

**Minutes**  
**Somerset County Business Partnership**  
**Board of Directors Meeting**  
**7:30 a.m.**  
**January 22, 2009**  
**PNC Wealth Management**  
**Bridgewater, New Jersey**

**Attending:**

William Amann  
Dan Beldowicz  
Sheila Breeding  
Phil Brown  
Casey Crabill  
Gillian Craig  
Tim Comerford  
John Donnadio  
Troy Fischer  
Freeholder Director Rick Fontana  
Eliot Goldstein  
Walt Hansen  
Skip Hidlay  
David Hollenbeck  
Rich Jack  
Joanne Jaeger  
Pam Jasones  
Mike Kerwin  
Sandra Kiser  
Alina Klein

James Laskey  
Donna LoStocco  
James Lyons  
Mike Maddaluna  
Glenn McCreesh  
Larry Morris  
Freeholder Peter Palmer  
John Papa  
Chris Pfefferle  
Dan Puntillo  
Rich Reitman  
Henry Reynolds  
Steve Reynolds  
Theresa Richards  
Gail Rosen  
Jeffrey Schneider  
Paul Stahlin  
William Taylor  
David Wolfskehl

**Guests:**

Chuck Knill, Somerset Valley YMCA  
Ed Seliga, Advanced Solar Products, Inc.

**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 7:37 A.M.*

*Welcome by Steve Reynolds representing PNC Wealth Management*

*The minutes from October 16, 2008 were moved by Mike Maddaluna and seconded by Mr. Comerford. Passed unanimously.*

**Mr. Laskey** As outgoing Chair, Mr. Laskey noted the challenges faced in 2008 with the resignation of President/CEO Horn and the economic downturn. He complimented the staff for adapting to the major issues and making the year a success from both a programmatic and financial standpoint

**Ms. Rosen** **Finance**  
Year end showed \$19,883 in excess revenue over expenses. Though 2008 revenue was less than expected, due to diligence of the staff, expenses were also significantly less than budgeted.

The 2009 revenue projections are the same as 2008.

It was noted that the 2009 budget was passed by unanimous vote by the Executive Committee.

**Ms. LoStocco** Credited staff for their tremendous effort to maintain programs and services while paring expenses to meet budget projections.

**Mr. Sharpe** **President's Report**  
Thanks the staff and volunteer leadership for their efforts in making 2008 a successful year on all fronts.

Presented the 2009 challenge to get everyone engaged in the activities of the Business Partnership. To prosper we have to stay positive and creative while we wait for the economic upturn. The Business Partnership will serve as the most valued resource for business as the downturn continues. Specific services are being provided to business to help combat the crisis.

The Small Business Resource Committee has developed programs including an ID Theft Compliance Workshop, Gap Loan program, and the Business Resource Hotline, The Business Partnership will serve as the clearing house for assistance resources from organizations including the SBDC, SBA, and EDA.

The Spotlight on Somerset theme will be continued in 2009, though the week-long series of events that was presented in 2008 will not be scheduled. Specific events throughout the year will be designated as Spotlight on Somerset events.

The Partnership is also working with state agencies and legislators to advance legislation that will make it easier to do business in New Jersey.

Mr. Sharpe noted that the list of 2008 accomplishments was included in the Board packet.

Mr. Sharpe is planning a series of one-on-one discussions with all Board members to determine what is being done right, what is wrong, and what is missing in the Partnership operations.

**Ms. LoStocco**

**RideWise**

There was an increase in ride sharing participants in 2008 over 2007.

One RideWise program is teaching special needs students at Hillsborough High School how to utilize mass transit services.

Staff is also working with individual companies to develop transportation plans for their employees.

**Mr. Wright**

**Public Leadership**

The goal of the 2009 work program is to “reach for the higher fruit” than has been done on the past. There is a need to build on past successes in shared services, green initiatives, and legislative issues.

Focus will be on getting municipal governments and school districts together with other groups to investigate sharing and a regional delivery of services.

