

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & PLANNING TOURISM/AGRICULTURE LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING January 6, 2026

ATTENDEES:

Legislators: Ron Ciotoli, Keith Flesher, Andrew Aronstam, Jake Brown, Tracy Monell, Jo Ellen Rose, David Cantella

Staff: Brittany Woodburn, Marley Norton, Cathy Haskell, Jackson Bailey

Guests: Wendy Walsh, Manager, Tioga County Soil & Water Conservation District

Committee Chair, Ron Ciotoli, called the meeting to order at 1:00 P.M.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & PLANNING (ED&P): Agenda and attachments previously emailed.

I. MINUTES

- A. Approval of minutes from December 2, 2025 – Committee Chair Ron Ciotoli asked for approval of the minutes from the December 2, 2025, meeting. Legislator Flesher made a motion to accept the minutes from the December 2, 2025, meeting, seconded by Legislator Aronstam. All were in favor.

Ms. Woodburn reported the following:

II. FINANCIAL

- A. 2026 Budget
 1. Economic Development
 - Year-to-Date Budget is tracking.
 2. Planning
 - Year-to-Date Budget is tracking.
 3. Sustainability Management
 - Year-to-Date Budget is tracking.

III. OLD BUSINESS/NEW BUSINESS

- A. Reports
 1. Tioga County Soil & Water Conservation District – Monthly report previously emailed and is in the committee packet. Ms. Walsh, Tioga County Soil & Water Conservation District manager, was in attendance and distributed informative packets. Ms. Walsh reviewed her report, highlighting the Agricultural Programs of Tioga County Soil Health Program, Cover Crops, AEM Strategic Plan and Agricultural Workshops. The

workshops are in conjunction with Economic Development & Planning. Sessions in Owego were more populated than in Berkshire, however 25-30 participants have attended the workshops

2. Cornell Cooperative Extension – Monthly report previously emailed and is in committee packet
3. Tioga County Tourism – Monthly report previously emailed and is in committee packet

B. Grants

1. Active Grants – See attached EDP Grant Tracking spreadsheet. Ms. Woodburn highlighted the following:
 - a. EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant
 - This application was not selected last year
 - EPA suggested changes and Ms. Woodburn reports that ED&P plans on applying for this grant again with the changes
 - Grant funds available to do a county-wide assessment to look into abandoned gas stations, reclaimed mining pits, vacant/abandoned buildings, etc.
 - This assessment opens opportunity for additional funds to evaluate and remediate sites to bring them back into productive use
 - Resolution included in this packet to apply for \$500,000 in grant funds to hire a consultant to complete the assessment with no match requirement, and program delivery included
 - Resolution also authorizes the County Planning Director as the Authorized Organizational Representative to sign/submit the application
 - b. NY SWIMS Round II – V. Owego public pool
 - Village of Owego was awarded \$271,771 for pool improvements
 - The village will replace the pool deck, install new fencing, and upgrade pump house doors to improve safety and extend the life of the municipal pool
 - Ms. Yelverton and Ms. Norton provided technical assistance on the grant submission
 - c. OPRHP EPF – Northern Tioga Rail-with-Trail Pre-Engineering
 - The TCIDA was awarded \$450,000 through the ORPHP EPF program to develop a Northern Tioga Rail-with-Trail Pre-Engineering plan to develop a recreational trail alongside OHRY railway in northern Tioga County
 - The Rail-With-Trail initiative aims to enhance local recreation by planning a new multi-use trail
 - The TCIDA will likely be applying for USDA RBDG to fund the \$150,000 project gap
 - d. NYS DOS Community Smart Growth Program – T. Nichols
 - Town of Nichols applied for NYS DOS Community Smart Growth Program to update their comprehensive plan
 - The application was not awarded as it is a very competitive program, and the grant will be removed from the spreadsheet

