



D R A F T

**MINUTES OF THE ECONOMIC AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON
April 11, 2013**

The Economic Affairs Committee convened at 11:00 a.m.

Economic Affairs Committee Members Present: Leilani Ulrich (Agency Chairwoman) Arthur Lussi (Economic Affairs Committee Chair), Frank Mezzano, Robert Stegemann (DEC), William Thomas. Patrick Hooker (DED) was absent

Other Members or Designees Present: Richard Booth, Sherman Craig, Bill Valentino, Cecil Wray. Dierdre Scozzafava (DOS) was absent.

Agency Staff Present: Jim Connolly (Acting Executive Director), Jim Townsend (Counsel), Dan Kelleher (Special Assistant-Economic Affairs). Terry Martino (Executive Director) was absent.

Others Present: Frederick Monroe (Executive Director, Local Government Review Board)

Chairman Lussi opened the meeting at 11:10 am. On motion by Frank Mezzano, and seconded by Bill Thomas, the March 14, 2013 minutes were approved unanimously.

Dan Kelleher provided the following update:

Mr. Kelleher informed the Board that he has been working with staff to develop this year's Local Government Day conference, to be held April 24 and 25, 2013. This year's conference will emphasize economic development strategies that can be utilized by local communities.

He also explained that staff will be participating in the second phase of the Hamlets 3 project. In Phase 2, the group will be working with three new community clusters on implementing projects through the planning model developed in Phase 1. Those communities are the towns of Jay, Caroga, Long Lake and Indian Lake.

Presentation by Sootbusters, LLC

Mr. Kelleher introduced Ursula Vaillancourt, co-owner of the business Sootbusters and more recently Treebusters. Ms. Vaillancourt gave a presentation on her and her husband Mike's diversified small business.

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Sootbusters is a full-service chimney company that provides repairs and maintenance, inspections, cleaning, soot removal, and lining repair and installation. The company also offers tree work, wood pellet delivery, wood pellet stove sales and installation and clean up services.

Ms. Vaillancourt noted that she and her husband had worked for the previous owner of the company and purchased the business in 2007. She explained some of the changes implemented to help the business be more successful.

She said they have greatly increased customer service by promptly returning phone calls and offering referral incentives. She highlighted that Sootbusters takes great pride in the company logo and displays it on all equipment. They are a fully insured and certified business.

The company fully trains and certifies all their employees. They have two full time employees and two part-time employees year round. Last year they employed ten total people during the year. The company is constantly diversifying to keep their employees employed longer throughout the year by adding services such as snow removal from roofs and snow plowing.

Ms. Vaillancourt explained that the company invested heavily in equipment that can have multiple uses. For example, she noted that their bucket trucks can do everything from chimney repair to tree work to construction. The equipment can be used for both Sootbusters and Treebusters.

Ms. Vaillancourt believes networking has contributed to the company's success; Sootbusters supports local events and sponsors various teams for sporting events. They became sponsors for the US Women's Bobsled Team by organizing a fundraiser and making a matching donation. Mr. Vaillancourt belongs to the local Rotary and she belongs to BNI.

Besides traditional advertising Ms. Vaillancourt reaches out to realtors, inspectors and caretakers to offer services. She believes her greatest advertising is word of mouth, hence the emphasis on customer service.

The Board complimented her on a great presentation and sound business practices. Ms. Vaillancourt was presented a certificate of appreciation.

The meeting closed at 12:05 pm.