

TUG HILL COMMISSION

MINUTES OF MEETING

Wilna, New York

May 21, 2018

Vice Chairman Yerdon opened the meeting 10:12 a.m.

Opened

Commission members included Mdms. Chereshnoski and Ritter, Messrs. Yerdon, Boxberger, and Maciejko. Staff included Katie Malinowski, Gwen Decker, Felicia Passino, and RACOG Circuit Rider Mickey Dietrich. Guests – Elaine Avallone, Lee Wilbanks, Village of Carthage President Wayne McIlroy, Town of Champion Supervisor Bruce Ferguson, and Town of Wilna Supervisor Paul Smith.

Attendance

On a motion made by Commissioner Maciejko and seconded by Commissioner Boxberger members approved the agenda as presented.

Agenda Approved

On a motion made by Commissioner Maciejko and seconded by Commissioner Ritter members approved the minutes of March 28, 2018.

Minutes Approved

Chairman's report followed.

Chairman's Report

Vice Chairman Yerdon welcomed everyone and thank Supervisor Paul Smith for hosting the meeting. Introductions were made. April's meeting in Annsville was canceled due to the weather. Summer is finally here. Commissioner Bogdanowicz is unable to be here today, however, he will be attending the SuperCOG meeting on May 30. Terms for myself and Commissioners Maciejko, Boxberger will expire this summer, we will be working on reappointments.

Welcome

Executive Director's report followed.

Executive Director's Report

Mrs. Malinowski reported the commission is officially in the budget with the same levels as last year. Fifteen positions are on the books, however, twelve are currently filled. Commissioners may have received emails regarding Financial Disclosure Statements and Ethics that needs to be completed. Mrs. Malinowski will provide ethics training for commissioners at the June commission meeting in Osceola. Senate reappointments for Commissioners Yerdon, Maciejko and Boxberger are in progress.

Administration

We are on track for the book completion on November 1st. Funding requests were made to Pratt Northam Foundation and Snow Foundation in April. Pratt will review it in June and Snow may take longer with their process. Mrs. Malinowski is working on media promotions.

Tug Hill Book

The commission's 45th anniversary and annual dinner will kick off the book release. There will be a recognition for the late Arnie Talgo. Mrs. Malinowski asked members for gift ideas for Betty Talgo. She suggested a painting of Arnie's camp. We are looking at Camden for the location and are leaning toward the Grape and Grog restaurant. Other suggestions included Beeches and Nicole's.

45th Anniversary

Sages were last recognized in 2015. Members can decide if they want to do sages along with Arnie's recognition or wait. If the decision is to do sages then we would need to start getting information out.

In your packets is the Local Leaders Survey letter, survey, examples and process for getting the survey out, along with draft results and comments. We followed a strict process and the goal of getting 50% back was exceeded. We currently have 58.5% and we are still receiving some surveys. We received at least one response from each community we serve. High ratings included workshops, LCG and land using trainings. 175 strongly agree the commission should continue. We will share the survey results publicly once it is finalized.

Local Leaders Survey

Two interns are working with us this summer. Seth Lapp from Lowville is currently working with Mr. Dietrich gathering GPS data collection. He will be doing a lot for RACOG and will also work in Trenton and Remsen. John King from Watertown will begin in July and will be working with Mr. Johnson and Mr. Street doing mini comprehensive plan work for CTHC. EFC is partnering on the finance side and helping to guide the intern program.

Interns

CTHC approved the town of Adams to join the COG at their April meeting at the Central Hotel in Glenfield. CTHC now has 21 member communities. The town of Lowville has also joined RACOG.

COG Additions

Commissioner Ritter asked why so much growth in COGs after several years of no change. Mrs. Malinowski responded that we think several things may have led to the growth, including last year's series "Focus on the COG's" in the Tug Hill Times, along with changes in the communities and the commission, as well as personal contacts that may have sparked interest for joining a COG.

The SuperCOG meeting is set for May 30 in Redfield. In your packets is the invite letter. Light refreshments will be offered. Each COG will have an opportunity to talk. The SuperCOG meeting is held generally every other year.

SuperCOG Meeting

In your packets is the end of conference survey summary. You can see which sessions are most popular and sessions participants would like to see in the future. We are in the black in the amount of \$3000, which we are happy about, due to increased food costs. It will be interesting to see if bids come from other caterers for next year's conference, with JCC now exercising their right of first refusal.

