

Executive Committee

Robert Sauer, *Chair*
Thomas McDonald, *Vice-Chair*
Betsy Mack, *Fiscal Officer*
Lawrence Mierek, *Director*
Pamela Dibble, *Director*

Municipal Projects Coordinator

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**DRAFT
MINUTES**

*Northern Oneida County Council of Governments
Executive Board Meeting Minutes
March 20, 2025
Town of Trenton Municipal Offices at 3:00 pm*

Present: Chair, Bob Sauer (BS) Fiscal Officer Betsy, Mack (BM), Director, Larry Mierek (LM), Associate Municipal Advisors, Lisa Bellingher (LB) and Joe Rowlands (JR), THC Associate Director of Community and Regional Projects, Jen Harvill, (JHe), THC Chair, Gerry Ritter (GR), THC Commissioner Bob Keller (BK), GPS Mapper, Mike Thompson (MT), and Municipal Projects Coordinator, John Healt (JH).

Meeting called to order at 3:00 pm by Chair, BS.

Approval of Minutes

Motion made by BM seconded by LM to approve the December 12, 2024, executive board meeting minutes. All in favor, motion carried.

Motion made by LM seconded by BS to approve the January 23, 2025, special executive board meeting minutes. All in favor, motion carried.

Financial Report

Fiscal Officer, BM reported 9 towns have paid their membership dues. BM wondered if there was anyone that might be staffing the booth at the LGC with MT, as our sponsorship level allows for 2 people to attend. BS mentioned he may be able to man the booth with Mike. BM mentioned to the board that the statements from Veizon shows a credit, and she is unsure what do as the account will be cancelled shortly. JH will find out when he calls to cancel the account. Motion by LM, seconded by BS 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 has yet to be received, but he was late in sending the voucher back. He mailed the voucher and followed up with the county- they should have everything that is required. If the contribution is not received, JH will follow up again. The THC is adamant that someone other than JH to be the bookkeeper, stating that as a state employee, it's a conflict for JH. A replacement needs to be found by the end of the year. JH explained the difference in line item descriptions between the budget and bookkeeping spreadsheet.

Tug Hill Commission Updates

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

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

- 2025 Local Government Conference, 3/31 & 4/1, Turning Stone. JHe reported that to date, there are 626 registrants, trainers, and exhibitors signed up, which is close to what it was for the same period last year. The THC is happy with the numbers. JHe also mentioned the room layout seems better for this year.
- Staffing - Paul Baxter should be officially retired soon, Gabriel Yerdon took a job with DEC, a planner/local government specialist a new employee, Patrick Brady, is in the hiring process.
- Strategic Plan was adopted and approved at 3/17/2025 commission board meeting. Copies were provided. JHe stated that a lot of work went into the plan, which GR and BK attested to.
- Workshops – JHe stated the Amish training went well, but was hoping for better attendance. Work is underway for a Welsh history in northern Oneida County.
- Planning work – JHe reported the Floyd comp plan is to resume once Camden and Rodman are adopted; Camden held first public hearing in January and is submitting to the county for 239m review. The Boonville survey is in progress (THC has assisted LaBella) and the Ava SWOT is complete, with the survey to follow.

Administrative Items

- Membership – BM stated that we are only lacking 3 towns. The village dues notices will go out in May/June to coincide with their fiscal calendars.
- Annual Dinner Meeting - JH asked the board to consider locations and possible speakers. JH stated that he likes Woods Valley, but it was discussed to bring the dinner to different communities to encourage participation. JH mentioned columnist Joe Kelly of Sheriff Rob Maciol as possible speakers.
- LGC - MT has agreed to staff the NOCCOG booth. BS may also attend to assist. Discussed was NOCCOG covering the registration cost of Ed Kurish, from Steuben, who had the registrations, plus his for NOCCOG to cover, in his truck when he was hit by a snowplow. Steuben originally planned on NOCCOG covering, but is unsure, as it is now past the deadline date. Also discussed was the overlooked registration from Sylvan Beach. After some discussion, it was decided that NOCCOG will cover the cost of both registrations at the higher rate.
- Verizon Contract - JH reported that currently the account is on hold, with the idea of terminating the contract April 3. GPS mappers can use their own cellular service and get a stipend.

