

OTSEGO NOW  
REORGANIZATION COMMITTEE

March 20, 2017  
Meeting Minutes

CALL TO ORDER

The Otsego Now Reorganization Committee meeting was called to order at 8:00 a.m. at the Otsego Now offices located at 189 Main Street, Suite 500, Oneonta, NY. Members present were Cheryl Robinson, Craig Gelbsman, Jeff Lord, Sarah Harvey, Rick Hulse and Devin Morgan (who joined at 8:10 a.m.); special guest Senator Jim Seward (who departed at 9:15 a.m.); and staff Elizabeth Horvath.

**Senator Seward Insight & Vision**

To begin the meeting, Senator Seward welcomed the new Board members, then shared some of the history of the development of Otsego Now (with a key vision creating a single point of contact for Economic Development in the County), as well as provided some insights as to transitioning to a full-time CEO.

Key Insights:

- He supports the team's desire to bring in a full-time CEO and believes a full-time CEO will be important to achieving Otsego Now's long-term vision.
- He encouraged the committee to consider the timing of such a move, and the transition period, as there are key projects underway such as the Oneonta DRI, the Schenevus site, addressing the power issues, and workforce. Further, he mentioned the importance of the CFA process, which usually begins over the summer, and decisions for funding take place in December.
- The group discussed the need for private funds to support the organization, at least in part, for sustainability.
- Some key characteristics to look for in a CEO from his perspective include:
  - Good roster of contacts
  - Experience in economic development deals
  - Aptitude for the political landscape and climate (both state and federal level)
  - Understanding of compliance and regulations IDAs operate under
  - Knowledge of the "local terrain"
  - Bridge builder
- While he does not have a job creation number of success in mind for 3-5 years, he sees success in that time frame including:
  - Completion of key projects
  - Pony Farm and Railyards occupied/" full"
  - Otsego Now has become the single point of contact for economic development needs in Otsego County

Senator Seward would like to remain in contact with the committee as progress is made and offers support or assistance wherever he can.

### **Economic Development Gap Analysis**

What prevents us from being the single point of contact? Groups we don't currently serve or serve thoroughly, initiatives that we don't or only partially engage in:

- Small business
- Start-ups/entrepreneurs/innovation
- Main Street revitalization
- Workforce
- Infrastructure
- Housing

The gap analysis spreadsheet will help us better understand how we achieve the goal of serving as the economic development “hub” for the County (either doing the activity ourselves, or partnering with those who do it and helping them raise their performance) and how to best create a plan to collaborate with key organizations to facilitate ED activity.

### **Internal Structure/Skills Resourcing**

Some thoughts were mentioned regarding the internal structure and skills, but a review of the expenses was tabled until the next meeting. It was generally agreed that the CEO role will focus on building relationships, building the organization, and creating an overall vision. The CEO role will NOT be the “boots on the ground” deal maker. The additional roles needed to pivot off that still need to be determined and most likely will be determined by the new CEO.

### **Search & Interview Process**

There is not yet consensus on the search and/or interview process. This will be a key topic at the next meeting.

### **NEXT STEPS:**

- EAH to add Housing to list of economic development activities
- EAH to refine the matrix of economic development activities, identifying levels of practice/capabilities of the organizations engaged in each activity [1 – say they do it or aspire to do it, 3 – do it with relative completeness, 5 – nailed it and completely service the activity].
- EAH to create mini-RFP to use to solicit proposals and general pricing from recruiters who operate in the economic development realm; CR to edit & review; EAH to obtain leads from her network and begin gathering data.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 10:15 a.m.