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Development council creates groups at second meeting

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Rochester, N.Y. — Lt. Gov. Bob Duffy admits that he's biased.

But the former Rochester mayor says the Finger Lakes Economic Development Council brings together some of the best of the region.

"When was the last time you've looked around and seen who is in this room working together?" Duffy said. "It's extra bodes really well for the region."

The second meeting of the Finger Lakes Economic Development Council on Tuesday at Monroe Community College organization, and seemingly some optimism, to a deadline-oriented process. Coming together was the approval of a statement, as well as the creation of 10 different work groups to be led by local leaders from both in and outside of the

Those workgroups will help make up the final, five-year strategic plan for the region.

Council co-chair Joel Seligman, president of the University of Rochester, says the group is moving "so fast we're dev we move along." With two meetings already gone, a final strategic plan must be delivered by a sixth meeting before 14 deadline.

After the plans are submitted, four top plans will receive \$40 million in grant money and tax credits out of an available with all the plans receiving additional portions. A common grant application will be available for the councils for a portion million in state funds.

Though the minds at the council's meetings and work group sessions will crafting the plan itself, Seligman also said and public comment, will be included in the process. Tuesday's meeting also included the announcement of three public meetings, to be held in Batavia, Rochester and Geneva, towards the end of August. And there will be a public hearing, is approved for additional comments to be factored in, he said.

"We want this to be as inclusive a process as we can have, and at the same time, we're under enormous time pressure. We want to be sure we can deliver an outstanding strategic plan on Nov. 14, and that date is non-negotiable."

Gathered at the table were representatives of a nine-county region, including Monroe and Ontario counties. The 21 included the gamut of heads of successful companies to industry representatives, including the likes of Robert Sands, chief of Constellation Brands, Sandra Parker, president and chief executive officer of Rochester Business Alliance, William president of Rochester Institute of Technology, and Pamela Heald, president and chief executive officer of Reliant C Federal Credit Union.

Duffy says the meeting marked Albany officials pulling themselves away from directing the conversation — the whole economic development councils created by Gov. Andrew Cuomo earlier this summer.

"This region, for their second meeting, is making great progress," Duffy said.

Council co-chair Danny Wegman says he remains optimistic that the council will be able to help grow opportunities focus those that already exist. The raw material is there, he says.

"There's a lot of bright people working in big companies and now they're starting their own companies," Wegman sa fantastic. It's a great way to grow."

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