Program Updates

- Training/Workshops - JH thought the Amish training was well received. JH reported that he has been speaking with MVEDD about assisting them with community visits for NOCCOG municipalities. JH, when speaking with MVEDD, discussed the possibility of an Oneida County funding forum, citing RACOG's Economic Forum. He will continue to discuss with MVEDD. JH also stated that vacant and abandoned properties are still an issue in almost all of the NOCCOG communities.
- Town/Village Updates – JH reported the summaries are still being compiled and sent. There was a discussion on the length of the summaries, and if they are considered helpful to the NOCCOG membership. It was decided to keep them as they are.
- GPS Program - GPS Mapper, MT, spoke briefly about some of the work he has done in the area. There was a discussion on how to make the mapping program less intimidating to the communities, who is the best person to talk to about the program, and what some of the factors may be as to why towns and villages are not taking advantage of the service. MT stated some communities are apprehensive, thinking their mapping information is shared online, which it isn't. There are municipalities from last year that still have an interest. GR suggested attending meetings of the Oneida County Highway Superintendent Association. BK suggested a live demonstration at the NOCCOG booth at the LGC. JHe suggested working with Oneida County Planning. JH stated the program will be pushed again in the next two monthly announcements.
- Scholarship Program – JH reported that all the participating schools are on board. It was noted that one winner from last year has received and cashed her check. One check has yet to be mailed, and one winner from last year was overlooked. A check will be mailed to him, too.
- Quick Reference Guide - JH estimated the guide would cost roughly \$8 each, if he produced them himself, not counting time and printer ink. A motion was made by LM, seconded by BM, to authorize JH to spend no more than \$1,200 to print. All approved. Motion carried.

- Website – JH reported the website still being updated and kept current.

Other Items

- Project for 2025 – continuing the discussion on a project to assist NOCCOG municipalities, JH stated nearly every community he visits has talked about hiring a grant writer. He believes it's more for the administrative side of the grant, as most clerks don't have the time, or want to do, the follow up after a grant is received. The idea would be to contract with a grant writer/administrator when/if there is a municipality that is looking for help. JHe stated the THC can work on the grant application, and the contracted administrator can do all of the required follow up. Names of possible candidates were given. JH will research further.
- NOCCOG Survey – JH presented a very preliminary draft survey that he, with help from the Watertown office, put together, for the board's review and edits. Once complete, distribution can be both hard copies and digital.
- Meet with Oneida County Planning - JH reported he emailed Oneida County Planner Commissioner, James Genovese, about a possible meeting, but never heard back. Vacant, abandoned and blighted housing is a growing issue the JH wonders if the county could assist with, as well as the numerous building collapses from this winter, which may put a strain on local resources. JHe mentioned the THC would like to do a check in with Oneida County as well, which would include Matt Johnson, from the Watertown office. THC could help to set up a meeting. JH will reach out to the planner who sent the housing study. JH attended the housing study presentation.
- NYCLASS – After a brief discussion on the fund balance, a resolution was presented by LM, seconded by BM to transfer \$20,000 from the fund balance to a higher interest bearing NYCLASS account. Roll Call vote:

LM - Aye

BM - Aye

BS - Aye

Be it therefore resolved, by a majority vote of the Executive Committee of the Northern Oneida County Council of Governments, to transfer the sum of \$20,000 from the fund balance of the general account to a NYCLASS account.

JH will get the necessary paperwork prepared.

- Letter of Support – JH reported the Village of Boonville reached out for a letter of support as they are looking for congressionally directed funding to help offset the costs of their wastewater treatment/collection project. A letter was written and submitted to the village. The board was copied prior to the letter being sent for review and approval.
- Other - GR mentioned the state of disrepair of the roads in downtown Boonville. It was mentioned repairs are scheduled to be made, but the heavy truck traffic seems to take its toll. GR stated there is a new bypass study that Oneida County has, and wonders if it could be re-visited. This could be discussed when a meeting with Onida County Planning takes place.

Next Meeting of the Board

- Thursday, June 19, 2025, at 3:00 p.m. in person at the Trenton Municipal Offices

Motion to adjourn made by LM, seconded by BM. All in favor. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 4:34 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

John Healt, *Municipal Projects Coordinator*