

## FLREDC MEETING SUMMARY

### **Introductory Information:**

**Date and Time Meeting Commenced:** November 14, 2023 at 2:01 P.M.

**Location:** The Conference Center at Wayne-Finger Lakes BOCES in Newark, NY

**Council Members Present:** Robert Duffy, Denise Battles, Steve Griffin, Matt Hurlbutt, Steve Hyde, Julia Hoyle, Faheem Masood, Steve Mowers, David Munson, John Noble, Peter Robinson, Jaime Saunders, Erin Tolefree, Simeon Banister, Todd Campbell, Phil Eygnor, Rochelle Stein,

**\*\*Council Member Substitutes:** Joseph Sayre, Allan Richards, Bill Bacon, Rokele Mikell-Castillo, James Bragg, Dana Miller

**State Agency/Local Government/ESD Staff:** Vincent Esposito, Laura Fox O'Sullivan, Bridget O'Brien, Kristin McCann, Cynthia Spencer, Shari Voorhees-Vincent, Steve Golding, Elizabeth Morabito, Greg Albert, Joe Hamm

### **Special Guests:**

Tracy Verrier and Michael N'dolo – MRB Group

Brian Pincelli, Executive Director, Wayne County Economic Development & Planning/WCIDA/WEDC

Erin Tolefree, President, Baldwin Richardson Foods

Joe Stefko, President & CEO, ROC2025

**Time Adjourned:** 3:48 P.M.

**Co-Chair Welcome:** Denise Battles welcomed everyone and thanked all in attendance including the Village of Newark and Wayne County for hosting. Bob Duffy welcomed everyone and thanked all for attending, including elected officials Phil Eygnor Chair of Wayne County Board of Supervisors, Mayor Jonathan Taylor from Newark, and Walworth Town Supervisor Michael Donalty. Bob introduced Michelle Sullivan of Wayne-Finger Lakes BOCES and thanked her for hosting and asked her to give a welcome.

### **Host County Welcome & Update:**

Michelle Sullivan, of Wayne-FL BOCES welcomed everyone. She pointed out that the Conference Center was a state-supported project about 12 years ago that has inspired other projects. BOCES has worked with ESD several times over the years, and they are honored to host today's REDC public meeting. She highlighted the many programs that are available at BOCES. Lastly, she mentioned that the refreshments provided were from the Arc of Wayne's Erie Shore Landing Café.

Phil Eygnor, Supervisor and Chairman, Board Supervisor of Wayne County

He gave a welcome and thanked the Finger Lakes Regional Economic Development Council for its past support of Wayne County and looks forward to continuing to work together to assist Wayne County and all other areas in the FL region that need help.

Brian Pincelli, Executive Director, Wayne County Economic Development & Planning/WCIDA/WEDC.

Gave an overview of Wayne County and highlighted some of the projects and businesses that play an important role in its economy (slides posted online). Brian also mentioned a few other items that were not included on his

presentation, including Newark winning the fifth round of the Downtown Revitalization Initiative, the consolidated EMS services project, and GIS data share.

**Wayne County Business Spotlight:**

Erin Tolefree, President & CEO, Baldwin Richardson Foods

Gave background of how Baldwin Richardson Foods started as Baldwin Ice Cream in Chicago but in 1997 combined with Richardson Foods in Macedon, NY to become Baldwin Richardson Foods. This was the beginning of their origins in Wayne County. She highlighted locations of their manufacturing facilities, warehouses across the US and in NY. Erin also talked about the vision and mission of Baldwin Richardson Foods and how Wayne County has been a place where they have been able to implement the company's vision. Through six phases of expansion, they had great support from community organizations and institutions including the FLREDC.

**Executive Director Update (Last Meeting: 8/10/23):** Laura Fox O'Sullivan, Executive Director, FLREDC.

Laura introduced new Council Member Simeon Banister, President & CEO of Rochester Area Community Foundation, and welcomed him to his first meeting. She then highlighted some of the project and event announcements since the last meeting (slides posted online). She also shared current New York State funding opportunities including ESD Capital Grants Batch 3 Grants, Office of Strategic Workforce Development Grants, FAST-NY, and DASNY's Nonprofit Infrastructure Capital Investment Program.

Laura provided an update on the status of the DRI/NY Forward applications that were due September 29, 2023. She acknowledged and thanked those who were engaged in the DRI/NYF application/selection process: Marc Cohen (representative of REDC Co-Chair Bob Duffy), Paul Morrell (representative of REDC Co-Chair Denise Battles), Veronica Dasher, Julia Hoyle, Steve Mowers, Wade Norwood, Jaime Saunders. Discussed NYF, this is the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of NYF (19 applications received).

Most of the CFA Round 13 announcements are public. The online REDC Award booklet is updated regularly. She thanked the council members who participated in scoring the CFA applications. She also talked about the new project dashboard on each REDC website. This new tool tracks our region's CFA projects and can be found on the FLREDC website, <https://regionalcouncils.ny.gov/finger-lakes>.

