Thank you. Wonderful job. That was a you know, I just I can't wait to see how many lives are changed through that office every year. You know, you're just starting out there, but I just can't see that happening, you know, going down the road.

Tomasine Oliphant 1:45:07

Thank you. And also like building a partnership closer with DSS and making sure that, you know, Mike Iapoce, he's wonderful. And I've worked with him in the past. And, you know, his team, were really working together to make sure those on assistance are really like we're trying to build a more seamless process, also with them. So, that's a goal that we have as well. Like, making sure individuals on assistance, you know, and SNAP, you know, that that we are really, you know, doing a seamless process with our services as well.

Chairman Cahill 1:45:45

Great, Does anyone have any questions for Ms. Oliphant before we let her go for the evening.

Tomasine Oliphant 1:45:53

Thank you.

Chairman Cahill 1:45:53

Okay. Well, thank you again, very much. I appreciate it.

Tomasine Oliphant 1:45:56

Thank you so much.

Chairman Cahill 1:45:57

I'm going to invite you back every so often to see how things are going

Tomasine Oliphant 1:46:01

Yeah, I'd love to.

Chairman Cahill 1:46:03

All right. Great. Thank you.

Tomasine Oliphant 1:46:05

Thank you so much. Take care.

Chairman Cahill 1:46:06

All right. All right. So, that ends our budget presentations for tonight. Does anyone want to take a five minute break? Or do you just want to keep on going?

Legislator Archer 1:46:16

Keep going.

Chairman Cahill 1:46:18

Okay. Okay. So, Miss Ahmed. I'm going to ask... we're going to do the UCAT resolutions first. So Miss Ahmed, she's been here for two hours waiting. So, I, and I appreciate that. So, let's see if we can get those out of the way. The first... is everybody okay with that?

Okay, so then we'll start with Resolution 387, which is: authorizing the chair to Legislator execute an agreement with the State Department of Transportation to accept the New York State for mass transportation projects for federal fiscal year 2021. The Department of Transportation - (UCAT)

Legislator Archer 1:46:59

So moved.

Legislator Litts 1:47:00

I'll move it.

Chairman Cahill 1:47:02

Second?

Legislator Uchitelle 1:47:03

Second.

Chairman Cahill 1:47:04

Okay. All in favor?

Committee Members 1:47:05

Aye.

Chairman Cahill 1:47:05

Any discussion?

Chairman Cahill 1:47:08

Okay, so, then we're... let's say it's an okay, if we block 388, 389 and 390. Everyone, unless there's some discussion you want to have.

Legislator Litts 1:47:22

I'll make a motion to block.

Chairman Cahill 1:47:28

Since a grant applications anyway, right? There's a motion. Is there a second?

Legislator Uchitelle 1:47:33

Second.

Chairman Cahill 1:47:35

Okay, all in favor?

Committee Members 1:47:37

Aye.

Chairman Cahill 1:47:38

Okay, so then on resolutions 388, 389 and 390.

Chairman Cahill 1:47:46

I'll accept a motion to move.

Legislator Corcoran 1:47:48

Motion.

Legislator Litts 1:47:50

Second.

Chairman Cahill 1:47:52

All in favor?

Committee Members 1:47:54

Aye.

Chairman Cahill 1:47:56

All right. All right. So then we're going to go down to 391, which is: Amending Capital Project No. 529 (Purchase Of Mass Transit Buses And Related Equipment) And Amending The 2020 Capital Fund Budget – Ulster County Area Transportation (UCAT).

Chairman Cahill 1:48:11

Is that the 2020 or 2021? budget? You're amending the 2020 budget. Yeah.

Sajaa Ahmed 1:48:15

Yeah. Okay. Yeah. We're trying to zero out by the end of the year

Chairman Cahill 1:48:19

Okay.

Legislator Litts 1:48:20

I'll move the motion.

Chairman Cahill 1:48:23

For a second.

Legislator Uchitelle 1:48:23

Second.

Chairman Cahill 1:48:25

Okay, any discussion? Okay. All in favor?

Committee Members 1:48:30

Aye.

Chairman Cahill 1:48:31

Any opposed? Great.

Chairman Cahill 1:48:34

And then we're going to do... So I, Oh, yeah. We got one more for you, right? All right. So, 393, I'm sorry.

Fawn Tantillo

Two more.

Chairman Cahill 1:48:41

Oh, two more, sorry. Right. 393: Approving A Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan – Department Of Public Transportation (Ulster County Area Transit).

Chairman Cahill 1:48:50

I'll accept the motion for that.

Legislator Corcoran 1:48:52

Motion.

Chairman Cahill 1:48:55

Corcoran.

Chairman Cahill 1:48:55

Second by Legislator Litts.

Chairman Cahill 1:48:57

Any discussion on that? Actually, I've got a question on it. What do we... what are we looking at here?

Sajaa Ahmed 1:49:04

Okay. So, the FTA, there's a new regulation that came out that added this rule after... it came out of the FAST Act, which was fixing America's surface transportation, and it was a component of that legislation, which goes back to I think 2012. And the original date was supposed to be July 20. And then they extended it because of COVID.

Sajaa Ahmed 1:49:28

But it basically, we already have a safety plan. We just have to have tracking and annual certification with our certifications and assurances that we do every year for various compliance items that both Burt and Clint work on for us, or with us. So, this is just another checkmark that we have to certify that we have this plan. What it will actually be is our internal operations stakeholders in conjunction with Diane Beitel at the Office of Safety.

And if, you know, right now we actually are going to work with the Sheriff's Office because of the uptick in opiate related activity to offer some sort of, we're not going to require our drivers to get Narcan trained. But just awareness of, you know, the situation. Some of our riders are people who are, unfortunately, afflicted with addiction. So, it would be beneficial.

So, the plan, just ask us as a director, and we're small agency, so we're doing this anyway, but to look at trends and safety issues, on a larger scale, and the way we wrote our plan is we included a military matrix of safety and risk assessment. So, we'll have quarterly meetings about this topic.

Chairman Cahill 1:50:56

Thank you. Anyone else have any questions about this one? Okay. All in favor?

Committee Members 1:51:03

Aye.

Chairman Cahill 1:51:04

Opposed. Okay. So, then the last one for you tonight, Ms. Ahmed, will be 393: Approving A Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan – Department Of Public Transportation (Ulster County Area Transit).

Sorry, I read that one. The 394: Authorizing The Chair Of The Ulster County Legislature To Extend An Intermunicipal Agreement With The Town Of New Paltz To Provide Public Transit Service To The New Paltz Area (New Paltz LOOP) – Department Of Public Transportation (Ulster County Area Transit)

Move by Legislator Delaune. Second by Legislator Litts. Any discussion? How is their ridership on that with COVID.

Sajaa Ahmed 1:51:43

Not great. We're down 75%. We restarted the New Paltz loop around... back in August. We actually just added the Saturday and Sunday service and I should have my October numbers by tomorrow. I was hoping to have them for tonight. So, then we can... because the students had actually requested that we restore full weekend service. So, that's when they are using the service. And it's getting better every month. It's picking up a little bit every month. We did a short term amendment to the contract because we have been having kind of near quarterly meeting meetings with all of our New Paltz stakeholders to really assess the future of the New Paltz loop. Because both the town, the student SUNY Associate, Student Association and the college are all contributing to this contract.

Chairman Cahill 1:52:38

I remember when that started way back when, yeah.

Legislator Uchitelle 1:52:40

So, can I just speak to that really quick. So this one of the first whereas this references in 2008 agreement, and she mentioned the Student Association being party to that. I was the Executive Director, or the Executive Vice President, of the Student Association that signed on to the agreement in 2008. I'm very proud of having been part of that. I'm excited that we're continuing with the weekend service because we fought really hard for that. And we didn't start with that at the time. So, I'm happy to hear that.