Staff will be participating with Somerset Medical Center on a green event featuring Ed Begley Jr.

**Mr. Seliga**

The Green Building initiative is continuing to get very positive response statewide. Safety and wellness issues are being integrated into the Green Building program.

There is also an initiative working to assure that existing buildings are prepared for use as emergency shelters.

**Ms. Deas**

**Advocacy & Influence**

The 2009 program will increase the value and recognition of the Partnership initiatives at all levels of government.

A Gubernatorial Candidate Forum is planned for the fall.

**Ms. Breeding**

**Legislative Affairs**

The key component of the committee will be face-to-face meetings with elected representatives and appointed officials from key departments.

The committee will be proactive on issues brought to the floor in a Policy Summit. Focus will be on legislative issues that will help businesses sustain through the economic downturn. Somerset County will be well positioned to take advantage of business related issues coming out of Trenton.

There will be an increased focus on sustainability issues.

**Mr. Palmer**

Noted that newly elected Congressman Leonard Lance is a member of the Financial Services Committee and should be a guest at a Legislative Affairs meeting.

**Mr. Fontana**

Mentioned that he had already reached out to the Congressman.

**Mr. Maddocks**

**Economic & Tourism Development**

Efforts focus on fulfillment of the strategic plan.

Regarding Route 22, Congress did not appropriate any money for Route 22 in 2008, though the legislation is still on the floor. There is potential for funding in March of 2009 by passage of a Continuing Resolution.

Due to budget cuts, there is no longer a staff person dedicated to business retention efforts. The focus for 2009 will be on attraction and growth.

**Mr. Fontana**

The Freeholders economic development initiative is focused on isolating the next emerging industry for Somerset County to enable recruitment activities.

Freeholder Palmer is Somerset County's point person on transportation issues as a member of the NJTPA. The county is inventorying shovel ready projects for anticipated funding with economic stimulus money.

**Ms. Charne**

The Culinary Invitational for 2008 was a success and work is already being done for the 2009 event that will be held on November 23 at the Imperia in Somerset.

Steve Forbes has committed to be the speaker at the May 29 Fifth Friday Friars Luncheon to be held at Trump National Golf Club.

The 2009 program of work will focus on enhancement of the tourism website and application for the Cooperative Marketing grant for the state.

**Mr. Comerford** Explained that the Smart Growth Economic Development Coalition is working on legislation to enhance business in New Jersey, similar to the efforts of the Legislative Affairs Committee.

A significant issue impacting business is the COAH regulation that affects every municipality in the state. If the regulations placed on developers are not modified, it will be difficult for developers to take advantage of the coming economic upturn.

**Mr. Palmer** The COAH obligations will have to be addressed from both the developers and the municipal standpoint as a balance will need to be created.

**Mr. Lantelme** **Member Value & Engagement**  
The Emerging Leaders are scheduling more creative events for 2009, moving away from standard networking events to more educational and entertaining initiatives.

**Mr. Stahlin** The Small Business Resources Committee is developing programs to help businesses through difficult times. He noted that Somerset County remains in a better economic position than most areas.

**Ms. Sieberg** The Reaccreditation application has been submitted to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce with the decision expected in March. There is no reason to expect that Reaccreditation will not continue. The Partnership remains the only accredited Chamber in New Jersey and has enjoyed that status for 25 years.

Noted that 2009 represents the 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Somerset County Chamber of Commerce. A strong marketing effort will support this event.

A Features & Benefits Task Force is being convened to address upgrade to the website and development of a new membership brochure.

**Ms. Rosen** Invited everyone going to Washington on the January 29 Chamber Train to come to the Business Partnership party before the Congressional Dinner at the Wardmann Park Hotel.

**Ms. LoStocco** The Partnership should focus on what has the greatest impact on the improvement of the economic situation for businesses. The organization must use every dollar entrusted for the benefit of the business community.

She requested that the Board provide feedback on ways that the organization can help.

***Meeting was adjourned at 8:40 A.M.***