

**Executive Committee**

Robert Sauer, *Chairman*  
John Doiron, *Vice-Chairman*  
Betsy Mack, *Fiscal Officer*  
Thomas McDonald, *Director*  
Lawrence Mierek, *Director*

**Municipal Projects Coordinator**

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## MINUTES

*Northern Oneida County Council of Governments  
Executive Board Meeting Minutes  
December 12, 2024  
Town of Trenton Municipal Offices at 2:00 pm*

Present: Chair, Bob Sauer (BS) Vice Chair, John Doiron (JD), Fiscal Officer Betsy, Mack (BM), Director, Tom McDonald (TM), Director, Larry Mierek (LM), Associate Municipal Advisor, Joe Rowlands (JR), and Municipal Projects Coordinator, John Healt (JH). Jen Harvill, (JHe) from the THC, attended virtually.

Meeting called to order at 2:02 pm by Chair, BS.

### Approval of Minutes

Motion made by BM seconded by TM to approve the September 12, 2024, executive board meeting minutes, with noted corrections. All in favor, motion carried.

### Financial Report

Fiscal Officer, BM reported that there have been billing issues with Verizon, and she is ready to send 2025 dues notifications to the towns, with no increase. Motion by LM, seconded by TM to approve the fiscal officer's report as presented. All in favor, motion carried.

Bookkeeping update presented by JH for the board's review. JH reported the voucher with Oneida County is signed and returned.

A copy of the 2025 Budget, which was approved at the 2024 Annual Meeting, was distributed to the board.

There was a discussion on the fund balance, why it is the amount that it is, and what should be done about it. A dues reduction was also discussed.

### Tug Hill Commission Updates

- 2025 Local Government Conference, 3/31 & 4/1, Turning Stone. Students from Holland Patent school were invited
- Staffing, Maria Covey, new planner started 12/5
- Strategic Plan - a draft will be available for the COG leaders meeting on January 29/30. The plan will then be brought to individual COG meetings in February.
- Workshops – it was mentioned the recent focus has been on the Local Government Conference. The Oneida History Center workshop one went very well in October, and Little Voices was good in November. It was asked about pursuing another Oneida History Center partnership, or possibly a session on the Welsh ancestry in NOCCOG. JR suggested the Steuben/Remsen Historical Society could assist.

**Towns:** *Annsville ~ Ava ~ Boonville ~ Camden ~ Floyd ~ Forestport ~ Lee ~ Remsen ~ Steuben ~ Trenton ~ Vienna ~ Western*

**Villages:** *Boonville ~ Camden ~ Holland Patent ~ Remsen ~ Sylvan Beach*

- Planning work – the Commission ready to resume work in Floyd on their comprehensive plan; Camden (T) is holding their first public hearing on their comp plan in January 8th or February; Remsen’s comp plan is grant funded; providing support to grant funded comp plan in Boonville (LaBella); Ava underway with SWOT held in November; THC believes the subdivision law in Steuben is done; provided comments on subdivision law in Lee, waiting to hear back

#### **Administrative Items**

- Membership Dues / Letters – BM reported that 2025 invoices and letter are to be sent
- Annual Dinner Meeting recap - 70 attendees, including a few local politicians. There were press releases in the Rome Sentinel and the Queen Central News. Changing the venue for next year was discussed.
- New Director - This is JD’s last meeting. JD has spoken with new Ava board member, Carl Traxel, who has expressed some interest. If not, JH stated there will be an article in the January announcements.
- Local Government Sponsorship and Registrations – in 2024 NOCCOG sponsored the conference at the \$1,500 level. JH thinks having the booth at the conference is good exposure. Mike Thompson could staff. Discussed was covering the registration cost of the directors attending, as well as 1 person from each municipality, but early registrations. A motion was made by TM, seconded by LM< to approve sponsorship of the 2025 Local Government Conference at the \$1,500 level. All in favor. Motion carried. A motion was made by BM to cover the registration costs of NOCCOG directors, as well as 1 person from each member municipality, attending the 2025 Local Government Conference, early registration cost only. Seconded by TM. All in favor. Motioned carried.