Chairman Cahill 1:53:08

Yes. I remember Legislator Zimet fighting very, very hard to get that implemented back then. Yeah.

Chairman Cahill 1:53:17

Any other discussion? Okay. All in favor?

Committee Members 1:53:21

Aye.

Chairman Cahill 1:53:22

Anyone opposed? Okay. Thank you very much. Miss Ahmed. I appreciate you being patient and hanging around there for a couple hours while we went through all those other things.

Sajaa Ahmed 1:53:31

Thank you.

Chairman Cahill 1:53:35

All right, so we have Legislator Bartels, we have resolution 232. Are we going to postpone that? Is that yours? Right?

Legislator Bartels

Do you want to move it for discussion? And then I'll...

Chairman Cahill 1:53:49

Right. I'll take a motion to move it for discussion. Legislator Archer. Second, Delaune. Okay.

Legislator Bartels 1:53:56

Okay. So, I'm actually going to withdraw it. Sorry to have to move it for that. But I just want the moment to say that, I still think this is a really extremely important issue. It's just this method of addressing it, I don't think we have a legal pathway. So, I'm going to stay focused. I've spoken to Legislator Uchitelle at length about this. And hopefully, we'll come back to you with something that the county can actually do. So, I appreciate being able to talk about it at this committee and I'm grateful for your willingness to consider it. But upon legal advice and review, I think that this won't be a path we can take.

Chairman Cahill 1:54:39

So the resolution has been withdrawn. Okay, so, well then, thank you, Legislator, Bartels. We're going to move on then to the Resolution No. 379, which is confirming the appointment of Lisa Berger as the director of tourism and I think there's a director Burger still here. I don't know if she's paying attention, but she's still on the call.

Chairman Cahill 1:55:02

So, I'll accept the motion to confirm her as Director. There's Mary Beth. Anyone else have a second? Second? Okay. Thomas Corcoran. Any discussion on the appointment of Ms. Berger to Tourism Director? No. Okay.

I just want to say welcome back. Lisa, if you're still there. I remember you were there way back when I was here the first time and you did an excellent job. And I really look forward to working with you in the future. And from your presentation tonight, it looks like you've got a firm grasp on where you want the county to go, with exception of maybe the tourism guide. [Laughter] But other than that, I mean, that's a challenge. That's a challenge there again, well, it's a challenge, I believe, you know, I think that's just one of the challenges. Like, you know, Alan has an is, you know, it's one of the things that we're going to have to deal with in these tight budgets. And we have to take a real close look at some of these things.

So, anyway, any other discussion on Ms. Berger as Director of Tourism? Okay, so I'll accept any... all in favor?

Committee Members 1:56:10

Aye.

Chairman Cahill 1:56:12

Anyone opposed? Okay, thank you. And if Ms. Berger still on, congratulations, and welcome back aboard.

Resolution No. 380, which is Confirming Appointment Of Tim Weidemann As Director Of Economic Development. I don't see Tim here tonight. But those of us have worked with him, know that he's a very capable young man who has done a good job with the 2040 Program. And the few instances that I've had to deal with him, I've been very, very impressed with his thoroughness, and his mastery of the subject that we're talking about. And I just think that he's going to do a great job as a Director of Economic Development. And I think we're going to be seeing a lot of them in this committee in the coming months, especially with Tech City, I think we're going to be seeing a little bit more of him than he would like to see of us, I think.

But anyway, I'll accept a motion to confirm. Legislator Archer. Second by Legislator Maio. Any discussion? Okay, all in favor?

Committee Members 1:57:17

Aye.

Chairman Cahill 1:57:18

All opposed. Okay, great.

So 386 is the amending the 2020 Ulster County budget to adjust the annual salary of the Director of Tourism? I'll accept the motion for discussion. Is there a motion?

Legislator Corcoran 1:57:41

Motion.

Chairman Cahill 1:57:42

Thank you, Legislator Corcoran. Second? Legislator Maio. Okay. So, we have a motion and a second. Any discussion on this?

Chairman Cahill 1:57:53

Legislator Archer, then Legislator Maio.

Legislator Archer 1:57:55

We're fundamentally changing the position here and changing what had been in the budget in previous years for the head of tourism. At a time that we're going through the kind of changes we're going through, the challenges we're going to have from a budgetary perspective. And the fact that a significant portion of expenses, we can control are our, our salary based expenses. I unfortunately, I can't support this recommendation at this juncture.

I just think at this point in time, I don't understand why we're changing the salary of the head of tourism. And particularly, I will say, that, you know, there's some conversation and there's another resolution out there. I mean, it's separate from this, but you know, if we're really if we're really serious and we know we've got some challenges from budgetarily, you know, I just can't support this change at this juncture.

Chairman Cahill 1:59:01

Legislator Maio.

Legislator Maio 1:59:04

Same thing that Lynn said. I just can't do it at this point. This is too early in the game. I've been saying, no, all along to other stuff. And this is just a little out of whack right now. I just can't consciously say yes to this.

Chairman Cahill 1:59:20

Okay. Anyone else have anything they'd like to add before I throw in my two cents?

So, one thing that jumped out at me tonight in our discussions with the when the budget analysis went over for us, is that we have four out of five of our collective bargaining units don't have contracts right now. And so, that's the bulk of our employees in the county who are without a contract, without a raise. Some of them are going into their second consecutive year without anything, right. No, no schedule negotiations anything, right? So, with that, I just think good conscience can't see increasing the salary of one employee by that amount of money when we're not even considering, you know, 95% of our employees. When there's a situation like this, you know, that's just my opinion, I just can't, I wouldn't be able to put my head on the pillow at night saying, Okay, this is a justified increase at this point in time.

Mr. Remsnyder worked the job for 14 years at that salary, and he did a damn fine job, in my opinion, at that salary. And I know that there's a some effort to realign that department and add some responsibilities into

that department. But I really think that we should see how that works out and see if the responsibilities merit a salary increase down the road, rather than put the salary increase in there and then add the responsibilities afterward.

And plus, you know, again, I'll say it again, we have four of our five collective bargaining agreements that are expired right now. And that's something that we really need to address, you know.

Legislator Archer.

Legislator Archer 2:01:03

And just to add to that, Chairman Cahill, those four, they expired last December, we've got one coming up. The last one, of the five, is coming up this December. So, I think you're spot on.

Chairman Cahill 2:01:19

Any other discussion? Any other comments? Legislators first, Dr. Wright, then I'll get to you. Okay. Thank you. Any other legislators have anything? Okay. Dr. Wright go ahead.

Deputy Executive Wright 2:01:31

You know, I certainly respect the views that have been shared here. I just wanted to speak a little bit about our motivation. You know, this is coming at a time when our tourism businesses are probably the most stressed in the entire county, the ones that have been hit the hardest and taken the longest time to recover. And I really appreciate the good news we've gotten in the last few weeks about the uptake in September and October. But we know we have a really hard time ahead. And we really made the decision that we need to invest in our tourism businesses in a different way than we have before. And also to really bring together the activities of our departments of economic development, tourism and employment and training in a way that we haven't before. And we have just a tremendous opportunity to do that, with Lisa moving into that position, having now been in leadership in every single one of those departments.