Local Government Conference

State lands tax payment changes and EFFI legislation were not included in final state budget. We probably won't see EFFI again for a while.

**State Land Tax
Legislation & Empire
Forest Future
Initiative
Minimum
Maintenance Roads**

Mrs. Malinowski was in Albany for a MMR meeting on May 17 along with Association of Towns, Adirondack Association of Towns and Villages, NYS Snowmobile Association, and NYS Association of Town Highway Superintendents. Feedback from assembly staff was that everyone should be able to access medical and emergency vehicles. We will continue to be involved and reach out to promote moving forward with this bill.

Attorney Mark Gebo was at the Court of Appeals in Rochester on May 18 for the Weikel vs West Turin case. It will be three weeks until we hear the decision on the case.

In your packets is a draft issue paper about the Montague radar. It provides information on how the radar works and how wind turbines affect it. Please review and give feedback.

Wind

We are doing a lot of GIS work with communities this summer. Staff participated in training on QGIS, a free GIS software that is user-friendly. Having staff trained will spread the GIS

GIS

workload across additional staff. We are making improvements to the online interface and getting data organized in house.

Consolidated Funding Applications are due by July 27. Staff are working on several salt shed storage grants. We are trying to give communities a heads up and get information together for grants. We provided a training in Lewis County to communities.

CFA's

In your packets is a flyer for the Cemetery Abandonment Webinar on June 5 that we are offering, as the session on this topic was cancelled for our Local Government Conference in March. The information was sent to all that attended the conference. This a real problem for communities.

Cemetery Webinar

Mr. Dietrich, RACOG Circuit Rider reported:

COG Reports

The next board meeting for RACOG will be held June 19 in the village of Carthage. We will have the gentleman who purchased the railroad from Lowville to Carthage speak. Other projects include a community resource map by a virtual intern at Monroe Community College, zoning and Black River navigation between Lowville and Carthage. Seth Lapp, our summer intern working with SU-EFC, is currently working on data collection in the RACOG area and other Tug Hill communities, primarily focused on drinking water infrastructure. RACOG has been working on NY Alerts since last fall, as well as looking at LED lighting is also being planned. The RACOG website was revamped, and other community websites are moving forward.

In your packets is the finance report for 2017-18 and the proposed 2018-19 budget. Mrs. Passino reported we are wrapping up the 2017-18 finances, as there are still a few things not through the system yet. We are over on personnel services, we try to control as much as we can on non-personnel. 2018-19 processing has just started. Step increases for staff are due to be done by May 31.

Finance Report

Mrs. Malinowski added that 2018-19 is similar to last year's budget, and we are projected to be \$36,000 over budget due to personnel costs. The COG's taking over mileage for the circuit riders is a big help. We are still waiting to hear on the grant through the Fort Drum Regional Health Planning Organization to come through, which would help. Staffing is a concern, with some close to retirement and DOB hasn't allowed us to fill current vacancies.

Commissioner Yerdon opened the floor for public comment.

Public Comment

Mr. Ferguson: Since Mickey has come on board as circuit rider we have given him some projects to work and has been doing great, as well as bringing us great resources. Mr. Johnson has helped us with our comprehensive plan. The commission has been a great resource for us.

Mr. McIlroy: Expressed concerns regarding ATV trails. He would like to see more trails opened up and have less riding on roads.

Mrs. Malinowski: About 15 years ago the commission had several meetings regarding ATVs, and wrote an issue paper on the topic. The paper is a bit outdated now, however, she will get it to Mr. McIlroy. She would be willing to assist in bringing people together again to discuss it if there was demand. Enforcement would be needed on trails. Ryan Piche, Lewis County Manager, has increased Lewis County's budget for enforcement on the ATV trails.

Commissioner Ritter: Clubs will sometimes approach towns for trail use. ATV's tend to do more damage to snowmobiles on property.

Mr. Smith: Expressed concerns on the MSA census process and funding and how it influences our area. The larger area seems to get funding, while the smaller area gets no benefits. He would like more conversation on this and how to help the smaller area.

Commissioner Yerdon: The Redfield boat launch looks great.

There being no further business before the board, on a motion made by Commissioner Boxberger and seconded by Commissioner Cheresnoski members adjourned the meeting at 11:42 a.m.

Adjourn

Respectfully Submitted,

Tom Boxberger
Secretary