- ED&P will continue to work with the Town of Nichols to look for sources to fund their plan
 - Nichols was awarded \$154,000 in grant funds from OPRHP for improvements to Cady Library
- e. CDBG Microenterprise – Ms. Yelverton continues to work on this project
- Ocular Prosthetics has received their second reimbursement
 - Country Fit has received their first disbursement
 - Labrador Lumber's project is completed
 - Owego Brewing Company has received their first disbursement
 - The Five has begun their project and their first reimbursement has been submitted to the state
- f. CDBG Public Facilities – Catholic Charities – Ms. Norton continues to work on this project
- The mobile food truck is almost complete and has been sent to vinyl wrapping
 - The truck is expected to be delivered in the next few weeks
 - Catholic Charities may be requesting budget modifications due to the need for certain supplies and staffing costs
 - Resolution will be submitted if changes are needed
- g. George Smith Park Master Plan – Ms. Woodburn informed that the draft Master Plan has been created, and the final Master Plan should be submitted soon
- h. Upcoming Grant Opportunities – Ms. Woodburn advised of the following opportunities
- i. County Infrastructure Grant Program
 - ii. Tioga Arts Council – NYSCA Grants (Technical Assistance)
 - iii. Child Care Capital Construction Funding Program
 - iv. ESD Power Up – Electric infrastructure upgrades at key industrial sites

C. Economic/Community Development

1. Family Enrichment Network – Ms. Woodburn asked that the conversation be tabled for discussion at a later time
2. DRI – Owego – Ms. Woodburn advised that HCR has approved the reallocation of unused DRI funds from 48-50 Lake Street to Historic Owego Marketplace. ESD/HCR are also working on awarding two other projects with reallocated funds.
3. NY Forward – Village of Waverly
 - a. Small Projects Fund – Applications for the Small Projects Fund are due next week, and the committee will be updated on the selected projects.
 - b. Public Projects – Ms. Norton is on the steering committee, and the kickoff meeting for the Village's Public Projects was today. The Public Projects include the Broad Street Streetscape and East Waverly Park.

D. Land Bank

1. 247 Main Street, Owego – Ms. Woodburn reports that the design work is underway, before photos have been taken and there has been drone imagery of the roof

2. 121 Providence Street, Waverly – Construction has begun, and the building permit has been obtained. Ms. Woodburn should have more of an update at next committee meeting.
3. Vacant Rental Improvement Program – Ms. Patton is working on submitting an application for the Vacant Rental Improvement Program. This programs funds can support repairs and rehabilitation of vacant rental units and other vacant spaces to increase the supply of critically needed apartments. The program helps owners of rental properties bring vacant units and spaces in small-scale properties back into productive use to create safe, quality and affordable long-term rental units. Small scale properties are defined as 1-5 units, with no more than 20 units in a property owner's portfolio. \$50,000-\$75,000 is available. The Land Bank will apply for the funds, and subgrant to eligible property owners.
4. Community Foundation of South Central NY Women's Fund – The Land Bank received \$8,000 from the Community Foundation of South Central NY's Women's Fund for a home repair course for women. The Land Bank is the grant applicant, recipient, and administrator of the funds. The Landbank is coordinating the collaboration between a local WBE construction management firm, Sheila Neville, and Owego Apalachin Central School District to teach and host the course, respectively. The goal was to provide up to 10 women from Tioga County with basic self-sufficiency skills, including basic construction skills, hands on experience, education to make better informed decisions and allow for questions and answers. Ms. Woodburn reports that the TEAM Tioga social media page posted the course, and over 75 women signed up. The discussion will be had with OACSD and BOCES about a potential to take over/run the program on a more regular basis at their satellite campus, since there is a clear need.
5. By-laws and Board of Directors updates – The Land Bank is working on updating their by-laws and changing the structure of their Board of Directors. The Land Bank has recommended that their Board change from 9 to 7 members, including 3 public officers, a Tioga County Legislator, 2 at-large members and 1 non-profit sector member (or at-large). A resolution is included in the committee packet. There is also a resolution to reappoint Hannah Murray to an At-Large position instead of her original appointment as a Board of Education Member for the Candor Central School District.

E. Workforce Development

1. OACSD/BT BOCES Satellite Campus – Owego Apalachin Central School District has hired Sara Hayes as grant management consultant of their Congressional Direct Spending and ARC Grants. Ms. Norton will continue to check in on the progress of this project.
2. Southern Tier SouthWorks ACHIEVE award – The Southern Tier was selected as one of four awardees for the inaugural \$150 million Advancing Collaboration for High-Impact Initiatives for Economic Visions & Expansion competition (ACHIEVE), which empowers the REDCs to advance catalytic regional economic development projects. The Southern Tier SouthWorks ACHIEVE proposal was awarded \$38 million to support the development of SouthWorks, which is a mixed-use reuse project in

Ithaca that will repurpose the blighted former Morse Chain Factory. SouthWorks will offer housing, an innovation hub for start-ups in manufacturing, biotech and ag-tech, a living laboratory for trades-focused workforce development with childcare and wraparound services, and an integrated neighborhood with local amenities for recreation, livability and arts. There has been discussion regarding training spokes across the Southern Tier, and ED&P has submitted the OACSD/BT Satellite Facility as a possibility for this.