And so, we really saw this summer, Lisa and Rick worked hard together to do webinars and technical assistance to those tourism businesses. She told you about the workforce development work that we have planned. We think this is really essential to make that industry more resilient. And we just think we have an excellent opportunity here. Tim and Lisa and Tomasine have already started mapping out a work program around bringing what, for now, is actually four separate databases that the three departments use to interact with Ulster County businesses together. Lisa mentioned, turning Salesforce into the engine for the website, which will eliminate two databases that the tourism department double enters data into right now. And so we really are adding substantial roles to that work, and much of it is roles that Lisa has already taken on in her leadership and those other departments. So, we have a fair amount of confidence in in what the three of them are going to be able to do together. So, I just submit that for your consideration as you weigh this. Thanks.

Chairman Cahill 2:03:48

Thank you, Dr. Wright. Any other comments or questions?

Chairman Cahill 2:03:53

Okay, so then I'm going to call the vote, all those in favor of Resolution 386, which is amending the budget to increase the salary of the director of tourism. And all those opposed.

Okay. And Abe, did you vote I'm sorry, I missed it.

Legislator Uchitelle 2:04:17

I did not vote. I abstained.

Chairman Cahill 2:04:18

You abstained.

Legislator Uchitelle 2:04:20

Yeah.

Fawn Tantillo 2:04:21

And can I for the record? Can I have a reason?

Chairman Cahill

Yeah.

Legislator Uchitelle 2:04:23

Oh, I don't know. I didn't realize I needed a reason. I did not... what I had hoped to do is do a little bit more comparison of the different salaries before I came in here. But I if I need a specific reason for abstaining, it was just for wanting to do more research, but...

Fawn Tantillo 2:04:43

I don't believe that's allowed. I think you're only allowed to abstain if you have a conflict, okay.

Legislator Uchitelle 2:04:50

Yeah. Okay. Then I'll vote opposing it.

Chairman Cahill 2:04:53

Thank you very much. Okay, so on to, I got to skip over those... so we're on to Resolution Number 395, which is: Reappointing Member And Alternate To The Ulster County Planning Board – Town Of Olive – Ulster County Planning Department. I'll accept the motion to move.

Legislator Corcoran 2:05:16

Motion.

Chairman Cahill 2:05:17

Legislator Corcoran. Second by Legislator Litts. All those in favor?

Committee Members 2:05:23

Aye.

Chairman Cahill 2:05:24

Opposed? Okay, thank you.

Resolution 399 which is: Amending the 2020 to 2025 Capital Improvement Program Establishing Capital Project 576, which is the Enterprise West, And Amending... I love that name... Enterprise West – Amending The 2020 Capital Fund Budget – Department Of Public Works.

Motion to move it, Legislator Maio. Second. Legislator Litts.

Okay, any discussion on that one?

Legislator Archer.

Legislator Archer 2:05:58

So, I have, you know, reviewed all the information that I've received from everyone. And I have to say that at this juncture, I feel this is way premature to spend this kind of money in this environment. I understand that you're trying to build and look at an opportunity. But, you know, in the last meeting we had around this, I had asked for some particulars on what we're spending. We're already making the school taxes whole.

Everything we're doing here, we started out with this proposal the first time back in June, and it was only going to be you know, \$200,00-\$300,000, and no more, to get the building up so we could sell it.

Now we have a whole proposal about, you know, what we're wanting to do with it, that it's more than just bringing it online. But now we're talking about another \$400,000. This is a money pit. And we aren't the government is not great at being landlords and out there trying to develop a property, we don't have the expertise for this. And it's a high risk game, as it is, development of a property like this is a high risk game. And we're risking taxpayer dollars on this.

And as much as I appreciate where you're trying to go. I think the Chairman, in the last meeting we're in, brought up a very good point. Why aren't we doing an RFQ to see if there's development interest out there. You have a list of tenants, you've got people expressing interest, you can hand off to a developer who is

willing to kind of move in that direction. But all the work that you will have done to get there. And we're not putting taxpayer money on the line for something that's a risky adventure.

So, it from that perspective, I cannot spend, I can't support in this juncture, when you're asking for all other tax stabilization, money, etc. This just does not make sense to me from a fiscal perspective, I just can't support this.

Chairman Cahill 2:08:21

Legislator Litts.

Legislator Litts 2:08:22

Yeah, I thought this first capital improvement project was to close in the building, so we can make it through the winter and protect our investment. And we need to be akin to, you know, shutting your furnace off during the winter. I don't know what that gains.

Chairman Cahill 2:08:45

I mean, I you know, I was through the site, and I noticed that all the sprinkler heads were off. They you know, from when they be commissioned to building, you know, and you have to have to put that building back together so, it's winterized. I know that that's a big portion of what this is. Tim, is that correct?

Tim Weidemann 2:09:04

That's correct.

Chairman Cahill 2:09:06

Yeah. So...

Legislator Archer 2:09:09

What... how to... so, excuse me, if I may, Chairman.

Chairman Cahill 2:09:12

Yeah. Sure. Go ahead. Sure.

Legislator Archer 2:09:14

Then help me to understand we went down this road back in June, it was only going to be to bring it online. It was only going to bring it... now all of a sudden, we've got \$400,000 along with [inaudible] to develop it, become renters, to look at... You know, I just feel like it keeps changing and shifting to suit whatever proposal you want to move forward with. And it... and again, at a time where we're strapped for cash. We have no clue yet what the State is going to impose on us with regards to cuts. We are all waiting for a stimulus package that is a big question mark. And we're out spending this money. I mean, we're going into 2021. And I don't think that if we continue spending this way that we're going to be able to maintain our workforce. So, I just feel like this is not prudent at this juncture. Thank you.

Chairman Cahill 2:10:21

Legislator, Bartels, and then Marc, we'll let you go. Okay.

Legislator Bartels 2:10:24

Thank you. I just want to ask a question for clarification. This, the dollar figures might be associated with winterizing, but this is a step establishing a Capital Project, that according to the resolution, is to redevelop the property as a hub for small scale manufacturing, and arts-related uses. That's what the resolution says. So, it is a, I mean, this is setting a larger goal than just winterization. Correct?

Chairman Cahill 2:10:55

Yeah, you were, but I just I know that winterization was part of that, you know, getting energized and winterized. I know that was part of it. Right. Yeah. There is a bigger picture. There's no question about that. I don't think you guys are disputing that, that there's, you know, setting it up for something down the road. Right. Yeah.

So, Marc, you were first and then Dr. Wright.

Deputy Executive Rider

Oh, I'll make way for Dr. Wright really quickly. But I just want to say that the original kind of tranche of money was really to get the utility infrastructure separated off of the other side of, of Tech City, and just very minimal key heating components, etc. up and running. And this is just the very next small step. And I'll let Dr. Wright talk more about that.

Deputy Executive Wright 2:11:51

Thanks, Marc. Yeah, just to answer Legislator Bartels question, that larger capital projects that you're referring to that was the big picture in response to the request, the very reasonable request, to say we don't want to keep getting these nickel and dime things, we want to see the big picture. So, that Capital Project to redevelop it is the big picture. But as we discussed, we're anticipating that this chunk is the, under the current plan, the last of the chunks that we would be coming to the county for. That, that it's going to be the responsibility of the Local Development Corporation to go out and seek funding for the rest of them. So, this this, this portion of it is as Legislator, Cahill said, the winterization, the getting the security system working again, it currently has about 100 faults that are that are flashing in it, and so, it's not usable. So, that needs to be repaired. So this is kind of the basics. You know, really to steward the building. And when we think about this expenditure, we've got to think about the cost of not doing anything and weigh it against it.

Chairman Cahill 2:13:06

Okay. Legislator Maio, because she hasn't gone yet. And then, Legislator Archer back to you. Okay.

Legislator Maio 2:13:12

Thank you. Yeah, I get it. Maybe the next step. But if you want me to write a check for this, I can't do it right now. I mean, just like I couldn't do it on the last resolution. I mean, \$20,000 here, \$400,000 here. I mean, you know, where's the budget? Where's the process? It's just, it's silly at this point. I just I, I can't. If there's a breakdown. I didn't see it, I'm sorry. But as of right now, tonight, I'm going to be a no on it.