**NY SMART I-Corridor Tech Hub Designation Update:** Joe Stefko, President & CEO, ROC2025

The Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse NY SMART I-Corridor has been designated as one of 31 federal Tech Hubs by the U.S. Economic Development Administration. This exciting designation allows the NY SMART I-Corridor to compete for potentially hundreds of millions of dollars in Phase 2 of the Tech Hub Program. Joe praised the team effort it took to win this competitive designation. He thanked Senator Schumer, Congressman Morelle, the REDC and all organizations and partners in Rochester and across NYS for their support.

He detailed the work of the Consortium and the components of the Phase 1 application (slides posted online). The Consortium consists of 60+ members from across economic development, government, higher education, workforce, philanthropy, industry, and nonprofit sectors. Joe thanked the State for its critical role in Phase 1.

Phase 2 applications are due February 29, 2024. He outlined next steps and stressed the opportunity this regional Tech Hub collaboration provides. It also offers a roadmap to future collaboration in other areas.

**FLREDC Strategic Plan: Presentation, Discussion, Call for a Vote:** Laura Fox O'Sullivan, Executive Director, FLREDC; Michael N'dolo, CecD, Director of Economic Development, MRB Group; Tracy Verrier, Senior Economic Development Analyst, MRB Group.

Laura thanked all involved in the strategic plan process especially given the aggressive timeline. She announced there would be a vote at the end of the meeting to accept the final strategic plan draft. She went on to re-introduce consultants Tracey Verrier and Michael N'dolo from MRB Group.

Tracey provided updates on public participation and detailed the goal area priorities and strategies identified (slides posted online). She also outlined the FL Region's Workforce Development Challenge Proposal.

Michael discussed some of the feedback received regarding the draft plan and urged anyone with additional comments to submit no later than the end of the day on November 15, 2023.

There was lengthy discussion about the need to effectively incorporate equity and inclusion into the strategic plan. Tracey proposed a series of areas the FLREDC can continue to work on in advance of the next CFA round (slide posted online).

### **Some thoughts from group on Equity discussion:**

Simeon Banister – Think of Equity as something that unlocks opportunity for long term gains. It would be beneficial to the region. Praised REDC for willingness to consider concerns raised. How to integrate thoughts into the process and when and how to not get lost in the process.

Erin Tolefree – asked for clarification on the ask if it was to incorporate language on Equity into the plan.

Laura Fox O'Sullivan - the strategic plan is REDC's guidance for prioritizing and scoring projects going forward.

Faheem Masood – Need a way to measure equity and inclusion, there are no measures in place to evaluate it, lacking data. Would ask for team supporting REDC to give an agreed upon approach and then activate it.

Jaime Saunders – to add to what Faheem and Simeon mentioned, Jaime said having the committees and discussions were good. She thanked Tracey and the council for its efforts. The conversation was positive, but more work needed.

David Munson – Define what is meant by Equity (several dimensions to it). Define then we can measure.

Bob Duffy – Thinks it's a good idea to include equity into the plan. Would like to see results from it being used in the future.

Steve Hyde- MWBE Reporting requirements, seems broken, how to get MWBE engaged in the process. The demographics are not there, how to support equity inclusion, identify what is broken.

Michael N'dolo- efficiency and equity goals and effectiveness would have to become a part of evaluation process. Continue discussions and develop a system to use. Define Equity, then systematize it.

Denise Battles – asked about submitting feedback, asked if there was a process to confirm submissions of feedback.

Tracey Verrier reminded everyone that comments on the Strategic Plan are due November 15<sup>th</sup>. There is a Steering Committee Meeting November 20<sup>th</sup> to review final content and the final plan will be submitted no later than November 30<sup>th</sup>. A final version of the plan will be distributed after updates are included (slides posted online).

**Call for Vote:** Co-Chair Bob Duffy made a motion to accept the Strategic Plan with the changes discussed. The motion was seconded by Simeon Banister. All in Favor, none opposed.

**FLREDC 2023 Work Plan:** Bridget O'Brien, FLREDC Deputy Director, reviewed the 2023 FLREDC workplan (posted online). Scoring of ESD Grants Batch 2 is underway. She reiterated the upcoming Strategic Plan deadlines including presenting our region's Challenge proposal to the State Implementation Assessment Team (SIAT) in December. ESD Grants Batch 3 applications are due January 31, 2024 and Batch 4 applications are due April 12, 2024.

**Final Discussion & Next Steps:** Laura Fox O'Sullivan thanked everyone for attending and for the Council Members' participation. She also praised Bridget for always keeping things on schedule and thanked MRB Group for all their work throughout the strategic plan process. Co-Chairs Bob Duffy and Denise Battles expressed thanks to everyone including the host, consultants, partners, ESD, and all that attended.

**Adjourn:** 3:48 P.M.

**Next Public Meeting:** February 1, 2024