

Fourth Special Meeting
July 26, 2006

The Fourth Special Meeting of 2006 was called to order by the Chair at 10:06 A.M. Seven Legislative members were present, Legislators Oberbeck and Roberts being absent.

The Chair asked for a moment of silence on behalf of all our Veterans serving around the world.

Chair Burns led all Legislators and those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance.

There were 2 people in attendance.

Elaine Jardine, County Planning Director, spoke. “I am reading a statement today from Shawn Yetter, Commissioner of Social Services, as he could not make it. He is in New York City, but he did want to make a statement.

“Governor Pataki’s announcement of funding for the 2006 State Disaster Relief, Temporary Housing Assistance Grant Program, offers an opportunity for devastated families and households to receive up to \$2,500 in assistance for Rental Assistance, Food, Furniture and Utility Payments. Tioga County can receive up to \$250,000, giving us the opportunity to provide this grant to 100 families or more.

“It became clear while providing supportive services at the Disaster Relief Center, that many of the most severely impacted families are grateful for any and all support that they receive to assist in rebuilding their homes and their lives. Social Services served over 500 families in one capacity or another at the Disaster Relief Center. While many of these families were individuals who have relied on our systems in the past, a large number were not. In the midst of all of its tragedy, it has been impressive to see that the State and Federal governments have come forward with what is grassroots, accessible dollars to assist in significant ways. This funding source is but one piece of the puzzle for rebuilding our communities and the lives touched by the flood. It can be efficiently managed and monitored by shared responsibility with Tioga Opportunities, Inc., Tioga County Department of Economic Development and Planning, and Tioga County Department of Social Services. This opportunity to bring additional relief dollars into our County should not be ignored.”

Legislator Huttleston spoke. “That is \$250,000 for 100 families?”

Elaine Jardine spoke. “Or more because it is going to be up to \$2,500 per family.”

Legislator Huttleston spoke. "The grant is for \$250,000. That would be 100 families."

Doug Barton, Economic Development & Planning Director, spoke. "Some may only get \$2,000."

Legislator Huttleston spoke. "I guess the question I have is have you surveyed the number of families that could possibly be eligible?"

Elaine Jardine spoke. "Right because we have to give preference to low and moderate income housing so we have to make sure we serve at least 50% low-to-moderate income household families first, and then the remainder can go to non-income eligible families."

Legislator Huttleston spoke. "I assume that the government is putting out 25 million, but it is distributed based on the amount of disaster in each County. How did they determine \$250,000 for Tioga?"

Elaine Jardine spoke. "For this particular program and this is only for temporary assistance for food, utility payments, furniture, and rental assistance. There are other programs out there for construction and rehabilitation of housing and other items, but this is a very specific small program."

Legislator Huttleston spoke. "I guess if I was in Broome County and they were giving us \$250,000 it would not go very far for the amount of disaster they had up there."

Legislator Quinlan spoke. "I think you are doing a marvelous job and I really think that getting this grant, anytime you get money from the government and help people, give it to people, it is a wonderful wonderful thing. When I was Mayor we tried to get grants and we always were turned down. If you can get any money from the Federal Government to help these people that need it God bless you."

Doug Barton, Economic Development & Planning Director, spoke. "There is one other point that we had discussed when we had originally brought this to you at the very beginning stages. The best opportunity to manage this money properly has been determined in meetings between Elaine, Social Services, and Tioga Opportunities is that Tioga Opportunities has the mechanism in place to manage a program of this type most efficiently. The one difference that we had with our discussion is that Tioga Opportunities does want 4% management fee that is allowed under the terms of this grant. They will be managing the grant and they will be utilizing the 4% fee."

Legislator Sauerbrey spoke. “So this is a change from what we discussed last week?”

Elaine Jardine spoke. “That is correct. They will require the 4% administrative fee.”

Doug Barton spoke. “At that point in time we were not sure who was going to manage. We decided that if it were a County department we would not, but I think that through the discussions Tioga Opportunities really is in a better position to manage it and they are used to doing projects like this”

Legislator Sauerbrey spoke. “That is great. I am concerned that they are not overcome, that they can run this program efficiently, that they can get response from the community. Are they stating that they will do that?”

Elaine Jardine spoke. “Yes, Bob Hildebrand has been part of this. I just met with Kathleen Horner and Bob Hildebrand this morning to talk with the Governor’s Office of Small Cities Representative, and they have agreed to do it. They are talking about adding a staff person because they have not only this program, but other programs such as we were talking about earlier to administer and distribute.”

Legislator Sauerbrey spoke. “This is not a criticism. We recently had a meeting where we talked about providing services for the community and one of the things that Tioga Opportunities is doing now is collecting names of people that have needs in the community. United Way is collecting the names of the volunteers and they are meshing them together. I would hope that this additional activity will not burden them so that there would be people answering the phones and response. I do not know how we can carry that message, but there needs to be answered phone calls and people responding to needs. I do not know what we can do to make that point clear.”

Doug Barton spoke. “I am more comfortable in that they said they are going to put staff on.”

Legislator Sauerbrey spoke. “Additionally, specifically for this activity?”

Elaine Jardine spoke. “Yes for this and the other flood relief activities that they are involved in.”

Legislator Weston spoke. “What oversight do we have through our agencies with that or are we just turning it over to them completely and washing our hands of it for the \$10,000?”

Elaine Jardine spoke. "No, to term them as manager would be incorrect, they will be the grants administrator, and I would assume that Planning would still serve as the project manager, and we would be controlling the connection between the Governor's Office of Small Cities, the County Treasurer's Office, and the draw downs to Tioga Opportunities."