Chairman Cahill 2:13:41

This was presented in the Capital Programs pitch, right. Between when we, when Ways & Mean and Public Works, correct. Yeah, I thought so. Yeah.

Legislator Maio 2:13:52

That's to be a big break down for \$400,000.

Chairman Cahill 2:13:56

Yeah, I think in that in that committee, it actually was, you know, I think, yeah, it's out there. I think on OneDrive. I don't know, Fawn, is it on the OneDrive, do you know, for Public Works.

Fawn Tantillo 2:14:07

It must be but I...

Chairman Cahill 2:14:09

Exactly where I don't know either.

Legislator Archer 2:14:13

We had asked for some additional cost breakdowns which I have not seen yet. And I go back to, if I may. Chairman, continue.

Chairman Cahill 2:14:23

Yeah. Sure.

Legislator Archer 2:14:24

I go back, I go back to what Marc gave us, back on June 11, on 2020. Alarm work, complete provided at no cost by Safeco. HVAC \$4,000 complete. Sprinklers, \$24,000 pending contract. Boiler restart, \$40,000, post electrical work, air handles and circulating loops. So, this is all part of that \$200K or \$343,500. Then you put in the \$60,000 reimbursement, which is only good if you're using the gas. Which means you got to get the building started. For a total cost of \$283K. We were told back then that's it. That's all we're spending right now, we're not going to be coming back for more. That was the whole point here.

And now you're coming back for \$400,000. We have no clue what the state cuts are. I believe in your plan, I believe what you want to try to accomplish, I just think that timing is the worst time in the world. And I've had this conversation with Tim and I, I'm sorry, Marc, and Evelyn, we've not had the conversation. But in, you know, when he and I were chatting about it, you know, looking at using next year, as a way of building the outreach into the municipalities around it, I get a kind of a look-see at where, where economic can grow in the entire county and focusing on that.

And we should have kept this building mothballed. We don't even know if it's a viable building for the next person who wants to buy it, where it's like you're investing in something that someone else may tear down. They may say, look, for us to bring the building up to what we want to do here, it's going to cost us a fortune.

So, we don't even know, we have an idea. And I think it's an interesting idea. But I don't think now is the time that we should be taking those kinds of risks. Given all the other things that are unknown in this environment. I really, as much as I would love to do this, and I really mean that. From a fiscal responsibility perspective, I can't do I can't put the taxpayers money at risk. Knowing that we're seeing surges of COVID all over the place. We're seeing our numbers tick up. I just think it's a very dicey proposition and not worth another dime of taxpayer money to do. So. Sorry, that's where I'm at.

Chairman Cahill 2:17:02

Newly appointed Director Weidemann

Tim Weidemann 2:17:05

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to say that I understand the hesitancy. I understand the concern. I mean, it would be surprising to me if people didn't have lots of questions about a \$400,000 commitment. But I just want to be clear here that the fact is, and you know, we can debate whether it was the right decision or not. But it's true, that this is now a county owned building and property. And that, that means there is a responsibility to ensure that this doesn't deteriorate. I can say that I am fully confident that there are uses for this building in the near future that represent positive economic development for our county. And I think it would be a shame if we didn't take this immediate step to move in that direction. I understand. It's an it's a commitment.

But I want to point out that the discussions about the longer term liability of owning this building and the costs associated with that, and whether those should be borne by a developer, or whether those should be borne by the local development corporation, are perfectly valid conversations that we should continue to have. But in the meantime, if we don't invest this amount of money to make sure that this building is maintained in a way that allows it for future use, I think we have to then at least consider the fact that the

alternative is to tear down the buildings or allow them to fall into disrepair, and then end up with, you know, with the challenges that that entails. So, I just want to make sure that that's clear. As you guys consider your decision here.

Chairman Cahill 2:18:36

Legislator Archer.

Legislator Archer 2:18:37

Oh, I and I appreciate that. But here, here's what I would say. So, what's different from June till now, when we were getting it up online, and we were doing it. So, what's changed? Now what's the \$400 attached to? And the building was mothballed. And, you know, it was, it was it was in a decent shape. And before we brought it all back online, and so, what changed from "Oh, this is all we're spending on it," to now you need another \$400,000?

Can you tell me, Marc? Because you were the one that gave us the numbers and told us, and I think we have it on tape, that this is this is all we're spending this year. Come on, I just want to understand that. No, disrespect.

Marc Rider 2:19:28

No. And I understand that. And I mean, I think that the plans for kind of the minimum occupancy and what we thought about as Bob Buser is going in and out of it a bunch of times and seeing, as Evelyn said, 100 faults. And once we got the systems up and running, we saw that we needed to spend a little bit more to ensure that it doesn't be deteriorating. But again, a bulk of that other costs was just getting the electric off. And then we spent a minimal amount on some of the systems.

Legislator Archer 2:20:13

That's, that was not how it was laid out, and I get things change. And but again, this goes back to when we were talking about this, then why didn't we bring engineers in to give us a full assessment before we start putting money into it? So, that's all I'm saying. You know, I'm, I think I've said my piece. So thank you for allowing me to do that.

Chairman Cahill 2:20:40

Thanks. So, any other comment on resolution number 399. Sorry, is that right, 399?

Legislator Litts 2:20:50

399 is correct.

Chairman Cahill 2:20:52

Yeah. Any other discussion?

Chairman Cahill 2:20:56

Okay, all those in favor?

Committee Members

Aye. (Cahill, Corcoran, Litts, Uchitelle)

Fawn Tantillo 2:21:04

Cahill, Corcoran, Uchitelle, so, four in favor.

Chairman Cahill 2:21:09

Okay. All opposed?

Fawn Tantillo 2:21:13

Delaune, Maio, Archer. It passes four to three.

Chairman Cahill 2:21:17

Okay. Thank you. Resolution Number 418, which is: Approving The Execution Of A Contract Amendment For \$42,714.00, Causing The Aggregate Contract Plus Amendment Amount To Be In Excess Of \$50,000.00 Entered Into By The County – Tyler Technologies, Inc., F/K/A New World Systems Corporation – Information Services. I'll accept the motion to move it.

Legislator Litts 2:21:46

Move.

Chairman Cahill 2:21:47

Legislator Litts. And Legislator Delaune, second. Any discussion? Okay, then all those in favor?

Committee Members 2:21:58

Aye.

Chairman Cahill 2:22:00

Opposed. Okay. Resolution 419 Approving The Execution Of A Contract For \$382,750.00 Entered Into By The County – Cubic Creative, Inc. D/B/A Belo + Company – Department Of Tourism. And this is the tourism contract that Director Berger spoke of earlier. I'll accept the motion to move in.

Delaune and Litts. Discussion? Legislator Archer, go ahead.

Legislator Archer 2:22:38

I'm sorry. I really, tonight I feel like a bit of a broken record.

Chairman Cahill 2:22:42

No. Well, you're not. It's something we should all be thinking about.

Legislator Archer 2:22:45

I would really, and it kind of goes into the resolution that I know we're going to get to but I just feel like I do agree. We need a new website. And we need to be you know, considering how we continue to advance tourism in the county. But I really feel like at these, these are nice to have, a nice to spend money. I'm not sure it's a need to have at this juncture.

Given again, what we're going into, I feel a bit of a broken record. But you know, there's a lot of spending in this budget, even for next year. And it gives me great concern that we're not having conversations, and potentially, what if conversations. Because the only thing we can control, our expenses. Now I realized that some of this is half of it is covered by I live in New York. But I would say this to me, what did we spend doing this last year? I think about the same money. Can somebody tell me what we spent on this last year?

