



MEETING SUMMARY

Introductory Information:

Date and Time Meeting Commenced: Thursday, January 25, 2018 at 2:30 p.m.

Location: The Conference and Event Center Niagara Falls, 101 Old Falls St, Niagara Falls, NY 14303

Council Members Present: Jeff Belt, Dr. Virginia Horvath, Crystal Abers, Aaron Bartley, George Borrello, Deanna Alterio Brennan, Paul Brown, Dottie Gallagher-Cohen, Dr. Rosa Gonzalez, Brenda McDuffie, Michael Metzger, and Jennifer Parker.

Council Members Substitutes: Anthony Vilardo for Mayor Dyster, Sam Ferraro for Legislator Keith McNall and Tom Hersey for County Executive Mark Poloncarz.

State Agency/Local Government/ESD Staff: Howard Zemsky, Christopher Schoepflin, Michael Ball, Chanel Maddigan, Amanda Mays, Janet Murray, Diego Sirianni, Rob Sozanski, Mo Sumbundu, Paul Tronolone, Jean Williams, Lori Cornell, Chris Bauer (DOS), Chris Borgotti (DOL), Cesar Cabrera (DOL), Frank Cirillo (DOT), Jim Cuzzo (DOT), Lou Paonessa (NYPA), JC Smith (EFC), Mark Thomas (Parks), Vince Horrigan.

Special Guests: Mayor Bill Aiello, City of Olean; Stephen Tucker, Northland Workforce Training Center; Michael Ulbrich, Buffalo Manufacturing Works

Time Adjourned: 4:30 p.m.

Welcome and Remarks:

Call to Order:

Preamble requesting disclosure of any conflicts of interest read.

Conflicts noted: (Please List)

Recusals noted: (Please List)

No conflicts noted.



☒ The record of recusals was noted and acknowledged at the meeting.

Reports/Discussions/Motions:

2:30 p.m. Opening Remarks – *Mr. Jeff Belt and Dr. Virginia Horvath, Co-Chairs, WNY Regional Economic Development Council*

- Co-Chairs Jeff Belt and Ginny Horvath welcomed the new Chautauqua County Executive George Borrello to the REDC, and recognized outgoing County Executive Vince Horrigan.

2:40 p.m. 2017 Year in Review and Building the Project Pipeline – *Mr. Michael Ball, Executive Director, WNY REDC*

- Power point shown reviewing the WNY Regional Office accomplishments in 2017;
- 224 CFA applications were submitted and WNY received \$68.8 million for 112 projects. 21 priority projects received \$10 million in funding and represent a \$97.4 million investment of additional funds for the projects;
- Since 2011, WNY has received \$76.3 million from NYS for priority projects which have totaled \$648 million of total project investments – an 8:1 ratio, surpassing WNY’s goal of 7:1;
- Total ESD funding in WNY, inclusive of priority projects, Excelsior Tax Credits, Buffalo Billion investments, and other grants and loans has totaled **\$2.1 billion** and leveraged an additional **\$6.1 billion**. That has resulted in the creation of more than 18,000 jobs and retained over 49,000;
- The WNY Regional Office also provided technical assistance to two communities, one of which received a CFA award (Town of Ripley);
- The City of Olean was the Downtown Revitalization Initiative winner from the WNY region for 2017, and the office is preparing for Round 3 announced in Governor Cuomo’s 2018-2019 budget. Additionally, through the Buffalo Billion initiative, Smart Growth funding was provided to four communities – the City of Dunkirk, Village of Gowanda, City of Lackawanna, and City of North Tonawanda – for up to \$2.5 million each;
- WNY had 15 municipalities receive funding through Round 4 of the Restore NY program in 2017, totaling \$7.5 million in awards which was the most in the state. They received 34 letters of intent and had 14 applications submitted from the region for Round 5;
- Through two rounds, the Better Buffalo Fund has awarded loans totaling more than \$20 million to 35 projects. The third round of applications is due February 1;
- In the year ahead, the WNY RO is looking to continue to identify projects early on and work with potential grantees to ensure success of their projects. It will also prioritize building capacity in smaller regions, so all of WNY can share in the region’s success.