Legislator Sauerbrey spoke. "Now the 4% administration fee does not come out of the grant?"

Elaine Jardine spoke. "Yes it does. So \$240,000 will actually be going to an average of maybe 100 families, something like that, but we could get more if the families request less. A lot of this is going to be fluid and dynamic, but they do need the money. It is an enormous amount of work that we are not prepared to do and they always work with the Governor's Office of Small Cities on these programs. They are definitely more qualified to do the administration part of it and the distribution."

Legislator Huttleston spoke. "As I understand you are going to apply for the grant through your Department, but then Tioga Opportunities is going to administer it."

Elaine Jardine spoke. "Yes that is correct. We will have to have a contract."

Legislator Huttleston spoke. "The biggest problem is the people getting the word out to the people. I do not know how they are going to handle that."

Elaine Jardine spoke. "Right and I have talked with Social Services about that. Shawn, Val Nitti, Bob Hildebrand, and myself have been meeting continuously during this past week, and they say they usually run through Maureen for the legal ads and the public notices, and we will be posting it everywhere. They will be talking to Supervisors. Caseworkers will be talking about it with their clients. We will get the word out."

Legislator Huttleston spoke. "I suggest too sometimes it would be better if you had a public hearing or some kind of announcement in the paper where the flood victims and everyone could come, and then you get the word out to them all at once, rather than piece meal. What happens, some of the people are maybe a little more illiterate and so on. I have some people up in my District, they are an elderly couple that they do not know where to turn. They have had trouble. FEMA has been there three times. Their house, the foundation went in. It is probably going to be condemned, but they keep telling me that everybody keeps coming and looking, but they do not hear anything happening or anything to help them. This is the biggest problem I think with a lot of this is people do not know where to turn because it is something that they do not go through every year. It is something they

go through maybe once in a lifetime. I would suggest that somewhere, if you do get the grant, that you have a public forum and publicize it well and let the people come. Maybe have the applications or whatever they need right there, rather than trying to do it one on one.”

Elaine Jardine spoke. “Certainly we will have some kind of advertising campaign in the Pennysaver, what have you. The grant actually does require a citizen participation plan.”

Legislator Quinlan spoke. “I would just like to comment, as we sit here a lot of people have never been through a flood. I have been through two of them. If we can help these people, we should help them. We can set an example. Tioga County can set an example. We know what happened to Katrina and all this stuff, and I think Doug is right about the administration part of it. Let Tioga Opportunities handle it. They will do a good job. They have got a good name. Anything we can do to help, Tioga County can set an example because a lot of these people are very very slow. They do not realize what it is to go through a flood and if you see these people, I have seen them from Greene to Deposit and so on sitting there just wondering. They have not got a dime and they are asking for help, and if Tioga County can set an example, if this gal can get this grant, and I think she can. I do not think this 4% is a lot of money if you get that grant and let them handle it, and they will do a good job.”

Legislator Huttleston spoke. “You have to understand too Andy since that was presented to us at the other meeting, we met with the Governor up at the airport and fortunately there is some more money, 50 million. It said in the paper next day 45 million, but I think he told us up at the airport the State is putting an extra 50 million in. There is other money too coming down the pike which is good.”

Elaine Jardine spoke. “That other money will go through Tioga Opportunities as well.”

Legislator Sauerbrey spoke. “Did you get notification from that because that is what I was waiting to hear?”

Elaine Jardine spoke. “Bob Hildebrand has talked with the Governor’s Office of Small Cities and DHCR.”

Legislator Quinlan spoke. “I think it is a wonderful program, I really do. I mean they need help and if you can help anybody, help them, especially these flood victims. My wife is a very concerned person and she never says anything. I took her on a trip from Deposit to Waverly just interviewing these people, talking to them. I do not know what the Governor or Libous, or any of these guys did, but we

talked to maybe 150 families that do not have a dime and they are wondering where they are going to get some help, and we can set an example. Tioga County can set an example for these people, for everybody if we try to help. That is why we are here, to help.”

REFERRED TO:

ED&P COMMITTEE

RESOLUTION NO. 183-06

*RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE
2006 STATE DISASTER RELIEF
TEMPORARY HOUSING
ASSISTANCE GRANT PROGRAM*

Adoption moved by Legislator Sauerbrey,
seconded by Legislator Harrington.

WHEREAS: Due to the expansive statewide damage caused by the June 2006 flood, Governor Pataki has created a \$25 million relief package to supplement gaps in federal assistance; and

WHEREAS: NYS Governor’s Office for Small Cities (GOSC) has been allocated \$3 million of this relief package to make funding available to residents with immediate housing needs as a result of damage from the flood through the 2006 State Disaster Relief, Temporary Housing Grant Program; and

WHEREAS: GOSC is assigning grant coordination, administration and distribution to the counties and the maximum grant available is \$250,000 per county and a maximum of \$2,500 per displaced family, and

WHEREAS: Eligible expenses for displaced families include rent, food, furniture and utility payments; and

WHEREAS: This grant program requires two public hearings prior to the August 14, 2006 grant submission deadline; therefore be it

RESOLVED: That the Tioga County Legislature will hold two public meetings to receive public input regarding this grant application on Friday, August 4, 2006 at 1:30 P.M. and Thursday, August 10, 2006 at 1:30 P.M., both meetings to be held at the Edward D. Hubbard Auditorium in the Tioga County Office Building at 56 Main Street, Owego, NY.

Roll Call:

Ayes 07

Noes 00

Absent 02

CARRIED

Legislator Harrington made a motion to adjourn at 10:23 A.M., seconded by Legislator Huttleston and motion to adjourn was carried.