

**Minutes**  
**Somerset County Business Partnership**  
**Board of Directors Meeting**  
**7:30 a.m.**  
**July 16, 2009**  
**Merrill Lynch**  
**Bridgewater, New Jersey**

**Attending:**

Dan Beldowicz  
Bill Blum  
Sheila Breeding  
Mark Chazin  
John Donnadio  
Troy Fischer  
Freeholder Director Rick Fontana  
Eliot Goldstein  
John Graf  
WSkip Hidlay  
David Hollenbeck  
Rich Jack  
Joanne Jaeger  
Sandra Kiser  
Alina Klein  
Mark Krane  
James Laskey  
Janis Lewandowski

Donna LoStocco  
James Lyons  
Mike Maddaluna  
Glenn McCreesh  
Freeholder Peter Palmer  
John Papa  
Chris Pfefferle  
Dan Puntillo  
Rich Reitman  
Henry Reynolds  
Theresa Richards  
Gail Rosen  
Ed Seliga  
Tim Taylor  
Dick Williams  
David Wolfskehl

**Guests:**

Keith Henry, Merrill Lynch  
Richard Canter, RAC3  
Beth Degnan, Affinity Federal Credit Union  
Caren Franzini, NJEDA

**Staff:**

Hannah Blumenthal  
Kimberly Charne  
Takeena Deas  
Mike Kerwin, CEO

Bob Lantelme  
John Maddocks  
Carol Soriano  
Peter Wright

*Chair Donna LoStocco called the meeting to order at 7:40 A.M.*

*Keith Henry from Merrill Lynch welcomed the Board, stating that in a difficult economic period the Business Partnership “is more relevant today than at any other time.”*

*The minutes of the April 16, 2009 meeting were approved unanimously.*

**Ms. Rosen     Finance**

The Financial Report as of June 30 shows an excess of \$3083 revenue over expenses. The Finance Committee does not expect this trend to continue through the year but cost reductions and fund raising efforts are proving very effective.

The question was raised regarding the \$99,000 in professional fees. This relates to the consultants hired for the Route 22 initiative and the Long Range Economic Development Plan. The latter expense is balanced by a contribution from the Freeholders.

**Ms. LoStocco** Noted that the organization is showing a positive financial impact from cost controls that have been put in place.

*The Finance Committee report was approved unanimously.*

**Mr. Kerwin** Detailed the progress of the Strategic Planning process noting that the interim marketing plan, designed to attract new members and investors, has been completed. He has initiated a strategic planning process with the officers, meeting on Friday afternoons, with the expectation of releasing the results by the end of August.

Committees are asked to meet to contribute their discussion to the planning process.

The Strategic Plan will dictate the new program of work based on the “new normal.”

**Ms. LoStocco** Advised that the Board meetings have been restructured to enhance dialogue. Staff is seeking greater feedback from Directors.

**Ms. Deas** The “Affordability Forum” is scheduled for October 2, in cooperation with the Courier News. Both major party gubernatorial candidates have been invited to participate. It will be a solutions-based forum seeking suggestions to make New Jersey more affordable.

**Mr. Graf** Noted that Chris Daggett, a third candidate, should be considered.

**Mr. Hidlay** The Courier News and the Partnership are taking advantage of the competitive gubernatorial race to address key issues in the forum rather than listen to a formal

debate among the candidates. The candidates will be asked to make a 15 minute statement followed by questions. Panel discussion on key issues will follow. Potential subjects include Collective Bargaining and Pension Reform; Health Care Reform; Housing Costs.

There is a need for volunteers with expertise to participate on the panels and provide real world testimony on the selected subjects. Contact Ms. Deas at the Partnership.

- Mr. Palmer** Noted that the forum must maintain a positive tone and be solutions focused.
- Mr. Graf** Suggested that diversity, multi-cultural issues, and paid family leave be considered at topics for the forum.
- Ms. Rosen** Suggested discussion of tax issues and impact on the business community.
- Mr. Puntillo** Staff will need to set priorities for the organization based on the discussion at the forum.
- Ms. Breeding** The issues will become the agenda for the 2010 Legislative Affairs Committee.
- Mr. Laskey** The forum will allow staff to determine the level of support by the Governor on the key issues.
- Mr. Palmer** Noted that the Legislature has the final say on solutions to key issues.
- Mr. Krane** There is a need for continuing dialogue between government and the business community.
- Mr. Hidlay** Suggested adding the topic of Taxes with a subtopic of Collective Bargaining.
- Ms. Breeding** Invited Board members to the Legislative Affairs meetings on the first Friday of each month to contribute ideas for development of the forum subject matter.
- Ms. LoStocco** Introduced CEO of the New Jersey Economic Development Authority Caren Franzini.
- Ms. Franzini** The NJEDA is 35 years old and is all about job creation. They provide fee for services to the business community and are a self-sustaining organization.

They have recently provided financing for Duke Farms renovations, the Fellowship Village solar project, corporate re-financing technology loans, and BEIP programs.

They are overseeing a \$50 million Main Street program that provides access to capital for small and medium sized businesses. They are also partnering with banks to provide loans up to \$250,000 for stressed businesses.

Invest NJ is a program that provide a \$3000 grant per unit for new job creation.

The recently passed Permit Extension legislation is a good step in the direction to sustain business growth.

Authority is working with developers to advance projects. The Economic Recovery Grant program, when signed by the Governor, will allow a portion of development to be returned to the developer over time.

Clean energy programs are creating the next major business sector in the state based on the elements of the state's Energy Master Plan.

**Ms. Allison RideWise**

RideWise is working to better integrate into the overall Business Partnership program of work by focusing on environmental sustainability. Car and van pools efforts reduce emissions and contribute to the dictates of the Energy Master Plan. The organization is tracking methods to reduce Somerset County's carbon footprint.

**Mr. Maddocks** Phase II of the Long Term Economic Development Plan is in preparation. The Phase I plan is to be found on the Business Partnership and County web sites.

**Ms. Charne** The Partnership has applied for a \$152,000 Destination Marketing grant that will be applied to attraction efforts for the hospitality industry in the county.

**Mr. Kerwin** Noted that this is the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Chamber of Commerce and a birthday party is being scheduled at a Somerset Patriots baseball game.

**Mr. Wright** The Economic Development Tool Kit has been distributed to all 21 municipalities to assist them in including an economic development component into their respective master plans.

**Mr. Fontana** Announced that Sen. Lance's office informed him that \$1.125 million appropriation for Route 22 is included in the latest transportation funding legislation. Must be approved by the Senate.

**Mr. Kerwin** Thanked Freeholder Palmer for his effort moving the transportation issues forward, particularly the effort to repave a section of Route 22 at Route 202/206.

***Meeting was adjourned at 9:05 A.M.***