Chairman Cahill 2:24:01

I certainly can't.

Legislator Archer 2:24:03

Pardon me?

Deputy Executive Wright 2:24:04

It was approximately the same. I don't have the numbers in front of me. But this is a this is an annual contract that we do for our tourism, promotion and marketing.

Legislator Archer 2:24:12

And we have, and now we have more information coming into this year than we had when we proved this last go around. We've had COVID. We've had some things we've had to retrench. Now, we know we're going to potentially have some ongoing issues with COVID.

Again, I you know, do we... it's a nice to spend, but do we need to spend, right now? And I and that's kind of where I'm at? I would, I would, you know, I'd like to wait at least to get into January. The fact that we're kind of doing this now. It gives me a little bit of pause. And I know it's probably teed up to all kinds of things that need to happen, but I we have no idea what the state is going to cut. We're proposing to spend another \$400,000, I just... I'm sorry, I can't do it.

Chairman Cahill 2:25:07

Legislator Maio, then Legislator Delaune.

Legislator Maio 2:25:11

Basically what Lynn said, the same view, again, I'd like to get into the first quarter. Even of 2021 and see where we're at. I understand it's important. But so is everything else that's tied to the budget, and we have to

be a little creative. We have to start cutting somewhere, and everywhere, probably, eventually. I'll be a no tonight. Thank you.

Chairman Cahill 2:25:47

Legislator Delaune. I'm sorry.

Legislator Delaune 2:25:49

Oh, that's, that's quite okay. I guess for me, you know, in the past, we always had the opportunity to meet with and kind of get a feel for what the approach was going to be. And I think that was very beneficial for this committee. And I'm disappointed that that's not happening this year.

Chairman Cahill 2:26:14

So, a couple... Legislator Uchitelle, and I'll go ahead.

Legislator Uchitelle 2:26:18

I just want to build on Legislator Delaune, His comment. You know, my having come from this industry, you know, I'm looking at the contract, and I'm seeing things like alright, how can website maintenance appear in a bunch of different spots that, you know, maybe it's, we're getting charged twice for the same thing. And, you know, do we need this component here, and wait, they're getting a dig on the ad spend. And so, I am like inclined to pick it apart, which is what we would do, to Legislator Delaune's point, in that conversation. So I agree.

However, on the whole, I know that we have a very critical tourism and lodging industry here that's really counting on us to make a commitment to them. And I just couldn't see us wholesale not supporting that effort by holding this contract back.

Chairman Cahill 2:27:07

Yeah. Legislator, Litts. And then then I'm going to go. Okay.

Legislator Litts

Well, it's the third largest revenue generator for this county. Yeah, I know about COVID. And I know that, you know, there are budget constraints, and probably the worst thing you want to do is decrease our revenue in this time.

Chairman Cahill 2:27:30

Yeah. So, you know, my concern is, you know, that we haven't seen all of the numbers yet from... I think, Director Berger said, we only have second quarter numbers. And when we see the third quarter number, she said, she thinks that they're going to be robust, and they're going to be better than the second quarter, I think, is how she portrayed that to us. And, you know, for me, I would feel much more comfortable knowing what we're looking at, because that, to me, I think the third quarter number is going to be much more accurate as to what we're going to see in 2021, than the first and second quarter numbers of 2020.

Because people have adjusted to COVID, people have adjusted their lifestyles. And I do agree, 100%, that people who can get in their car and drive somewhere for a day and stay in a little boutique hotel, or a bed and breakfast, or one of the local hotels, and go pick apples or go on the rail trail or, you know, just walk around the small towns in the area. I absolutely believe that that's happening. I'm out and about, and I see it. And I think that, you know, in some instances, you can be penny wise and pound foolish, and I think not supporting the tourism department would, in this instance, in this environment, especially, and I know that there's financial restraints, but as far as, you know, the third largest revenue generator in the county, that jumps out at me, and I just don't know how you cut the legs out from under that, you know, they just don't know.

Legislator Litts and then Legislator Archer.

Legislator Litts 2:29:09

Well, I mean, just to build upon what you said, people are coming, they're going to the boutiques, they're going to the spas, they're going to pick apples. And then they come back and they say, you know, I don't want to live in New York City anymore. I want to move Upstate. So, they're going to go to where they know. And look at the number of businesses and individuals that have moved out of New York City and moved into Ulster County. Ulster County is the quickest, largest growing population in the state, if not the Northeast. Ulster County is because people are exiting New York City and they're coming up here to live. And I believe that's because in the past, our Tourism Bureau has put forth the best foot for Ulster County. And to take the third largest revenue generator and then turn off the switch. I don't... I think that's going to hurt us a lot.

Chairman Cahill 2:30:19

Legislator Archer then let's... well, actually, Legislator Corcoran, you haven't spoken yet. Go ahead. Yeah.

Legislator Corcoran 2:30:23

So, I just want to say, I understand all the points being made tonight. Just as Legislator Litts just said, I mean, I see the booming building going on here in Ulster County, as a building inspector here. And, and just going right back and to repeat what everybody else is saying, it's a third largest revenue source. And I know we depend on it, usually, in Marlborough. So, I'm going to be yes.

Chairman Cahill 2:30:47

Legislator Archer.

Legislator Archer 2:30:49

Oh, what? What I would hope is that, as Legislator Delaune said, why haven't they come before us and kind of walked us through what it is they're proposing. So, fine, we have, we have, today, we have no idea what

the cuts are to us. We're being asked to propose, to move forward on a contract, that we will have some obligations going into next year. What's another month? Let them come, let them present to us. Let them tell us what they're looking to do. Let's at least have some questions. And who knows, perhaps by then, we'll have an understanding of what the content implications are to this year, and potentially looking at where we're going into next year.

We're being asked to do this. And at the same time, we're looking at next year's budget. I'm not saying, I agree with you, I think it's important, I think economic development is important. But I also am concerned about the taxpayer. Would the taxpayer feel that's a good investment when they can pay their taxes here. Or when we have to raise taxes because we have... our general fund is depleted. I just feel like, you know, we're rushing to make some decisions. All be it important ones to the county to our initiatives, and I just feel like it, we really need to just take a breath, take a step. Let's do as proposed and see if we can move forward.

Chairman Cahill 2:32:23

I'm going to recognize myself. So, one of the things that was also brought to my... that I wasn't aware of until today, was it's not only the third largest revenue generator, it's also a third largest employer. Right? So, I mean, how do we... I just don't know how we ignore that. Because, as Legislator Archer said, how would the taxpayers feel if they knew we were spending this kind of money on tourism? Well, if it meant that, you know, some of the third largest employers were going to be losing their jobs, I think they'd be pissed that we didn't spend this money on tourism. That's my opinion.

Because, you know, we know there are a lot of communities depend on tourism, and they depend on tourists related activities from one end of this county to the other. Right? And so, to me, I just, I know, it's tough, right? But I think, okay, so I look at what I asked it, you know, IS cut to the bone there? Right? And so, there are sacrifices that have to be made in some places. So, we can do things like this. So, we can, you know, make sure that our tourism industry which is the third largest revenue generator, and the third largest employer in the county, doesn't fold up and go away.

I'm concerned that we're not spending more money on the on the travel guide, quite honestly. You know, I'm more concerned with that then supporting this contract with Belo, quite honestly. As far as the overall economy goes, your overall economic development of the county, right?

Legislator Corcoran.