#### **Program Updates**

- Training/Workshops – JH reported on the GPS workshop 9/26 in Lee, while poorly attended, Preston, the Highway Super from Western was there and is a big proponent of GPS mapping. JH thought it may be worthwhile to try having another workshop, again. The Town Clerk Lunch and Learn was 9/30 in Trenton and virtually. About 20 attendees in total. JH worked with the Oneida County Town Clerks Association to help spread the word. JH discusses trying to attend their meetings, if they hold them, to get a feel for what’s going on at their level. NOCCOG picked up the bill for the lunch. JH stated the lunch & learn format seems to work well. It was discussed to do the same style training with CEOs. Also discussed was an Amish training, particularly regarding the lack of help at the state level when it comes to enforcement. The THC will work with NOCCOG to provide a workshop covering planning, zoning and enforcement- shooting for early next year. Another discussed training possibility was blighted and vacant properties- this topic is a session at the LGC. It was mentioned to offer a similar workshop this summer for those who couldn’t attend the LGC. JH discussed with Chris Barboza, at the THC, about a training regarding reducing speed limits in municipalities, which is also a session at the LGC. It may be something that can be repeated later in the year, and made available to the public, as they are the one who approach boards with these requests. Also discussed was a training geared for Village Clerks and another training with laird Petrie.
- Municipal Advisor Contracts – 2025 contracts, with the increased hourly rate, are ready for signatures.
- Town/Village Updates – are still being sent. It was noted that long time Floyd Supervisor, Willard Strieff, announced his resignation. Also noted was the unexpected passing of Annsville board member, Ed Fall. It was asked if the meeting summaries are useful to the member municipalities. JR stated that he feels the summaries are well received.
- GPS Program – GPS mapper, Mike Thompson, was scheduled to attend the meeting, but couldn’t make it. JH used a google program called Notebook LM to generate a “podcast” that highlights the benefits of GPS mapping. He played a portion of the podcast for the board. JH would like to edit the recording and put it on the website. There was a discussion on the lack of use with the program.
- Scholarship Program – JH stated that ideally, the scholarship winners will forward their grades after the completion of their first semester, which should be later this month.
- Quick Reference Guide - an initial draft was presented for board review.
- Website – JH reported that the website still being updated with announcements, minutes and trainings

#### **Other Items**

- Forestport Expo - JH stated the Town of Forestport 2nd annual town expo apparently had a few dignitaries from the state and county level there and it may be worth attending next year.
- Project for 2025 - JH presented a copy of a recently completed economic resiliency plan for NorCog and RACOG as an idea of doing something similar for NOCCOG. BS suggested the board should generate a list of ideas. The possibility of grants or assisting with a grant administrator was discussed. It was stated that in the past, Gerry Ritter worked on a records/bookkeeping grant for NOCCOG that assisted the membership. One on one training was discussed as another possibility. NOCCOG could also compile a database of contractors.
- Meet with Oneida County Planning - JH stated the last NOCCOG met with James Genovese from Oneida County Planning was a virtual meeting shortly after he was hired, late 2021 or early 2022. JH will reach out and try to set up a meeting. It was mentioned to maybe meet with MVEDD as they have helped a number of NOCCOG municipalities.
- NYCLASS - it was discussed to move some surplus funds to a NYCLASS account.

#### **Additional Items**

- JH mentioned the possibility of eliminating the contract with Verizon. The service is only used for the GPS program. The mappers could collect the data on the GPS iPad, or their own device, and then upload that data using their own internet service. They could receive a stipend during the times that they are working. It was agreed to end the contract with Verizon.
- Discussed was presenting a list of accomplishments to the NOCCOG membership. JH stated that a run down of what NOCCOG did in the past year, similar to the Chair's Annual Report, as well as what is sent to Oneida County would be included in the January announcements.

#### **Next Meeting**

Scheduled for Thursday, March 20, 2025, at 2pm, in person, at the Town of Trenton Municipal Offices.

Motion to adjourn made by TM, seconded by JD. All in favor. Motion approved. Meeting adjourned at 3:56 pm.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*John Healt, Municipal Projects Coordinator*