

MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Wednesday, July 22, 2020 – 10:00 AM
State Office Building – Conference Room 100, 1st Floor
Zoom Conference Call/Teleconference
317 Washington Street, Watertown, New York

The Development Authority of the North Country Board of Directors met in regular session at the State Office Building, Authority Conference Room 4th Floor, 317 Washington Street, Watertown, New York on Wednesday, July 22, 2020 at 10:00 am.

Members Present

Voting

Frederick Carter, Chairman
Margaret Murry
Thomas Hefferon
Dennis Mastascusa
Alfred Calligaris
John Johnson Jr.
Alex MacKinnon
Gary Turck

Non-Voting

Mary Doheny
James Hollenbeck
Stephen Hunt
Brian McGrath

Members Absent

Staff Present:

Laurie Marr, Director of Communications and Public Affairs
Angela Marra, Executive Assistant

Guests:

Jennifer Granzow, Counsel, Wladis Law Firm

1. Chairman Carter called the meeting to order at 10:13 AM.
2. Chairman Carter requested a roll call by A. Marra.
 - All Board Members were present.
 - A quorum of voting members and non-voting members was established.

Today's meeting, due to Corona Virus emergency restrictions and in compliance with Governor Cuomo's Executive Order, was conducted in person as well as teleconference with several members of the Board in attendance via teleconferencing.

The meeting had no in-person public access, but it was accessible through the Authority website through live streaming.

During the meeting, because it was being done in part telephonically, it was asked that when speaking to please state their name so they can be identified appropriately in the minutes.

3. Executive Session – Personnel Matters

Upon a motion by T. Hefferon, and seconded by D. Mastascusa, the meeting moved into Executive Session at 10:14 AM.

Upon a motion by D. Mastascusa, and seconded by T. Hefferon, the meeting moved out of Executive Session at 10:39 AM.

No action was taken during the Executive Session.

4. Resolution No. 2020-06-89, affirms the designation of employment to be Executive Director upon acceptance of the offer by Carl E. Farone, Jr., and further authorizes the Chairman of the Board to enter into a five year employment contract based upon performance.

F. Carter stated that this resolution will be read into the record by our attorney, J. Granzow. There will then be a vote taken of the Board's voting members in a roll call vote.

Prior to reading the resolution, J. Granzow spoke of the background of the Executive Search Committee process to get to the point now where the committee is now offering its recommendation for the candidate to be offered the position of Executive Director of the Authority. The committee met several times prior to the event of publishing an advertisement for the position, to discuss the procedure, how it would be handled, the specific questions that would be asked of the candidates, where the position would be advertised, and specifically what qualities and qualifications the members of the committee on behalf of the full Board felt were important to consider in a candidate for Executive Director. The advertisement ran from May 30th to June 26th, which was the application deadline. This position was advertised in six newspapers of general circulation across upstate New York, including Syracuse, Albany, and Plattsburgh. It was also published on multiple hiring websites including the New York State Department of Labor, the Authority's own website, and a wide variety of websites that target a diverse population of potential candidates with the goal being to cast a broad net and to hopefully get applications from qualified people from a number of different areas. By the application deadline, 26 applications had been received. Judging by name only, 14 appeared to be women and 12 appeared to be men. The Search Committee reviewed the applications of all the applicants, and of those 26 selected 8 who were the most eminently qualified among that group to invite for interviews. Those in-person interviews were conducted with the entire Search Committee on Tuesday the 14th and Wednesday the 15th of July at a neutral offsite location. Within the interviews a standard set of question were used to ensure the same information was being received from each of the candidates so the Committee could better assess each candidate as compared to the other competitors. At the end of the process the overwhelming choice was made by the committee. At this time, F. Carter gave counsel permission to read the resolution.

J. Granzow proceeded by reading:

Resolution 2020-06-89 July 22, 2020,

Designation of the Executive Director, Development Authority of the North Country.

Whereas, upon the retirement of James Wright from the role of Executive Director of the Development Authority of the North Country, an executive search committee was formed for the purpose of conducting a search for a new Executive Director, and

Whereas, after advertising the position and reviewing the application materials and qualifications of those interested in the position, the Search Committee conducted in person interviews of certain of those candidates, and

Whereas, the Search Committee recommended that the position be offered to Carl Farone under such terms and conditions to be agreed upon between Carl Farone and Frederick J. Carter, Chairman of the Board, with funding already contained in the existing budget.

Now upon the recommendation of the Search Committee, therefore be it

RESOLVED, the Development Authority of the North Country herewith affirms the designation of employment to be Executive Director upon acceptance of the offer by Carl Farone, and be it further

RESOLVED, the Chairman of the Board is herewith authorized to enter into a five year employment contract based upon performance.

Upon a motion by T. Hefferon, and seconded by M. Murray, Resolution No. 2020-06-89, Designation, Executive Director, Development Authority of the North Country, was unanimously approved.

B. McGrath commented that he obviously has no votes as a Governor appointee to this Authority since 2014. He has expressed individual comments in Executive Session as to specific individuals and that is to remain in Executive Session. That said, what he could say in open session is he appreciates the effort of the Search Committee and feels that they worked very hard. He believes that today's resolution, which was read for the very first time just a few minutes ago, of which he had not seen before, and had not been indicated to him that the Board was going to be proceeding with selection today. B. McGrath said he believes that this process is flawed because it is rushed. He believes that the full Board, voting and non-voting members, should've had and should have opportunity to at a minimum hear the visions for the Authority and the qualifications of the next leader from the top three candidates. He had not been given the opportunity to hear that out which is very unfortunate because it makes it very difficult for him to say that he is without a vote but supportive of the resolution when he very much could be. He stated that he is greatly disappointed that we had a process that was conducted well intentioned, thoughtful, and hardworking Board members and then effectively crammed down the full Board members' throats in a matter of minutes on a special called meeting. B. McGrath feels it is inappropriate and that it is the wrong way to go. He thinks a decision like this should have involved the entire Board, it should have involved other parts of the State government including the Governor's office and none of that was done. He is very disappointed.

At this time a Roll Call vote the Authority Board voting members was called:

Frederick Carter – Yes
Margaret Murray – Yes
Thomas Hefferon – Yes
Dennis Mastascusa – Yes
Alfred Calligaris – Yes
John Johnson – Yes

Alex MacKinnon – Yes
Gary Turck – Yes

The roll call vote resulted in eight votes in favor.

5. Upon a motion by A. Calligaris, and seconded by T. Hefferon, the meeting was adjourned at 10:47 AM.

F. Carter thanked everyone for all of the input they had and all the remarks and comments that everyone made. Let us move the Authority forward.

J. Hollenbeck stated that he believes the Board had made an excellent choice.

D. Mastascusa stated that L. Marr did an excellent job and should be commended as well.

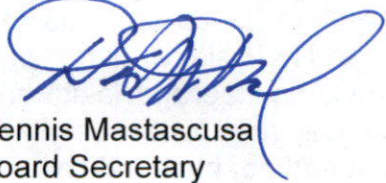
T. Hefferon commented that the press releases are ready to go.

F. Carter also thanked A. Marra.

T. Hefferon also thanked the attorney, J. Granzow.

J. Granzow stated that it is important to note that with the internal candidates in particular, everyone talked about what a great staff the Authority has and she felt that was really nice to hear.

Respectfully submitted,



Dennis Mastascusa
Board Secretary