

FLREDC MEETING SUMMARY

Introductory Information:

Date and Time Meeting Commenced: August 10, 2023 at 10:13 A.M.

Location: Seasons on Keuka Lake Banquet & Conference Center, Penn Yan, NY

Council Members Present: Denise Battles, Bob Duffy, DeAnna Burt-Nanna, Matthew Cole, Veronica Dasher, Steve Griffin, Steve Hyde, Julia Hoyle, Faheem Masood, Theresa Mazzullo, Steve Mowers, John Noble, Peter Robinson, Jaime Saunders, Erin Tolefree, Grant Malone, Todd Campbell, Leslie Church, Rebecca Ryan, Rochelle Stein

****Council Member Substitutes:** Leah George VanScott, Vanessa Herman, Allan Richards, Ana Liss, Mitch Rowe, Bill Bacon, Tamara Mayberry

State Agency/Local Government/ESD Staff: Vincent Esposito, Laura Fox O'Sullivan, Bridget O'Brien, Kristin McCann, Cynthia Spencer, Shari Voorhees-Vincent, Steve Golding, Sharon Gray, Elizabeth Morabito, Greg Albert, Greg Parker, Arthur Briley, Joe Hamm, Hector Gonzalez, Melissa Keller, Joe Leathersich, Tim Walsh, Leonard Skrill

Special Guests:

Tracy Verrier and Michael N'dolo – MRB Group
Susan Charland – Prospect Hill
Rafael Salaberrios, SVP, Division of Small Business

Time Adjourned: 12:07 PM

Co-Chair Welcome: Denise Battles started the meeting by welcoming everyone and thanking all for attending. She thanked Yates County and the Village of Penn Yann for hosting, the consultants from MRB, the Council Members, her co-chair Bob Duffy, and praised the leadership of Laura Fox O'Sullivan and Bridget O'Brien at ESD. Bob Duffy also welcomed everyone and thanked ESD for its leadership. He thanked the host communities. He also introduced and congratulated Dr. Rupert Hayles, the new President of Roberts Wesleyan University.

Host Welcome & Update: Leslie Church, Chair, Yates County Legislature and Supervisor of the Town of Milo thanked everyone for coming and how happy she is to show off the new Seasons Banquet & Conference Center. She highlighted some unique features of Yates County as well as some recent economic development projects. This year marks Yates County's Bicentennial. There are many events planned throughout the rest of the year.

Steve Griffin, CEO, Finger Lakes Economic Development Center, also thanked everyone. He gave an overview of Yates County (posted online), including its diverse economy and economic growth areas. He also highlighted some of its economic development activities over the last 10 years.

Executive Director Update (Last Meeting: 5/10/23): Laura Fox O'Sullivan, Executive Director, FLREDC, welcomed new Council Members Julia Hoyle and Simeon Banister. She highlighted some of the project and event announcements since the last meeting (posted online). Laura also discussed current New York State funding opportunities that are still open, including Round 5 of the Office of Strategic Workforce Development grants, New York's Child Care Workforce Retention Grant Program, FAST-NY, Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) Round 7, and NY Forward Round 2.

New York State Small Business Credit Initiative (SSBCI): Rafael Salaberrios, SVP, Division of Small Business – Capital Access gave a presentation (posted online) outlining the SSBCI. ESD received \$501 M in federal funds for the SSBCI. Ray gave a brief overview of the 10 ESD small business programs that SSBI supports. (More information of these programs can be found at <https://regionalcouncils.ny.gov/sites/default/files/2023-08/SSBCI%20Flyer.pdf>) Ray and his team are working hard to make capital more accessible, and he encouraged anyone interested in more information to contact him at 646-599-6493.

Ray also quickly highlighted several other ESD programs managed by the Division of Science, Technology, and Innovation (NYSTAR) and NY Ventures to help start-up companies grow and mature companies to innovate.

Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) & NY Forward (NYF): Laura Fox O’Sullivan gave an overview of the DRI and NY Forward programs (posted online). She introduced Melissa Keller from NYS Department of State who manages these programs for the Finger Lakes Region. Laura then turned it over to Steve Mowers, Matt Cole, and John Noble to share their firsthand experience as previous round winners in Medina, Geneseo, and Perry respectively. All agreed it was a great experience and appreciated the decentralized nature of the local planning committees, which encourage broad community stakeholder participation. These funding awards have energized their communities and helped jumpstart meaningful economic development activity.

Laura outlined the current funding rounds in more detail and the process to submit applications. She encouraged those interested in applying to submit an intent to apply by August 18, 2023. The intent to apply is optional but is required if you would like to receive one-on-one technical assistance in developing a NYF or DRI application. Final applications are due by 4 pm on September 29, 2023.

Council Members are needed for the Selection Committee, so please let Laura or Bridget know if you are interested.

