

Minutes
Somerset County Business Partnership
Board of Directors Meeting
7:30 a.m.
April 16, 2009
HSBC
Bridgewater, New Jersey

Attending:

Phil Brown
Robert Bzik
Pat Cozza
Gillian Craig
Freeholder Director Rick Fontana
Eliot Goldstein, Esq.
Walt Hansen
David Hollenbeck
Fred Howlett
Joanne Jaeger
Sandra Kiser
Alina Klein
Mark Krane
Jim Laskey, Esq.
Donna LoStocco
Anna Lustenberg

James Lyons
Mike Maddaluna
David McGhee
Freeholder Peter Palmer
John Papa
Henry Reynolds
Steve Reynolds
Gail Rosen
Jeff Schneider
Ed Seliga
Paul Stahlin
Tim Taylor
William Taylor
David Wolfskehl

Staff:

Hannah Blumenthal
Takeena Deas
Bob Lantelme
John Maddocks
Tom Sharpe, CEO

Diana Sieberg
Carol Soriano
Kimberly Charne
Peter Wright

Meeting was called to order by Chairwoman LoStocco at 7:35 A.M.

The minutes from January 22, 2009 were moved and seconded for approval. The minutes were passed unanimously.

- Ms. Sharpe** **Finance**
Mr. Sharpe indicated that the organization is currently going in the right direction financially. Some areas that are behind in the budget are due to timing and should be more in line after upcoming May events have taken place.
- Mr. Sharpe** **Corporate Resolution Proposed**
Mr. Sharpe presented a corporate resolution to the Board for approval. The resolution requested that the foundation portion of the organization be able to fund four programs from the (C)6 portion of the organization since they fall under the categories of charitable or educational in nature. Mr. Sharpe asked Carol Soriano to further explain the need for the resolution to the Board.
- Ms. Soriano** Ms. Soriano stated that last year programs that caused the chamber portion of the organization to lose money were reviewed. After review, it was found that some of the programs could be funded through the foundation. The auditors advised that a resolution be drafted for approving the foundation to fund the listed programs (Tourism, Educational Forum, EHS, Small Business Loans)
- Mr. Papa** Asked how the passage of the proposed resolution would affect the SCBP profit and loss statements and how activities/expenses would be split between the legal entities.
- Mr. Papa suggested that a before and after Profit and Loss statement would be helpful to explain the outcome of the change.
- Ms. Soriano** Explained that in the last three years the organization was getting a loss in the chamber portion because of the program areas that historically were accounted for in the chamber. Those programs are being moved over into the foundation. There is a combined P&L. The process has already begun.
- Freeholder Fontana** Stated that he was not familiar with this resolution and he did not feel comfortable voting on it until he is able to review it. He asked that the voting be put off until he has had a chance to become familiar with the material.
- Ms. LoStocco** Agreed that the resolution should be reviewed. Ms. LoStocco stated that the issue will be revisited at the Executive Committee Meeting in May.

Mr. Sharpe

President's Report

Mr. Sharpe reported that the staff has met frequently to discuss planning and organization details for the transition to the new CEO. In the process, the staff has done a good job of implementing the 2009 program of work and planning major events and initiatives through the end of the year.

Mr. Steinberg

RideWise

Mr. Steinberg reported that Donna Allison is back to work after being out on maternity leave. There has been a new employee hired to take over Employer Services, and now that the position is filled and Donna has returned to work, employer activity has resumed.

Mr. Steinberg indicated that despite lower gas prices, interest has continued to remain high in carpooling as shown in the RiseWise report.

Mr. Wright

Public Leadership

Mr. Wright introduced Mr. Mark Krane, Administrator for Warren Township, as a new Board Member representing the Municipal Managers Association.

Mr. Krane

Thanked the Board for welcoming him.

Mr. Wright

Mr. Wright reported that the finishing touches are being put on the Public Health Regionalization Study, which will be presented to the municipalities and the County for input before being submitted to Johnson & Johnson as part of the requirements.

Mr. Wright has been continuing to work with Superintendent of Schools, Trudy Doyle to encourage the school districts to participate in Shared Services. Mr. Wright commended Ms. Doyle's ability to facilitate conversations and give constructive suggestions on execution of ideas and plans for shared services.

Mr. Wright indicated that a Non-Profit Shared Services Initiative is being created with the help of Phil Brown, Somerset County United Way, and Millie Gaupp, Somerset County Department of Human Services and the Non-Profit organizations in the SCBP membership. Two meetings have been held to date and the goal is to identify opportunities where monies can be saved and how to have more money go to the Non-Profits.

Bernardsville Borough has joined the Shared Services effort and is looking at regionalized study for municipal courts. Morris County will be used as a model since five towns in Morris County have come together for a regionalized municipal court.

Mr. Wright is assisting Bob Lantelme on the Business Resources Program, and he is also working on the Veteran's Initiative for workforce development with RVCC and the Technical Institute at the Somerset County Vo-Tech to give educational opportunities to returning Vets and having the GI Bill pay for it.