2:50 p.m. Downtown Revitalization Initiative Round 2 Awardee Update – *The Honorable William J. Aiello, Mayor, City of Olean*

- The City of Olean has been working with the Olean Business Alliance and the public, with the help of a consultant, to issue a Request for Proposals and seek information and project ideas for implementation of its Downtown Revitalization Initiative.
- Since the award was announced in September 2017, there has been monthly community engagement as the City works to solidify the vision, goals, and strategies for the project.
- Through this process, the City has developed a list of 59 projects and is vetting 21 of these. They are drafting profiles of these priority projects that will review the assets and physical characteristics of each.
- The City will submit its plan in March that will include a final project list.

3:10 p.m. Northland Workforce Training Center – *Mr. Stephen Tucker, President & CEO, Northland Workforce Training Center*

- The Workforce Training Center is focusing on programs in advanced manufacturing and energy – two sectors where there is projected to be growth in WNY. It will start with six programs and examine demand for others on an on-going basis.
- The Center will also feature wrap-around services, testing for academic readiness and getting students up to where the minimum requirements are if needed, and will assist with affordability.
- They are developing a curriculum in coordination with the Buffalo Niagara Manufacturing Alliance to ensure the courses fit the needs of industry, and there will be placement opportunities for students upon completion.
- Currently Center staff is recruiting, performing testing and upskilling for students, and will begin training programs in the fall. Upon completion, they will be issued certification from either SUNY ECC or Alfred State University, depending on the program.

3:30 p.m. Buffalo Manufacturing Works – *Mr. Michael Ulbrich, Executive Director, Buffalo Manufacturing Works*

- Buffalo Manufacturing Works (“BMW”), a signature initiative of the Buffalo Billion, was opened to address innovation and manufacturing needs in WNY. The program has seen much success, and is on the path to sustainability within the next three years.
- In its 3.5 years of existence, BMW has initiated or completed 90 funded projects totaling more than \$3 million and representing nearly \$25 million in economic impact. It has helped 25 local companies across various industries and company sizes, and currently employs 20 people. Mr. Ulbrich detailed one of these company partnerships of BMW with Bak USA, a



company that began out of the Start-Up NY program and has grown to employ 100 people in downtown Buffalo.

- BMW has just begun a new program for Small and Medium-Sized Manufacturers (“SMMs) call “Shift,” which looks to tailor solutions to help these manufacturers utilize innovative technology. It is anticipated that Shift will impact 250 SMMs over the next three years.
- BMW is finalizing the design of its new space which will be co-located with the Workforce Training Center at Northland. They are also planning a STEM Lab expansion to work with Buffalo Public Schools students.

3:30 p.m. Niagara Falls Update – Mr. Paul Tronolone, VP Planning and Policy, WNY ESD

- Power point presentation reviewing the strategy for development in downtown Niagara Falls. The removal of the Niagara Scenic Parkway south was completed in November 2017 and has replaced the elevated expressway with one-mile of at-grade parkway, new greenspace and waterfront trails, and restored access for residents and visitors to the waterfront.
- Removal of the north section will break ground this summer with similar goals of increasing greenspace and reconnecting to the waterfront. It will also help restore the grid system of city roads, reestablishing city streets as the main thoroughfares. The power point showed renderings for the project and what it will look like post-removal.
- A number of investments have been spurred by the parkway project, including eight new hotels either recently completed or being constructed or expanded. These projects will generate over 1,000 new rooms and nearly \$260 million in total project costs.
- The Hyatt Place Hotel will be open for the tourist season in 2018. Additionally, the Hotel Niagara will begin restoration work this year, with the goal of being open for the 2019 season.

4:30 p.m. Closing Remarks & Adjourn

- Co-Chairs Jeff Belt and Ginny Horvath recognized outgoing REDC member Aaron Bartley for his service to the regional council.