CFA Round 13 Review Process/Timeline: Bridget O’Brien, Deputy Director, FLREDC gave a presentation (posted online) on the Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) Round 13. She gave an overview of the application process and deadlines, the available funding programs included, and the new elements in Round 13, including the Craft Beverage Micro Grant Program and the Non-Profit Capital Facility Needs Program. Both are new pilot programs using Regional Council Capital Funds. REDCs will not be scoring these projects but will be made aware of projects applying to these new programs. She thanked everyone for spreading the word about these new programs. There were many applications from the Finger Lakes Region.

She also outlined the CFA review and scoring process. There are less REDC-scored programs than in previous Rounds, but there are still about 100 projects that will be reviewed by the Council.

There was a noticeable increase in all applications from our Region. Thank you to all our economic development partners for hosting information sessions with ESD this Spring and sharing this information far and wide.

Laura thanked Bridget for doing a great job keeping the FLREDC on track and thanked the Council Members for their hard work.

FLREDC Strategic Plan: Laura announced that MRB Group was selected as the Finger Lakes Region’s consultant for the upcoming strategic plan update and challenges competition. She introduced Michael N’dolo, CECd, Director of Economic Development at MRB Group, who introduced consultant team members Tracy Verrier from MRB and Susan Charland from Prospect Hill. The consultant team gave a presentation (posted online) on the project schedule and decision points with final reports due on November 30, 2023.

They also gave an overview (posted online) of the new challenges competition, where three regions will receive up to \$10 million to implement their challenge solution. The seven challenge topics were outlined, and the results of the poll Council Members completed prior to the meeting were discussed. Workforce and population/talent were the top two challenge topics selected.

The consultants then led a discussion with Council Members about their top priorities, what they feel the region is best positioned to address, and which topics are not already being addressed in a meaningful way.

Ana Liss believes housing affordability and inventory should be a high priority.

Vanessa Herman discussed choosing sustainability and clean energy. The State's ambitious climate goals will be challenging and costly for everyone to implement. It would be helpful to focus on this area.

Matt Cole believes workforce development is the basic issue.

Steve Hyde offered housing as the top issue. To attract workers, there needs to be attractive affordable housing options. We're lacking middle income assistance.

Shelley Stein thinks the FLREDC has done great work on workforce development but should now focus on housing.

Tammy Mayberry shared housing as the Mayor's priority.

Faheem Masood reasoned workforce development should be the priority because increased wages are necessary to solve the housing affordability gap.

Dr Burt-Nanna believes workforce development is the way to address most other issues.

Grant Malone agreed that workforce should be the priority. Everyone should have opportunities.

Peter Robinson questioned the rationale of only focusing on one topic when all these need to be addressed. Mike N'dolo responded that the strategic plan will address all these issues, but this specific funding opportunity has a limited scope.

Veronica Dasher feels that workforce should be the focus. It helps all the other issue areas.

Laura indicated that the funding will be flexible, so there might be an opportunity to combined some of these issues.

Steve Griffin thought \$10 million is not enough to fix the housing issue and the Council should continue to focus on workforce issues. Also, current housing projects don't align with income levels.

Jaime Saunders suggested the question be reframed to what is the greatest opportunity for us to use the \$10 million instead of what is our greatest challenge to be addressed.

Bill Bacon advocated tourism be the focus. Jobs follow people and we need to attract people.

The consultant team then outlined the roles and responsibilities of the Steering Committee (posted online), which they recommend should include the FLREDC Executive Committee plus three additional Council Members. The consultants also recommended that the Steering Committee be empowered to make the final challenge selection based on the poll results and feedback provided today. The majority of Council Members agreed by a show of hands to accept these recommendations.

Susan Charland then led a discussion about how to ensure stakeholder participation in the strategic plan update process and how success in this area should be defined. She asked past participants in the 2010 Strategic Plan what they felt worked well. Matt Cole felt the work groups were effective. Steve Hyde felt public sessions with charettes worked well during DRI planning. Dr. Burt-Nanna urged the data collected last year by the Workforce & Talent Workgroup from diverse populations be included. Faheem Masood urged that qualitative input be supported by quantitative input. Our findings must be supported by data. Susan then urged anyone with additional input to follow up with Laura Fox O'Sullivan.

Michael N'dolo reviewed next steps (posted online). All Council Members will be updated throughout this process.

FLREDC 2023 Work Plan: In the interest of time, Bridget O'Brien, Deputy Director, FLREDC indicated the work plan (posted online) was outlined on the back to today's agenda and urged everyone to review it. She will be reaching out to schedule the next public meeting where the strategic plan draft will be reviewed.

Final Discussion & Next Steps: Laura Fox O'Sullivan thanked everyone for attending and for the Council Members' participation. She urged everyone to enjoy their time in Penn Yann.

Adjourn: 12:07 pm

Next Public Meeting: TBD (November 2023)