

**Steuben County Industrial Development Agency
7234 Route 54 N, P.O. Box 393, Bath, NY 14810**

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting
June 24, 2021**

Because of the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Emergency and pursuant to Governor Andrew Cuomo’s Executive Order allowing for the extension of public meetings to be held remotely, the Steuben County Industrial Development Agency held this Board meeting via electronic webinar instead of a public meeting open for the public to attend in person.

I. Call to Order – The Regular Meeting of the Steuben County Industrial Development Agency (IDA) was called to order at 12:01 pm by Chairman Mark Alger. Chairman Alger confirmed that there was a quorum present.

Present:	Mark Alger	Chairman
	Scott VanEtten	Vice Chairman
	Dean Strobel	Secretary
	Tony Russo	Treasurer
	Mike Nisbet	Board Member
	Christine Sharkey	Board Member
	James Johnson	Executive Director
	Jill Staats	IDA Staff
	Russ Gaenzle	IDA Counsel

Absent:	Mike Davidson	Board Member
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Guests:	Stacy Housworth	Future IDA Staff
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II. Secretary’s Report – A motion to approve the May 27, 2021 IDA Regular Meeting minutes was made by Nisbet and seconded by Russo. All voted in favor and the motion was carried.

III. Treasurer’s Report

a. April, May and June Update – Johnson introduced Stacy Housworth as the new Finance and Compliance Manager for the IDA; she starts on July 12. Stacy’s first task will be reviewing the April financials and compiling the financial statements for May and June. The financial statements may not be ready by the July 22 Board meeting, therefore special meetings may be set up between Stacy and members of the Finance Committee to review the statements as they become available. They would be presented to the full board at the August meeting.

IV. New Business

- a. BLW Properties (Wilkins RV) Inducement** – Johnson presented a request for property and sales tax benefits from BLW Properties, LLC which is the operating company for Wilkins RV. He noted that the company currently has a PILOT with the IDA that would be restated to include the new benefit. The company is proposing a \$2.7 million investment to expand the service side of the business from 20 to 28 bays at its Bath facility. The need for expansion stems from sales growth of 33%, which will result in more RVs needing service. And with service lead times in the six to eight-week range across upstate NY, Wilkins sees an opportunity for growth. In addition, there are no paint booths at any RV dealership on upstate NY, so Wilkins will be adding that service to fill the void. Close to 12,000 RVs were sold in New York in 2020; Wilkins sold 11% of them. About 45% of the 2,400 they sold were purchased by out-of-state customers. The company listed 90 retained jobs to be consistent with the information listed on the CFA grant application the company will be submitted to the state in June. Ten jobs will be created with the expansion. The resulting 287:1 benefit to cost ratio reflects the retention of jobs and the minimal savings to be received from IDA benefits, which will total \$223,000. Johnson noted that the town is reviewing its approval process for this project and the IDA may have to perform its own SEQR. The project is presented for IDA benefits based on a good or service not otherwise provided, and Scott VanEtten will be asked to attest to such as the leader of the county legislature. VanEtten motioned to accept the application and allow staff to schedule a public hearing; Sharkey seconded the motion. VanEtten then asked for a clarification on the structure of the PILOT schedule, and Alger asked if SEQR needed to be completed prior to this vote. Alger then called for a vote and all voted in favor; the motion was carried.
- b. Thurston Ridge Solar Inducement** – Staats presented a request for benefits from Nexamp for a solar project in Thurston. Thurston Ridge Solar is a \$9 million, 5 MW community solar project that will be built on 30 acres. The property is currently vacant farmland. SEQR was performed by NYSERDA and a decommissioning plan is in place with the town. Property and sales tax benefits have been requested, which led to an 11:1 benefit to cost ratio. A motion was made by Sharkey to accept the application and allow staff to schedule a public hearing; Nisbet made a second. All voted in favor and the motion was carried.
- i. As a side note to the solar discussion, Johnson discussed the initiatives going on at the state level through NYSERDA, Dept. of Tax & Finance and NYSEDC to create a methodology for assessing solar projects. IDA staff has attended various meetings with all parties to provide input on how that methodology should work.
 - ii. Johnson also discussed the possibility of increasing the applications fees because the closings of renewable energy projects tend to be delayed. This causes the administrative fee to be delayed as a result, so the many staff hours put into these projects are not quickly compensated. Another option provided by Gaenzle is to add an expiration date to the approval so that closings occur in a timely fashion. Johnson indicated he will benchmark with other IDAs and bring the information back to the Board.

c. **Canisteo Solar I Inducement** – Staats presented a second request for benefits from Nexamp, with this one being a solar farm in Hornellsville. Canisteo Solar is a \$9 million, 5 MW community solar project that will be built on 22 acres. The property is currently being farmed for soybeans, however only 10% of the 217 acres will be taken offline for the solar farm. Nexamp and the owner have structured a deal to allow for sheep grazing where the array will be built. A negative declaration was issued by the town and the site plan was approved. The decommissioning plan is still being ironed out and will be provided prior to IDA final approval. Property and sales tax benefits have been requested, which led to an 8:1 benefit to cost ratio. A motion was made by Nisbet to accept the application and allow staff to schedule a public hearing; Strobel made a second. All voted in favor and the motion was carried.

V. **Old Business**

a. **Eight Point Wind Public Hearing** – Johnson noted that no one attended the public hearing other than Board Member Dean Strobel. The project will be brought back to the Board for final approval later this year.

b. **Bright Hill Solar Assignment** – Staats reported that Nautilus Solar has requested the benefits provided to this project be assigned to a new LLC under its ownership umbrella. Nisbet asked if there was any risk in the assignment, and Gaenzle responded that there was not a risk and that this transaction was very common within the solar industry. A motion was made by VanEtten to assign the benefits and Strobel seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion was carried.

VI. **Next Meeting (July 22, 2021)** – Johnson noted that the next Board meeting is scheduled for July 22, but staff would be looking at the calendar and agenda to determine if meetings could be combined over the summer months. He reminded the group of the opportunity to hold a future meeting at the new First Heritage Federal Credit Union meeting room later this year.

VII. **Adjournment** – With no further business to discuss, a motion was made by Nisbet to adjourn the meeting at 12:58 pm, which was seconded by VanEtten. All voted in favor and the motion was approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Dean Strobel
Secretary

A full video recording of the meeting can be found at:
<https://www.steubencountyida.com/docs/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/2021-06-24-12-01-14.mp4>