Legislator Corcoran 2:33:51

So, again, I wasn't here last year, but obviously they're not asking for any more money. And I think they've got a lot of work ahead of them this year coming out of pandemic to bring these people back. So, I think they're going to be working twice as hard to bring these people back to the community and to do what they're doing. So, with no more being asked, again, I'm good with it and but I'd be on board with the with the brochure myself, too.

Chairman Cahill 2:34:14

Okay, thank you. I think Legislator Bartels, and then I think Dr. Wright you had your hand up? Yeah. Okay, so Legislator Bartels.

Legislator Bartels 2:34:21

I was just wondering and following on Legislator Archers, comment and suggestion. Is it possible to get Belo to come and make a presentation. Because in reading the Schedule A of this contract, it sounds I didn't have to be honest. I didn't compare it exactly to last year's contract, but the schedule A, I don't see a great distinction. You know, it's talking about brochures and...

Chairman Cahill 2:34:49

You and I discussed this.

Legislator Bartels 2:34:51

It seems like a standardized contract.

Chairman Cahill 2:34:54

There's nothing in there to say, because of COVID... right? And I think that that's a very good point. And so I will request that, no matter what happens with this resolution tonight, that we do, you know, get them in there, if it's postponed or whether we pass it or whatever. I would definitely want to hear what they're doing differently based on COVID versus previous years. Because how many years have we had this contract, Marc? Do you know? Anybody know, I know, they said they they've used...

Deputy Executive Rider 2:35:21

Third or fourth.

Chairman Cahill 2:35:23

Yeah. Right. So, I would definitely like to see, you know, the adjustment safe made to adjust to the new algorithm? Yeah.

Legislator Archer 2:35:33

Then I would propose that we....

Chairman Cahill 2:35:34

Hold on a second, Legislator Delaune.

Legislator Archer 2:35:36

Sorry.

Chairman Cahill 2:35:36

Sorry.

Legislator Delaune 2:35:37

I just wanted to make sure that everyone knows that I'm very much in favor of tourism. I guess for me, I think back to many years ago, and watching a presentation. And there seemed to be a real emphasis on golf. And it didn't seem to me like that made a lot of sense, then, you know, for a dying, dying sport. No offense to you. That's a fact. And so, I don't know what this contract about is about and where the emphasis is. And, again, it would be nice to know, for us to spend this much money, to be asked to spend this much money. Tell us what you're going to do. And things are different. They're different for the last three or four years.

Chairman Cahill 2:36:24

Yeah.

Legislator Litts 2:36:25

That's really the way Jim's golf is...

Chairman Cahill 2:36:28

I just want to let that...

Legislator Litts 2:36:30

...is flourishing.

Chairman Cahill 2:36:36

Greens, they're packed every single day.

Legislator Delaune 2:36:38

You're right, they are.

Chairman Cahill 2:36:40

Well, you got to remember what Rick Remsnyder did before he worked for the county right? He was at Golf Digest.

So, Dr. Wright and then I think Tracey had your hand up, I just want to... Dr. Wright has been waiting quite a while. So, go ahead.

Deputy Executive Wright 2:36:55

Thanks, Legislator Cahill, I just wanted to reply to the dismayed that they're not here, I apologize. It didn't even occur to me to invite them on. But I'm sure they would be glad to speak with this committee. I just want to make sure everybody, I think you all know, they are the same firm that we've been working with before. They've changed their name in the meanwhile, they were Cubic, they're now Belo.

But, you know, we really took a hard look at all 14 of the firms that applied and really came to the conclusion that they were the ones that the work.. that they have been doing. You know, they're the developers of the "Seek for Yourself" brand. They develop all of our, you know, marketing collateral and do the ad placement for us. That's the bulk of this contract. And that's why Schedule A looks the same as last time Schedule A. Because it is the same kind of framework, contract, and then the content within it and the emphasis changes year by year. This year, the emphasis on the redevelopment of the website, for example.

But you know, the members of the Tourism Advisory Board, who were on the RFP committee, were particularly insistent in their recommendation that we stick with the same team. That they're really, really pleased with their work and wanted to see us stick with them going forward. Sure, we can arrange to get them to come and you can hear more from them. But given the continuity, it just didn't occur to me.

Chairman Cahill 2:38:23

Legislator Bartels.

Legislator Bartels 2:38:27

The contract takes effect in January of 2021. So, is there any harm in holding a month to have them come to next month's committee meeting?

Deputy Executive Wright 2:38:38

You know, that just gives us, the certainty that it's in place by January 1 and the ability to go ahead without any interruption, as well as to begin discussing the work plan for next year with them. We want to we get those discussions on the website going as soon as we can now that m IS is freed up from its election duties, because they're a part of that work as well.

Legislator Bartels 2:39:01

But in theory, wouldn't that happen if it passed? It's December?

Chairman Cahill 2:39:05

Well, well, here's the thing I say is, is there anybody that's not going to support, you know, funding this company, you know, that they went pretty RFP and this is the one they picked? Is there? I mean, are we not going to support tourism and their advertising budget? I mean, come on. We are, right?

Legislator Delaune 2:39:24

Yeah, absolutely.

Chairman Cahill 2:39:25

Right. So, I mean, I think that my opinion is, I'm all for getting them here. And I'll block out an hour in the next meeting for them, or I'll call a special meeting, even if they'd like. But I think that we should, you know, my opinion, anyway, is that, you know, we move it along. So, so the plans that the tourism department has

can be put in place and they can start moving forward there. I mean, if that make plans, you know, that include is and some of the other things, you know.

Legislator Maio.

Legislator Maio 2:39:56

I'm good with that, and I appreciate your phrase, you know, penny smart, but pound foolish. And that's not what it's about. I just want to question everything we're doing is we don't know what next year looks like.

Chairman Cahill 2:40:09

I agree.

Legislator Maio 2:40:10

And I love tourism. I talk about it all the time. And I'm, I said it even last year, I think when we were doing this contract. and I think we did it late last year, so it is possible, still put it in place, just making comment. But I would be good with at least having a talk next month if that if we can set that up.

Chairman Cahill 2:40:18

So, Delaune, go ahead

Legislator Delaune 2:40:30

I'd like to make a motion to postpone it. And I'm fine with a special meeting. If that works for this group. I'm willing to do that. But I'd like to be I'd like to see a unified vote here on this contract.

Legislator Archer 2:40:46

I'll second the postponement.

Chairman Cahill 2:40:49

Any discussion on the postponement?

Legislator Litts 2:40:51

Yeah, I have discussion.

Chairman Cahill 2:40:53

Okay, go ahead.

Legislator Litts

If we postpone it until next month, that puts it like the week before Christmas, if it passes, and then you need to get the contract done before the end of the year. So. I don't know, are they going to work on Christmas. I don't... I don't know. It just seems like an awful short period of time to put together a contract before the first year.

Legislator Delaune 2:41:21

Is it possible to have a special meeting in two weeks, next week? Tomorrow?

Fawn Tantillo 2:41:26

We have budget meetings.

Chairman Cahill

Yeah.

Fawn Tantillo 2:41:29

Every day next week, unless you guys want to meet during the day. And then the following week, we're like, I think where are we into Thanksgiving? I have to look at a calendar.

Legislator Litts 2:41:31

Well, the following week is session. If we don't vote on it in session, it's going to December.

Chairman Cahill 2:41:48

Yeah. Deputy Rider you had your hand up there.

Deputy Executive Rider 2:41:53

I don't know if this is possible. But maybe since this is a zoom meeting. I don't know if this this company could come to Ways and Means Committee. I think it goes there next, and give a presentation. Or, again just to get it passed this month in session. As Legislator Litts said, there's a lot of work that has to be done to turn around this contract and get it fully executed by January 1.

