

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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MINUTES

Northern Oneida County Council of Governments

Executive Board Meeting Minutes

June 26, 2025

Town of Remsen Municipal Offices at 2:00 pm

Present: Chair, Bob Sauer (BS), Vice-Chair, Tom McDonald (TM), Fiscal Officer Betsy, Mack (BM), Director, Larry Mierek (LM), Director Pam Dibble (PD), 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), GPS Mapper, Mike Thompson (MT), and Municipal Projects Coordinator, John Healt (JH). Also present was invited guest, Jay Grasso, President of G&G Municipal Consulting and Grant Writing.

Meeting called to order at 2:00 pm by Chair, BS.

Jay Grasso was invited to speak on the services his company provides and the grant application process. Discussed were various grant opportunities, some of the communities his company has worked with, what may be required prior to applying for funding, and cost of services.

Approval of Minutes

Motion made by LM seconded by TM to approve the March 20, 2025, executive board meeting minutes. All in favor, motion carried.

Financial Report

Fiscal Officer, BM reported that all but 1 town have paid their membership dues. Invoices will be sent to the villages, now that they have begun their fiscal years, and a reminder will be sent to the town that has yet to pay. Newspaper and website annual subscriptions have been paid. Motion by TM, seconded by LM 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 half of the Oneida County payment was just received.

Tug Hill Commission Updates

- Staffing - Paul Baxter officially retired after 40+ years of dedicated service and Patrick Brady's hiring process has been completed. Patrick's role should be a split one, 50% planning and 50% project.
- Strategic Plan - adopted and approved.

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

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

- Workshops include a Welsh history in northern Oneida County that may coincide with the Remsen Festival of the Arts.
- Super COG Meeting – JHe stated that with many of the councils of governments facing similar issues, the THC is hoping to tentatively schedule a Super COG Meeting in November.
- Planning - JHe reported Ava's comprehensive plan is underway, THC has assisted LaBella with the Village and Town of Boonville, the Town of Camden's comprehensive plan is with Oneida county, and Remsen starts work on their plan on June 30.
- The THC annual dinner meeting is planned for October 9 or 16 at the Beeches, in Rome, depending on the availability of a speaker from NYS Ag & Markets.
- National Grid Upstate Upgrade Project – JHe stated the THC is monitoring the project as it affects a large number of Tug Hill communities.
- The THC is also working on a number of grants, including a sand/salt shed grant for the Town of Western.
- JHe also reported that planning is already underway for the 2026 Local Government Conference.

Administrative Items

- Membership - as noted in her fiscal report, BM stated that we are only lacking dues from 1 town, and village dues notices were recently sent to coincide with their fiscal calendars.
- Annual Dinner Meeting – It was approved to hold the dinner October 23 or 30, at Woods Valley, with Sarah Foster Calero, from Oneida County Tourism as the speaker. Also approved was inviting former board members and municipal advisors, with NOCCOG covering the cost. GR stated the longtime Town of Lee Supervisor, John Urtz, should be recognized for his years of service.
- Verizon Contract – BM states a bill for \$1.73 was received, which included an early termination fee plus taxes. JH called and was told the fees had been reversed and nothing was owed. JH then asked about the prior credit on the account, as the account should now be closed, and was told that what was credited equaled what was owed. JH will call again for clarification.

Program Updates

- Training/Workshops - JH spoke with MVEDD about community visits for NOCCOG municipalities. MVEDD did visit with, and made a report for, the Town of Trenton. JH contacted the Village of Camden, and a community visit is scheduled for July. JH hopes to reach out to Sylvan Beach next. JH would still like to do an economic forum with them for Oneida County. Also noted was that vacant and abandoned properties is still an issue. JH has emailed Oneida County Planning a couple of times to set up a meeting.
- Town/Village Updates - JH reported the summaries are still being compiled and sent.
- GPS Program - GPS Mapper, MT, spoke briefly about some of the work he has done in the area. He is 70% complete in the Town of Forestport, where he is working alongside the water department. MT is also mapping various data points in the Town of Boonville while he is Forestport, saving time and mileage. MT stated he will be working in the Town of Annsville next. It was noted by JH that the THC has reached our limit of "free" users for Diamond Maps. While the Watertown office will eliminate a few of the non-users still registered, NOCCOG may have to register independently for a license. JH will get some estimates on subscription costs.
- Scholarship Program - JH reported that all awards have been presented. JH attended and presented at the Holland Patent awards night. This year's awardees are Adirondack- Claire Miller, Camden- Noah Metott, Holland Patent- Emerson Hanna, and Remsen- Casey Gates
- Quick Reference Guide - initial sets have been distributed and the Planning Board section is being reviewed. JH, LB and JR all said the guides were well received.
- Website - JH reported the website is still being updated and kept current.
- Salary Survey - JH stated data is being compiled and work is underway on the survey.

Other Items

- Project for 2025 - the board discussed G&G and other possible grant administration options. It appears that offering administrative services after grant funding has been received may be too costly. TM stated that

Remsen pays an hourly rate for their grant administrator. GR noted that in the past, NOCCOG took the lead on an archives grant and the administrative work was done in-house.

- NOCCOG Survey – JH stated the survey was released on Survey Monkey June 1st, and was advertised in the THT and in the NOCCOG monthly announcements. Results to date were presented, which were favorable.
- Oneida County Planning - JH reported he is still trying to set up a meeting with them, the THC and NOCCOG
- NYCLASS - JH did not email the paperwork. He felt with no county contribution, a lesser amount than the previously approved \$20k may be better. It was approved to invest \$10k on a motion made by LM and seconded by TM.
- Forestport Community Expo is scheduled for September 24. NOCCOG was invited but did not attend last year. However, they had a good turnout with some local and state level politicians. JH feels it may be worthwhile to display, if for nothing more than good PR. There is no cost to have a booth. It was approved to attend.
- Other Items – Discussed was rotating the locations for the Executive Meetings. All agreed it was a favorable idea and will be implemented for the September meeting. JH stated some primary election results. It was noted that LM did not run for re-election.

Associate Municipal Advisors Reports

JR stated that other than the primaries, things are relatively quiet. LB mentioned the Town of Trenton has 27 condemned properties, with concerns about liability issues.

Next Meeting of the Board

- Thursday, September 18, 2025, at 2:00 p.m. in person at the Village of Camden Municipal Offices

Motion to adjourn made by TM, seconded by LM. All in favor. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 4:19 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



John Healt, Municipal Projects Coordinator