

*Northern Oneida County Council of Government
Executive Board Meeting Minutes
March 23, 2021
Jervis Library, Rome, NY at 2:00 pm*

Present: NOCCOG Chair, Bob Sauer (BS), Fiscal Officer, Betsy Mack (BM) Director, Ed Davis (ED), THC Associate Director of Community and Regional Projects, Jennifer Harvill (JenH), Associate Circuit Riders, Lisa Bellinger (LB) and Joe Rowlands (JR), Municipal Projects Coordinator, John Healt (JH) and Town of Remsen Supervisor, Tom McDonald. Not present was Vice Chair, John Doiron.

Meeting called to order at 2:04pm by Chair BS.

Approval of Minutes. Motion made by BM seconded by ED to approve December 16, 2021, executive board meeting minutes. All in favor, motion carried.

Financial Report

Motion by ED, seconded by BS to approve the fiscal officer's report as given. All in favor, motion approved. BM also gave a report on the 2021 Budget final numbers.

Tug Hill Commission Updates

- JenH reported that the March THC meeting was held in Cleveland, with no major announcements to report.
- The 2022 Local Government Conference will be held at the Turning Stone Resort and Casino on April 19th. JenH mentioned the logistics for the conference are more involved than when using JCC, but the LGC committee is excited about the new venue. Registration numbers are a little better than anticipated, with about 500 as of this week.
- Two new staff members are officially on board, but the THC has yet to fill the planner position. This is not a problem unique to the THC, as there seems to be numerous planner vacancies throughout the state.

Administrative Items

- **Executive Director**
Tom McDonald, Supervisor for the Town of Remsen, attended the meeting, and has expressed an interest in the vacant director position.
- **NOCCOG Annual Dinner Meeting**
JH encouraged the Board to think about a location for the dinner meeting this fall. The consensus seemed to be the October date worked better. The Delta Lake Inn is always a favorite, with great food and nice amenities. Garamone's in Forestport was mentioned, as was Awesome Country, in Boonville. The latter having opened a newly remodeled reception room. It was also mentioned to check into the soon to be opened tap room/microbrewery at the Hulbert House, in Boonville.
- **IMA**
JH reported the updated IMAs are slowly being signed and sent back.
- **Associate Circuit Rider Contracts**
Lisa and Joe have signed their 2022 contracts.

Program Updates

- **LGEC**
The LGEC has dissolved and is now a subcommittee of the Mohawk Valley Economic Development District. Current Committee members Steve Smith, who is also the Executive Director of MVEDD, Anita Adams and JH will continue to serve. The committee's funds were transferred, and the sub-committee will continue

with educational and training sessions. JH reported the first committee meeting was held on 3/11, where Steve gave a brief history and overview of what the committee does and has done.

- **Succession Planning Training**

JenH and JH met with Khris Dodson, with NY DOS, with the idea of generating an interest and explaining the necessity of knowledge transfer and succession planning. The hope is to get some preliminary information, such as “position knowledge inventory” to the municipalities, then follow up later with a training webinar. Maybe even bring in Khris as a speaker at the annual dinner meeting. A topic paper on this was released in 2015.

- **Town and Village update**

Meeting summaries are continuing to be emailed to our membership and are still well received. BS suggested to highlight the important aspects of each meeting, as the regular business, which is conducted at every meeting, can be a bit mundane. JH will do that starting next month.

- **GPS update**

- BS would like JH and Mark to reach out to the highway departments with each town and explain what Mark can do for them. However, the Town of Trenton has a project they would like Mark to start right away. There was a discussion of hiring summer help for the GPS program. Mark Clark’s schedule, and the short summer season, does not always allow for much time to be spent on a project. The idea of additional help would be that municipalities would not have to rely on their own employees to use the second GPS unit, should Mark not be available. Further, the right candidate may transition into Mark’s position, when Mark decides to retire. JH will reach out to the THC staff for opinions on the best way to look for the right candidates. Contacting BOCES was mentioned as an option for finding an interest, as well.

- JH spoke with Jason Cingranelli from Verizon. Jason set the account up originally with Jennifer Armstrong. Jason needed the tax ID/EIN number, which Betsy found, and JH sent to Jason. In a follow up call, Jason stated that he was working on getting JH added to the account.

- JH, with direction from BS, reached out to the Village of Remsen and Mark Clark in an attempt to get both GPS units in one location. However, Marty is currently in Florida and Mark will be starting to work in Trenton.

- **MVEDD Broadband Survey**

It was reported that discussions continue within the THC staff, the ACS School district, ISPs, county planning and other groups. There is a lot of money earmarked for broadband infrastructure at the state and county levels, and there is a definite need for better broadband in many of the NOCCOG municipalities. There are numerous studies that show the areas with little or no internet accessibility. The next step seems to be bringing the right people to the table to discuss feasibility, cost, and who takes the lead. At Katie Malinowski’s request, JH did reach out to the Commissioner of the Boonville Municipal Commission regarding the possibility of municipal provided broadband service. JH was told that the Commissioner did discuss the potential of municipal broadband with his board. Unfortunately, the commission board unanimously voted against the idea, stating a shortage in staffing and startup capital as the major deciding factors. They know there is funding available for both studies and actual infrastructure, but the board felt it was not a good time to pursue more than what they thought they could handle.

- **Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) committee**

JH mentioned the group meets monthly, led by Mari Kate Mycek, from MVEDD. The last couple of meetings have had guests from other organizations discussing funding opportunities, requirements, and availability. JH stated there is a lot of good information and resources derived from this committee.

- **Website**

The contract with Riverside Media has been signed and sent. JH stated that Chris has begun working on the website, and he has been giving him information for the site, when time allows. The hope is that the

site will be up and running within a few weeks, with the idea of a push of the site revamp at the April/May meetings

- **New Project**

- Drones: Even with last month's discussion about the possible duplication of services, some board members feel that a drone purchase will be an assist for the group and the communities. A drone could assist with the GPS service offered by NOCCOG. JR mentioned that he is researching the regulations and requirements needed to become a certified drone pilot. If acceptable, JR would be interested to fly a drone, as an additional service offered by NOCCOG, should NOCCOG decide to purchase and register a drone. It was agreed that JR will be the NOCCOG drone pilot. JR stated that it is best to purchase a drone after the training and FAA certification is completed. He will let us know when he is certified.

- Joint Water Systems Study: Gerry Ritter brought up a joint water systems operation study that was conducted in 2011 between the villages of Remsen, Barneveld, and Prospect. Although the topic was readily discussed at that time, two of the 3 villages in the study have since dissolved. Remsen Mayor, Marty Flint, has the study "in mind" with regards to succession planning. Trenton Supervisor, Joe Smith, said that the Town is open to discussions. JH stated the survey is good to have as a resource but both municipalities do not seem to have much of an interest in pursuing this endeavor.

- **Other Items**

A discussion was held regarding the high cost of gas and providing the municipal management consultants a stipend or an increased mileage rate to offset some of the cost associated with traveling to each municipality and various trainings. JH will research if paying more than the state mileage rate is allowable, or if a fuel stipend is the better way to proceed. Once a decision is made, the Board will review the policy and decide if there is a need for it to continue, at the next executive committee meeting.

Next meeting

Tentatively scheduled for June 15, 2022. In person, at Jervis Library

Motion to adjourn made by ED, seconded by BM. All in favor. Motion approved. Meeting adjourned at 3:48 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

John Healt, Municipal Projects Coordinator