

### ***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  
September 18, 2025  
Village of Camden 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, Joe Rowlands (JR), and Mike Thompson (MT), THC Associate Director of Community and Regional Projects, Jen Harvill, (JHe), and Municipal Projects Coordinator, John Healt (JH).

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

### **Approval of Minutes**

Motion made by BM seconded by LM to approve the June 26, 2025, executive board meeting minutes. All in favor, motion carried.

### **Financial Report**

Fiscal Officer, BM reported that all but 1 town has paid their membership dues. 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 second half of the Oneida County payment was just received.

### **Tug Hill Commission Updates**

- New Commissioner, Fred Munk, retired DEC from Lowville, has been approved and is officially on board.
- Workshops include a Welsh Ramble on Oct. 4.
- The possibility of a Super COG Meeting has been discussed. JHe stated that with many of the councils of governments facing similar issues, the THC is hoping to tentatively schedule a Super COG meeting.
- Planning - JHe reported the Ava comp plan is in progress, Floyd may resume, Lee may work on a comp plan or zoning, Remsen has started work on their comp plan, and Forestport's comp plan is in the public hearing stage.
- Grants - JHe stated that the THC is assisting Western with a sand/salt shed grant, and has helped Trenton with their BRICKS grant application. It was noted that the former Wendall Stihl sawmill in Ava has been purchased with plans for remodeling/demolition and re-opening.

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

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

- The THC annual dinner meeting is planned for October 9, at the Beeches, in Rome, with a panel of speakers discussing agricultural economic development and dairy expansion in upstate.
- ATV Paper update has been finalized, with some deep research into local laws.
- 2026 Local Government Conference is scheduled for April 20 & 21, 2026, and will be held at the Turning Stone. The 21<sup>st</sup> will be “Planning for Growth” with a focus on comprehensive planning and zoning laws.

#### **Administrative Items**

- Membership - as noted in her fiscal report, BM stated that we are only lacking dues from 1 town. She will send a gentle reminder.
- Annual Dinner Meeting is slated for October 23, Woods Valley Ski Area. Sarah Foster Calero, the president of Oneida County Tourism, is the speaker. JH reported that he spoke with BM regarding inviting former board members and municipal advisors to the dinner, with NOCCOG covering the cost. JH stated he has some names of former advisors and associates, but hopes to reach out to Gerry Ritter and Steve Hunter for more names, as well as some names of former directors, prior to the dinner.
- Verizon Contract – JH reported that he followed up regarding a bill for \$1.73, which included early termination fees, After calling, was told the fees had been reversed. JH emailed the contact that helped resolve the issues in getting his name on the account, but has not heard back.
- 2026 Budget – JH mentioned that more may need to be budgeted for supplies, especially if the plan is to continue making and distributing copies of the municipal reference guide, and more for the annual dinner. JH and BM will get together for some preliminary budget numbers.

#### **Program Updates**

- Training/Workshops – JH reported that MVEDD did a community visit in Camden, which he attended, and shared a copy of the report for the board to review. Discussed was vacant and abandoned properties, which is still an issue within NOCCOG communities. JR stated there is a breakdown between the communities affected and the county. It was discussed to broker a meeting with the county on this subject. JH mentioned that the Lost Traction ATV club spoke at the start of the Village of Camden meeting, with a tentative goal of legal ATV use in Oneida County by April 1, 2026.
- Town/Village Updates - JH reported the summaries are still being compiled and sent.
- GPS Program – MT spoke briefly about some of the work he has done in the area. Annsville was given as an example of why the GPS program is needed and beneficial- the town has a complex water system and has gone through a few water employees. They recently hired a consultant out of Syracuse, and a lot of time is spent searching for water lines and shutoffs. MT reported that the new water employee in Forestport is familiar with diamond maps, and things are going well, there. Also mapped were water meters and fire hydrants. JH mentioned that NOCCOG and the THC are currently ok with registered users and the Diamond Maps program.
- Scholarship Program - the board decided to continue with the program in 2026
- Quick Reference Guide - the planning board section was presented for board review. Discussed was continuing with other sections, such as zoning, clerks, or CEOs.
- Website - JH reported the website is still being updated and kept current.

#### **Other Items**

- Project for 2025 - after the G&G presentation, it seems as if paying for grant administration may be too costly.
- NOCCOG Survey - it was discussed to present the survey results to the membership at the annual dinner.
- Oneida County Planning - THC and NOCCOG met with Josh Dahlin and Deputy Commissioner, Rick Reichert. Discussed what was happening with the THC and with the county.
- NYCLASS - JH stated the proper paperwork was emailed, and some contact was made with Bob, but nothing has been invested as of yet. JH mentioned there seems to be a lack of communication, but will work on it.

- Forestport Community Expo - September 24. NOCCOG is registered, MT and JH will attend and set up a booth. JH felt this is good PR, noting it was discussed at the recent THC retreat to attend local events in our communities as a way to make stronger connections.
- Bookkeeper - it was discussed that paying a firm to keep the books is too costly for the amount of work required of NOCCOG. JH will research to see if anyone, not a CPA, can do the job.
- Oneida County Town Clerk's Association - JH stated he couldn't attend their September meeting, but will attend their next meeting, Dec. 5th.
- Oneida County Resolution for National Grid - JH reported on pushbacks from residents in Steuben regarding National Grid's rerouting of their lines and changing easements. While the town was asked to pass a resolution disagreeing with the reroute, it was mentioned the county would be asked to do the same. JH provided a copy of the county resolution to the board.
- Other Items - BS questioned the results of a recent \$1,000 contribution made by NOCCOG to the THC to offset the cost a broadband survey. JH and JHe mentioned the survey was used at numerous levels, municipal and private, to pinpoint and address the underserved broadband areas within Oneida County and NOCCOG.

#### **Associate Municipal Advisors Reports**


JR stated that many municipalities are considering local laws regarding ATV traffic. Also mentioned was the difficulty Trenton is having obtaining bids and pricing when dealing with prevailing wages. It was noted that issues in Annsville with the fire department continue, even with the very recent reinstatement of fire districts, resulting in the resignation of a commissioner already.

#### **Next Meeting of the Board**

- Thursday, December 18, 2025, at 2:00 p.m. in person at the Town of Western Municipal Offices

Motion to adjourn made by TM, seconded by LM. All in favor. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 3:33 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



John Healt, *Municipal Projects Coordinator*