Mr. Laskey Asked if Montgomery Township was going to work with the County to share emergency services.

Mr. Wright Mr. Wright said yes. He indicated that it will be a one year transition period starting on or about July 1st and will give Montgomery Township a net savings of about \$600,000.00. There will be a reduction of staffing in Montgomery, but the County Office of Emergency Management Communication Headquarters will need more staffing for the job.

Mr. Fontana Indicated that the County will not be hiring more staff because it believes that the job can be done with its existing staff.

Ms. LoStocco asked that personal introductions be given, having not been done at the beginning of the meeting.

Mr. Maddocks asked that the Economic & Tourism Development report be given before Advocacy Influence because Mr. Fontana needed to leave for a another meeting and as a co-chair was to speak for ED.

Freeholder Fontana **Economic & Tourism Development**
Reviewed the long-range Economic Development plan initiated by the Somerset County Board of Chosen Freeholders and administered by the SCBP. He noted that the long range Economic Development plan is meant to be a working document not white paper. Once targeted industries are identified, implementation strategies will be developed for growing those industries in the county. Freeholders Fontana and Ciattarelli along with Dick Williams and John Maddocks visited the Courier News Editorial Board on April 14 to review the project.

Mr. Maddocks Reported to the Board that Freeholders Fontana and Ciattarelli formed an advisory group with representation from the SCBP with Donna LoStocco, Troy Fischer and Tim Comerford all sitting on the Advisory Board to help guide the project. Mr. Maddocks asked Jim Laskey to review the meeting with Commissioner Dilts referencing the Route 22 long and short term improvements and the Route 206 15N improvements.

- Mr. Laskey** Mr. Laskey indicated that the Rt. 206 bypass is scheduled for a 2010 start. Route 206 15N (Conrail Bridge) is estimated at \$30 million with no funding to complete that project. NJDOT staff and County Engineering staff are going to review the 15N project to see if any cost savings can be found. Mr. Laskey also mentioned the RT 22 long term project.
- Mr. Bzik** Mr. Bzik stated that the NJDOT will not hold up this project (Rt. 22 long term) and will request release of funds from the Federal Highway Administration.
- Mr. Laskey** The Commissioner has asked that 2 projects be implemented in the Rt. 22 short term initiative in 2009: 1.) The Rt. 22 East ramp, 2.) The Foothill Rd. light.
- Mr. Maddocks** Indicated that Rt. 22 is a critical economic corridor where thousands of people are employed and holds almost three quarters of a billion in commercial property. It was suggested that businesses will lose economic value over time if Route 22 is not addressed. A portion of Bridgewater residents have clearly voiced their desire not to see any change to this corridor and the business community has not made its voice heard as strongly as the residents. Mr. Maddocks reported that there have been some businesses that have sent letters to the Mayor and Council President of Bridgewater, but there are not as many businesses represented as residents at the Council Meetings.
- Ms. LoStocco** Encouraged the members of the Board who work and/or live in Bridgewater to make themselves heard on this matter. She let them know that a letter has been created and can be edited by them for their convenience to mail to the Mayor of Bridgewater referencing this matter.
- Ms. Charne** **Tourism**
Ms. Charne reported that she participated in a DMO Press Conference and was joined by 15 other DMO representatives to request sustainable funding for Tourism in NJ. (“Declaration of Destination” is asking for \$8 million in the 2010 to be used for tourism development for the state of NJ.) This is considered the first time that DMOs from across NJ have come together with the same goal. Currently the state budget is only \$6.5 million in comparison to PA whose budget is \$30 million. The small increase will help tourism development generate \$20 million in sales income and special taxes to the state.

Ms. Deas

Advocacy & Influence

Reported that EH&S committee has been evaluating the objectives and outcomes of the group and believes that it has identified several educational needs that will interest the SCBP membership. The 2009 focus of the committee will be the need for sustainable emergency shelters and business continuity planning.

Mr. Seliga

Mr. Seliga announced that on June 30th a seminar on “Business Continuity in Times of Disaster: How to Make Sure Your Business will Survive and Recover” will be held, and asked the Board to mark their calendars.

Ms. Deas reported that the SCBP arranged to have an exhibit at the 2009 GreenFest, which was sponsored by Ed Seliga of Advanced Solar Products, Inc, and offered discounted pricing for SCBP members exhibiting at the event. Volunteers were secured from the EH&S committee along with various members of the SCBP and the Somerset County Energy Council, to man the exhibit table for the 3 days of the event. A survey has been developed to determine the interests and needs of the SCBP membership.

Mr. Wright

Reported that a ZOOMERANG survey was developed to determine the effectiveness of the SCBP presence and participation at GreenFest. SCBP has received 14 inquiries from attendees about membership, which were referred to Diana Sieberg and Bob Lantelme.

