

JUNE 28, 2007

COMMUNITY ENRICHMENT COMMITTEE
REPORT NO. 8

ALL MEMBERS PRESENT.

1. RESOLVED, the following item is hereby received and filed:

a. COMM. 12M-5 (2007)
ANGELA P. GEORGI: Funding for Arts and Culture
(4-0)

2. INTRO 9-13 (2007)

IANNELLO & KONST

WHEREAS, the Erie County Fiscal Stability Authority (ECFSA) is a public authority of the State of New York and, as such has been granted authority to approve the allocation of certain State funds to promote efficient government within Erie County; and

WHEREAS, a total of \$18 million was put in the care of the ECFSA to utilize at the discretion of the board, known as "efficiency grant" funding; and

WHEREAS, in 2006, a proposal was put forth to ensure greater future funding for the Buffalo Niagara Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) through the dedication of the hotel occupancy tax ("bed tax") to tourism marketing, which included a necessary "start-up" grant of approximately \$2.1 million of efficiency grant funding; and

WHEREAS, a consensus existed for the merit of the proposal and investment in the CVB, which provides a 20-1 return on investment paid for by out-of-town visitors, thus positively impacting the local tax burden on Erie County residents; and

WHEREAS, despite the conceptual support, the ECFSA was unable to award the grant as it did not fill the State requirement of an investment in reform that creates "cost savings"; and

WHEREAS, the CVB proposal is a clear example of opportunities that exist for reform in Erie County that are worthy of efficiency grant funding in the great benefit they offer to Erie County taxpayers, but do not meet the stringent criteria laid out in the efficiency grant legislation; and

WHEREAS, to date, the bulk of the \$18 million in funds designated for efficiency reforms in Erie County remains unutilized; and .

WHEREAS, that opportunities for Erie County to derive benefit from the designated efficiency grant funding are numerous, although many of these opportunities would not fall under the classification of "cost savings."

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, that the Erie County Legislature requests that the New York State Legislature amend the language which authorizes the use of efficiency grant funds for "cost savings" only, to include the ability to invest in other efficiency reforms, more specifically those that create opportunities for revenue enhancement; and be it further

RESOLVED, that certified copies of this resolution be sent to the Erie County Fiscal Stability Authority, Governor Spitzer, NYS Comptroller DiNapoli, The Western New York Delegation, County Executive Giambra, County Comptroller Poloncarz and the Buffalo Niagara Convention and Visitors Bureau.

(3-1) Legislator Ranzenhofer voted in the negative.

MICHELE M. IANNELLO
CHAIRPERSON