F. Planning

1. 239 Reviews –
 - a. 2025-025: Town of Nichols, Solar Energy Systems Local Law Amendment, Town Board – Nichols Town Board wishes to amend this law to include many more site requirements and restrict commercial solar energy systems to industrial and business zoning districts. Staff advised County Planning Board to recommend approval and the County Planning Board voted unanimously to recommend approval.
 - b. 2025-026: Village of Owego, Special Use Permit, ValuAuto – Applicant plans to add a vehicle dismantling operation to their junkyard and towing business located on Southside Drive. Staff advised the County Planning Board to recommend approval of the special use permit with conditions that the applicant comply with NYS DOT Region 9 Site Plan Review Committee's comments and requirements, that the dismantled vehicle parts are stored within a building as is required in the Village of Owego zoning code, and that the applicant comes back through the entire local approvals process before constructing the dismantled parts storage building. The County Planning Board voted to recommend approval with the conditions noted.
2. NYS American Farmland Trust – Farmer workshops, previously discussed in this meeting.

G. Sustainability Management

1. Debris Management Plan – Dr. Pratt is working on an RFP for a consulting firm to assist with getting the plan through FEMA approvals.
2. 2025 YTD –

a. Paid to Broome County	2025	2024
i. HHW	\$11,239.55	\$9,266.55
ii. E-Waste	\$ 1,006.25	\$1,994.65
b. Towns/County(E-waste)	\$ 1,167.25	\$2,261.20
3. There was brief discussion regarding E-Waste cost going down, Ms. Woodburn will look into how and why it went down in 2025.

H. IDA

1. Lockheed Martin PILOT application approval – TCIDA Board approved the PILOT application and the attorney will be working on closing on the PILOT in the next few months. Discussion regarding TEAM Tioga tracking the job creation and employment was had. The committee emphasized the

- importance of transparency with the public as the jobs are created and what is being done with the project, reporting updates on social media.
2. Board of Directors updates – Annual meeting is tomorrow and the Board is working on updates to the by-laws and policies. A resolution will follow for approval in the next few months.
 3. Southern Tier IDA/EDO partnership discussion – Southern Tier IDA's and Economic Development Organizations are working with Susan Payne to develop a roadmap to implement Southern Tier Cleantech Strategy that was put together by Newmark (a consultant group). The group has met twice and the focus of the roadmap has shifted, no longer solely focused on cleantech development, but all advanced manufacturing. The forming of an organization to market Southern Tier sites cohesively is in discussion. Ms. Woodburn will provide an update at a later date.
 4. USDA RBDG application – TCIDA will likely be applying to USDA RBDG to fund the \$150,000 project gap for the Northern Tioga Rail-With-Trail Pre-Engineering plan.

IV. PERSONNEL

- A. Administrative Coordinator – Resolution in packet to appoint Lisa Williams to the Administrative Coordinator for TCIDA/Land Bank position.

V. RESOLUTIONS

- A09-Authorize Agreement with Deluge Media
- A24-Recommend Members to the Susquehanna Heritage Area Commission
- A25-Appoint Administrative Coordinator (LWilliams)
- A26-Approval of EPA Brownfield Grant Application
- A33-TCPDC Bylaws Amendment January 2026
- A35-Appoint HMurray At-Large TCPDC Board Member

After reviewing the above resolutions, Ms. Woodburn asked this committee for support to move the resolutions forward. The vote to support the above resolution follows:

- Legislator Ciotoli – yes
- Legislator Flesher – yes
- Legislator Brown – yes
- Legislator Aronstam – yes

VI. PROCLAMATIONS - N/A

- #### **VII. EXECUTIVE SESSION**
- Legislators Ciotoli, Flesher, Aronstam, Rose and Brown were in attendance along with Legislative Clerk Haskell, County Administrator Bailey, Brittany Woodburn and Marley Norton. Motion by Legislator Ciotoli, seconded by Legislator Flesher, to move into Executive Session to discuss contract negotiations at 1:40pm. Motion carried. Motion by Legislator Ciotoli, Seconded by Legislator Aronstam to adjourn executive session at 1:55pm.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

With no further topics of discussion or questions, the meeting was adjourned at 1:55 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marley Norton

Community Development Specialist, Economic Development & Planning