Chairman Cahill 2:42:29

Is there any other discussion on the postponement? Okay, all those in favor of postponing it one month? (Delaune, Archer, Maio)

Chairman Cahill 2:42:39

Opposed? (Cahill, Corcoran, Uchitelle, Litts)

Legislator Maio 2:42:43

I'm opposed.

Chairman Cahill 2:42:44

Opposed.

Legislator Maio 2:42:44

I'm willing to try to move it along and get on the same page. Sorry.

Chairman Cahill 2:42:48

Okay. Okay.

Chairman Cahill 2:42:51

Do you have a vote, Fawn.

Fawn Tantillo 2:42:53

The vote is two to five. So it fails.

Chairman Cahill 2:42:59

All right. Any further discussion on the resolution unamended, Legislator Archer,

Legislator Archer 2:43:07

You know, I get the contract. But here's what I would say, that the County Attorney knows how to get a contract done when he needs to get it done quickly. It doesn't mean you can't keep moving forward, does it mean the contract can't be worked on? While we have the opportunity to hear what they're proposing for the kind of money we're looking to spend here. Who knows, we may even have more insight into what our cuts will be, etc. I just am... I'm a little puzzled why we're rushing. And I get it. I agree. I think tourism is important, but not to give everybody a good understanding of what we're paying what we're paying for. And at the same time, and we know that County Attorney has done this in the past that they've been in the midst of writing the contract pending a review. I just feel it's unfortunate that we're not going to have the opportunity to really understand what what's in this contract.

Chairman Cahill 2:44:11

So, I think Legislator Litts, Okay.

Legislator Litts

Well, what I would make as a suggestion is we call the question tonight, and if it makes it out of committee, they can make a presentation to us between now and Legislative Session, and then we'll all vote on it at Session, based upon our feeling on the question and their presentation.

Chairman Cahill 2:44:39

So, this resolution has to go to Ways and Means, as well. Is that correct? Okay, so then Legislator Archer, would you be opposed to having a presentation at your meeting?

Legislator Archer 2:44:50

And we will, I think it's we've got a very robust meeting. It's going to be tough. So, I think you know, once again, let's kick it to Ways and Means and let them be the decision maker... it's unfortunate, I'm not sure that... we have a pretty full schedule with the budget right now, to take on another presentation. Let's have a special meeting before we vote on it.

Chairman Cahill 2:45:16

Legislator Uchitelle.

Legislator Uchitelle 2:45:18

Yeah, I would just the, you know, I completely agree that we should hear from the firm, and we should talk to them and understand it better. The, and if it could have been before us a month earlier, or if that could have happened already. I agree that that would have been better. But the situation that we're in now, you know, to hold up voting for it, whether in this committee or another, or in session, would be to imply that the content of that meeting will change the way that we vote on it, or potentially change the way that the contract is written. You know, so if we, let's say something comes up in that meeting, and we're like, oh, we'd really like to see, you know, you, maybe you could change this to here or change that to there. That then is another period of time. It's just I don't see it realistically happening. I don't I don't see this working without us voting for it in the November session in both committees. And I'm not saying kick it to Ways and Means. I think it should be supported here. And there.

Chairman Cahill 2:46:19

You know, the only thing I'm going to say is that, this is not... we're not... this firm isn't strangers to the county, this will be the fourth year that the county has worked with them. Their work product is evident. And I'm pretty sure that if, you know, Director Berger requested that they make some adjustments to their methods for advertising and other things that they delivered to the county to adjust for COVID, I'm sure they would do it. I mean, you know, they're loyal, loyal vendor to the county at this point, you know, and I think that it's important that we understand that we do have a relationship with them as well. Right?

So, hold on, we got I got a bunch of hands at once here, I think.

Chairman Cahill 2:47:03

Legislator Maio, then Bartels, Litts and then Archer. No you're good? Okay, so Bartels Litts, and then Archer.

Legislator Bartels 2:47:11

Well, I just want to say that, you know, it is a little concerning to me that this contract appears to be potentially exactly the same as the last contract and doesn't actually reflect the things that were represented that they were going to do. It doesn't talk about website redesign. It talks about three brochures that are going to be distributed across the county. Updating Ulster County Alive. So, we ought to have a contract that actually reflects the goals of the department and the plan that they're actually going to do. So, I don't know if this is just a regurgitation of last year's contract or not. But that should certainly be fixed.

Chairman Cahill 2:47:51

I thought that Legislator Berger was clear in saying that they were not going to rebuild the website. I thought that she said that. I mean, I thought she did say that. Did she say that? One of you guys, that might know. I don't know.

Legislator Archer 2:48:05

I think what she said was, if I could, that she that the development of the online guide was not in this contract.

Chairman Cahill

Right.

Legislator Archer

I think that's what she meant? I think that's...

Legislator Bartels 2:48:19

She absolutely did say there was an update to the website.

Legislator Archer 2:48:22

There is an update to the website in the contract.

Chairman Cahill 2:48:25

Okay. So, we had Legislator Litts.

Legislator Litts 2:48:31

I'm next.

Chairman Cahill 2:48:32

Yes, sir.

Legislator Litts 2:48:33

I'd like to call the question.

Chairman Cahill 2:48:36

Okay. So then I had a couple people and...

Legislator Litts 2:48:38

I was going to... Well, let me make a comment.

Chairman Cahill 2:48:40

Okay.

Legislator Litts

In every county contract, if we don't like what they're doing, are we and they won't. 30 days.

Chairman Cahill 2:48:49

Right.

Legislator Litts 2:48:50

End the contract. We have a termination clause and every contract the county writes. So, if they're not doing what we think they want them to do, they're done. We'll get another one. I you know, this is a company we work with three other years before. They've been very respondent to our needs and our own our quest. This is not somebody new that we don't know. And I think they'll bend over backwards to provide us with whatever we need to increase our tourism in the county. I would just like to vote tonight, and if we don't like to what they're doing in the end of January, terminate the contract.

Chairman Cahill 2:49:38

Okay, Legislator Archer, and then I...

Legislator Archer 2:49:40

I think that's a bad idea, Legislator Litts. As long as we have a commitment that at the next Economic Development meeting, they will be here presenting what they're proposing for 2021.

Chairman Cahill 2:49:52

And so, I think Dr. Wright has to answer that question.

Deputy Executive Wright 2:49:56

I'm sure we can arrange that.

Chairman Cahill 2:49:58

Okay.

Legislator Litts 2:50:00

Rick Remsnyder used to bring them there every quarter to report to us. I don't see that changing.

Chairman Cahill 2:50:08

Yeah. So, I think, you know, I think the whole COVID threw a monkey wrench into, you know, the industry is on their ear right now, you know, we all know that. And they're trying to bounce back and they're trying to become innovative, and they're trying to do things to change, change things around. So, you know, I think they're going to get their sea legs back pretty soon. You know, from what I see traveling around. They certainly are. Tourism is coming right back. It's as strong as I've ever seen at this time of year, really.

Legislator Litts 2:50:35

We are this fastest growing county in the northeast, so somebody's got to be doing something. Right.

Chairman Cahills 2:50:41

Okay, so, Legislator Archer, and I think we're going to call the vote.

Legislator Archer 2:50:44

Yes. All I want to just make clear, is that if in fact, there is something we're concerned about, we've already approved it. And so, unless we get an agreement with the Exec's administration, that if there's something that's of concern, or the contract would have to be modified, or something pops up, and we realized that the kind of money that we want to spend, maybe we won't do everything, maybe we'll just focus on the website... at least there is an opportunity that we can have that conversation. Should we have more information at that point in time. Then we can do that I can live with moving it here, and go from there.

Chairman Cahill 2:50:44

Yeah, well, I think, you know, I think we're going to we'll call them in and have a discussion with them. And, and we'll take it from there. And the next meeting, there'll be on the agenda.