Mr. Hollenbeck

Reported that GreenFest was a Star-Ledger event that PSE&G sponsored. Mr. Hollenbeck mentioned that if GreenFest is to be held in Somerset County again, The SCBP would have to work with the Star-Ledger to make that happen.

Ms. Deas

Ms. Deas reported that to date, Senator Bob Smith (April 3), Mr. Chris Christie (May 1), Commissioner Steve Dilts (June 5) and Senator Joseph Vitale (July 10) have all confirmed to speak at Legislative Affairs Committee meetings. Senator Vitale will be speaking about Universal Health Care, and Ms. Deas noted that there is still the need for a host for the meeting. A calendar of meeting dates and agenda has been created and is being maintained.

Ms. Deas stated that the Legislative Affairs Committee will be hosting a Gubernatorial Debate on September 10, 2009, and that planning for the event will begin in the second quarter.

Mr. Wolfskehl

Member Value & Engagement

Stated that as an organization that is so diverse and has so many different stakeholders, we should be focusing more on member value. He encouraged the Board to remember that member value and engagement is not just a focus for Diana and Bob, but should be the main focus for the whole organization.

- Ms. Sieberg** Announced that the SCBP has received a four-star accreditation with the US Chamber of Commerce. The SCBP is the only accredited chamber in the state of NJ and there are only 4% of chambers in the country with a four-star rating. A new Auto-Draft payment option has been implemented to help retain members who can not afford to pay their annual dues all at once, and to attract new members with the same issue.
Ms. Sieberg announced that the Outstanding Citizen and Quality of Life Dinner is coming up on May 6th. Dick Williams has been nominated as this year's Outstanding citizen and sanofi-aventis for the Quality of Life Award.
- Mr. Lantelme** Reported on the Gap Loan Program and explained that there are very specific needs that businesses are requesting, so most of them are referred to very specific business members for help (Ex: accountants, banks etc.) It is greatly appreciated that so many members have volunteered to help. To date, one loan has been approved and the process is starting on approving loans for more businesses. Mr. Lantelme discussed the "Follow the Leader" mentoring program that the ELSC is organizing and explained that since the program was introduced, there has been some response, but the ELSC was hoping to have more of the Board interested in participating.
- Ms. Jaeger** Ms. Jaeger asked for more information concerning time responsibility for mentors. She stated that although more board members may be interested, they may just not have the time to dedicate to the program. She said that she would appreciate more information to see if she could become involved.
- Ms. LoStocco** Ms. LoStocco agreed and also asked for more information. She asked Ms. Craig what primary business area the Emerging Leaders members would be interested in as far as finding a mentor.
- Ms. Craig** Indicated that although the Emerging Leaders represent a variety of business areas, she would venture to say that most Emerging Leaders members would like to find a mentor in sales.
- Mr. Lantelme** Indicated that he would have more information about the "Follow the Leader" program sent out to the Board for clarification on the responsibilities of becoming involved.
- Ms. LoStocco** **Closing Comments**
Ms. LoStocco stated that in these economic times, retaining and recruiting new members is difficult if the companies don't find the value in their membership. She mentioned that she had met with the SCBP staff and the CEO finalist recently and had a discussion about how to give more value to the members of the organization. Ms. LoStocco mentioned that she had brought up the idea that the membership should be viewed in groups (Small, Medium & Large

businesses) and the focus should be on finding out from these groups what they see as valuable since a large company would be looking for different areas of focus than a small or medium sized company. Ms. LoStocco suggested that the membership be surveyed to see what SCBP should target to provide the best value to its members. She encouraged the Board to give their suggestions and comments to help the staff find a plan to give more back to the membership.

Ms. Lustenberg Stated that although Ms. Deas has been successful in getting interesting speakers, the meetings are targeting a very limited audience. Ms. Lustenberg suggested that the efforts of the Legislative Affairs committee and the ELC be combined to make a revenue generating program that will hit a broader audience. She mentioned that the Union County ELC is a good model because they have a Board and sponsorship for their programs.

Mr. Maddocks Noted that the Legislative Affairs meetings are not free since the meetings are for members only, and to become a member dues are paid. The Legislative Affairs meetings are no additional charge to members as an added value for their membership.

Ms. Lustenburg Acknowledged Mr. Maddocks' point, but noted that if the membership was given the opportunity to attend an event with a high-profile speaker, they may be willing to pay for that event. Ms. Lustenberg volunteered to meet with Ms. Deas to discuss the effort.

Suggested that an extended Board of Directors meeting to brainstorm ways to reach our membership and offer maximum value.

Mr. Maddocks Asked the Board to remember that although the SCBP is willing to go in the direction that the Board asks it to go, the Strategic Plan needs to be followed, or changed to reflect the new direction that the staff is given.

Ms. LoStocco Agreed and noted that the Strategic Plan is in need of updating will be reviewed and updated with the new CEO. She stated that the focus should be changed in the Strategic Plan to reflect the times.

Ms. LoStocco thanked the Board for their input and asked that they share any more input that they may have either with her or with the SCBP staff.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:15 A.M.