

Hearing Officer: Welcome. This public hearing is now open; it is 5:00 p.m. I am Robin Finnerty from the County of Monroe Industrial Development Agency and I have been designated by the Agency to be the hearing officer to conduct this public hearing.

Hearing Officer: We are here to hold the public hearing on the fairlife, LLC project. The transcript of this hearing will be reviewed and considered by the Agency in determination of this project. Notice of this hearing appeared in the *Democrat & Chronicle* on Friday, October 6, 2023.

Hearing Officer: **FAIRLIFE, LLC** has requested that the Agency assist with a certain Project, consisting of the construction of an approximately 745,000 square-foot milk processing/warehouse building to be located on Tebor Road and Basket Road in the Town of Webster, New York; for use by fairlife, LLC in its business of producing milk beverages.

The proposed financial assistance contemplated by the Agency includes New York State and local sales and use tax exemption benefits and a partial real property tax abatement.

Hearing Officer: All those in attendance are required to register by signing the sign-in sheet; you will not be permitted to speak unless you have registered. If you have a written comment to submit for the record, you may do so. Written comments may also be delivered to the Agency at 50 West Main Street, Rochester, New York 14614. Please note, the purpose of this hearing is for the Agency to hear all persons with views in favor of or opposed to either the location or nature of the facility, or the proposed financial assistance being contemplated by the Agency. Therefore, the representatives of the Agency will not be responding to comments or questions.

Hearing Officer: If anyone is interested in making a comment, please raise your hand, state your name and address; if you are representing a company, please identify the company. I request that speakers keep comments to 3 minutes.

**The Hearing Officer calls on those who raise their hand.**

See attached comment

As there were no further comments, the Hearing Officer closed the public hearing at 5:15 pm.

I am here this evening to address Fairlife's application for Tax relief. I want to make clear that I am not opposed to this project, I welcome them to the community. The question is, at what cost and benefit to the taxpayers in this town.

I only found out about this public hearing last Thursday in the supervisor's column in the local paper. One would think that an issue as important as this is to the taxpayers in Webster, it would be better advertised. But I have reviewed the application and I have several comments.

First off is the request that the county / state forgive 43 million dollars in sales taxes for the construction. Half of this is local and shared amongst the villages, towns, and school districts in the county. While these dollars would certainly help these recipients with their budgets, this is a one time deal and while I would rather they paid the tax I would be OK with it. But realize even a small reduction in a tax rate that these dollars could provide now pays dividends forever because of the compounding effect on the tax rate. Also realize that everyone – even Fairlife benefits when tax rates decrease.

My concern is the 20 year property tax Pilot that is being requested. If granted, over the 20 years Fairlife will have avoided payment of \$3 million dollars in town taxes, \$5 million dollars in county taxes, and most concerning, \$13 million dollars in Webster school taxes. The total avoidance would be \$21 million dollars. These numbers are understated because they do not comprehend tax rate increases over the next 20 years.

This plant requires 16 million dollars in upgrades to the Webster sewer plant to handle large waste volume Fairlife will generate – already part of an 81 million dollar bond resolution. Currently unknown is the cost to replace 9000 feet of sewer main required to get that waste stream to the treatment plant. Also to be costed out is the extension and upgrades to Boulter parkway – a town road, as

well as the cost to replace the school districts entrance to the sports complex parking facility. Webster has passed resolutions for thousands of dollars for consultants and engineers just to get estimates for these upgrades. Most of these costs fall on the backs of roughly 15000 taxpayers on the Webster sewer system. Who is going to pay for this?

To put this in perspective, Coca-Cola, the parent company of Fairlife, has a market capitalization of 233 BILLION dollars. Their revenue in 2022 was 43 BILLION dollars. The CEO's compensation package in 2022 was 22 MILLION dollars. Fairlife's revenue last year was a BILLION dollars and growing by 7% annually. Averaged out, the tax relief amounts to a little over a million dollars a year. Does this company really need corporate welfare to pay the tax bill?

Now I've been around long enough to know how the game is played as corporations' shop around the country to see who will give them the most money. I don't like these deals but I acknowledge something is better than nothing and we have to play the game.

I ask you to reject this proposal and consider what I call the 10 year 10 percent plan starting out with a payment of 10% year one, increasing 10% annually until they would pay the full bill in 10 years.

My excel spreadsheet skills are a bit rusty but if you do the math, I'm sure you will come to the realization that this plan is a better deal for Webster tax payers while still granting Fairlife a significant tax avoidance especially when you consider the sales tax forgiveness.

All I'm asking is for a fair deal for the taxpayers of Webster from Fairlife, a company with a billion dollars in sales last year.

Pay their fair share – that is all I am asking.

Thank you