Chairman Cahill 2:51:37

Legislator Delaune.

Legislator Delaune 2:51:38

I'll make a motion.

Chairman Cahill 2:51:40

Okay, a second.

Legislator Litts 2:51:42

I'll second.

Chairman Cahill 2:51:43

Okay. All those in favor?

Committee Members 2:51:45

Aye.

Chairman Cahill 2:51:50

Opposed? Is there any opposed? Okay. Okay, good.

Okay, so then we're going on to the last resolution of the night, which is resolution 428, which was submitted by Legislator Bartels, and it's: Setting A Public Hearing On Proposed Local Law No. 16 Of 2020, A Local Law Amending The Ulster County Charter And Ulster County Administrative Code By Deleting Article XXXIX From Each (Department Of Tourism), And Amending The Ulster County Charter And Ulster County Administrative Code With Respect To Article XVII (Department Of Economic Development), To Be Held On Tuesday, December 8, 2020 At 6:05 PM.

Is there a motion to move this?

Legislator Archer 2:52:50

Move for discussion.

Chairman Cahill 2:52:51

Is there a second? A second from Legislator Maio.

Okay, so discussion, Legislator Bartels, I'm going to request that the folks on the committee have an opportunity to speak first. And then because we they were provided this resolution and I sent an email out asking them to take some time to review and to call if they had any questions. Go ahead, go ahead. Nobody's has their hand up anyway. Okay. I just like the opportunity, despite the fact that I'm feeling concerned, considerably less articulate at this point to warn you down. You wait a minute, I didn't think that was possible.

Legislator Bartels 2:53:30

A little bit of the background, and in my thinking on this, and a little bit of, you know, the history in a suit. So, this is something that I've been thinking about for a long time, that I brought up in our caucus on repeated occasions over the years, and was actually a part of the discussion related to the creation of the Department of Economic Development.

I want to begin by saying that I really think that this is the way we should move. And that I think of this as elevating the priority of tourism, by putting it as a component of economic development. If you, if you look at the tourism, and it's too late now to get into all the details are to recite to you. But if you look at your budget book on online, under the Department of Tourism, even in the 2021 proposed budget, we're still operating on this relic of an idea. And I'm not saying we're operating in practice, it just on paper, we're still operating in this relic of idea of tourism, as a marketing component to attract these tourists dollars that are a key component of our sales tax revenue.

But tourism is so much more than that. And I am speaking to the choir when I speak to this committee and to those from the Executive's Office, who are present. Tourism is so much more than that. It doesn't just drive it, doesn't just drive visitors dollars, it's a way of attracting new businesses. It's a way of bolstering existing businesses, not just a tourist spend. It's a way of identifying quality of life problems. And I believe that the right place for this department is not as a separate silo, not as its own department.

But just like in New York State under ESD. There is a Division of Tourism. And what I'm proposing is a lateral move for tourism. I'm not proposing, even though that's not in this before us right now, I'm not proposing budgetary changes, I'm not proposing cuts, I'm not proposing removing personnel. I am talking about giving the Director of Tourism a Deputy title under the Director of Economic Development, but an added title of Director Division of Tourism, of maintaining those budgets separately, similar as we do with Real Property. And then of allowing the Director of Economic Development, the latitude to take the time to evaluate efficiencies, that I think are naturally happening anyway, that are a part of all these discussions that we're having on a regular basis, and I think are functionally naturally happening within this Executive Department.

I've spoken to many of you already. I spoke to the Executive about this some time ago. And I understand that the Executive's Department now would like a little time with this. And wherever this goes, right now, I would like to continue this conversation, because again, I'm committed to the belief that this is the right way to go, with this future division under the Department of Economic Development. And I believe it bolsters both, I just I think it's a natural, it's a natural progression. And in a smart, on a smart right sizing, I think it's this, I think it's the right thing to do. So, thank you.

Chairman Cahill 2:57:06

Thank you, Legislator Bartels. Does anyone have any other comments that they'd like to make at this time?

I'll just had that I had conversation with both Tim and Evelyn on this, and I don't disagree with what Tracy is talking about here. I think that we have to really look at that and, you know, put an emphasis on tourism. And as an economic development engine, I think we kind of, you know, talked about that earlier with the previous resolution, where we understand that it is an economic driver in the county, and there is importance to it. And it should be, you know, on equal footing with economic development in part of every discussion. Right?

And I agree, and I just think that, as I put in my email to you, folks on the committee, and I think, Tracey, you got it as well, you know, that I think that as the folks who are going to have to, you know, work on the organization of that, and also then administer that change, I think that they should be part of the conversation and, you know, with the legislature, as a partner, to see how we can do this moving forward. So, it's something that we all are comfortable with. Something that we all agree on, and something that will be beneficial, inevitably, to the economic development and tourism industries in the in the county, right?

You know, for that reason, I'm going to recommend that we postpone this a month. And then Legislator Bartels, you know, we'll figure out a way where we can get in some, you know, some deeper discussion with Mr. Weidemann and Ms. Berger. And I guess, Dr. Wright, maybe even Pat himself, you know, on how, how we want to address this, right?

Because I don't think that anybody disputes that economic development and tourism go hand in hand, they do. And so, I think that we just want to make sure that we're, it's a pretty drastic change. And there's going to be some ramifications within the industry when this happens there. You know, those folks, if you, you know, you talk about...you know, I'm sitting here thinking, you know, we didn't discuss this during the presentation from the budget analysts about a bed tax, or, you know, those guys would be, you know, they stormed the building again, like they did last time, right? And so, when we talk about doing things like this, you know, we have to consider, you know, the folks are in that industry, and how it will impact them.

So, I think, you know, for that reason, I'm going to request that we postpone this a month, have an opportunity to talk to some more stakeholders on this. And then, you know, we'll revisit it, you know, next month or in January or whenever we're done discussing it.

You got to unmute there, Herb.

Legislator Litts 2:59:49

Did you put that in the form of a motion?

Chairman Cahill 2:59:51

I will make a motion that we postpone this for one month, pending further discussion with the Executive's Office and the Departments of Economic Development and Tourism.

Legislator Litts 3:00:01

Well, then I'll second that motion.

Chairman Cahill 3:00:05

Any discussion on that postponement? Okay, all those in favor?

Committee Members 3:00:11

Aye.

Chairman Cahill 3:00:13

All those opposed? Okay. And thank you very much. Tracey. It's a 10 o'clock. And I know you haven't... and you got to get up early, you know, and I know those of you guys that have children; this has been a long day. We've been at meetings for four and a half hours now here.

Legislator Litts

Oh, yeah.

Chairman Cahill

And we covered a lot tonight in this committee. And I think we really did a good job, we got a lot of information. And if we also put in, it'll be a miracle, because there was a lot there. But I just want to say

thank you very much for your patience on such a long meeting. And it's an important time of the year for us. We all know that. There's a lot of stress involved with the budget, and a lot of, you know, discussions that have to be had. And you know, I don't want anybody to think that we don't appreciate, I don't appreciate that input, because I do. It does help me with my future decisions every time, and I consider them. And I just want to say thank you to everybody who was here tonight and hung out there and did all this work. Thanks. Legislator Litts.

Legislator Litts 3:01:14

Having said that, my dinner has been cold, stone cold, for hours. I'll make a motion for an adjournment.

Chairman Cahill 3:01:24

Okay.

Legislator Delaune 3:01:25

I would like to spend some more time with you people.

Committee Members 3:01:32

[Laughter]

Chairman Cahill 3:01:32

Right. All right. Second? Okay, second, all those in favor? Aye. Okay, thanks again, everybody. I appreciate it.