

## Session 1

### 1A) Employee Handbook Basics

An employee handbook is a valuable communications tool that sets forth the organization's policies, procedures, practices and benefits to employees. Having clearly stated policies and procedures will help supervisors maintain consistency in implementing and enforcing policies. This session will explore the case for written policies and will focus on what should and should not be included in a well-written employee handbook.

**Ronni Travers**, President, Public Sector HR Consultants, (518) 399-4512, rtravers@publicsectorhr.org, www.publicsectorhr.org

### 1B) All About Grant Preparedness

This session will focus on the many grant opportunities that are available for projects in your community and what you can do to prepare for the application. During the session we will address the following questions: What are my projects? What do my constituents want? What grants are available? Writing and administering grants - can we do it in house or do we need help? Will an income survey help us get grants? What happens if we get turned down?

**Jay Grasso**, President, G & G Municipal Consulting and Grant Writing, (585) 368-8866, jay@ggprocess.com, www.ggprocess.com

### 1C) The Process of Site Plan and Subdivision Review - Recording, Outline, Handouts

From the applicant's first sketch on the back of a napkin to the final approved project, the complete land development review process, including SEQR, will be explained in detail. Helpful checklists, forms and outlines will be provided. Planning boards, zoning boards of appeal, code enforcement officers, and all those interested in learning more about the review of proposals for development are invited to attend in order to better understand the project review process.

**Philip Street**, Director of Planning (retired), New York State Tug Hill Commission, tughill@tughill.org, www.tughill.org

### 1D) Spot Zone or Grant the Illegal Use Variance?

This session will explore situations in which a proposed use differs from those around it and how it might best be handled. Discussion will include a review of the use variance test, the definition of spot zoning and a few cases that will help local officials make sure their zoning works for their municipality.

**Paula Gilbert and Ebony Mapp**, Local Government Specialists, NYS Department of State, (518) 473-3355, paula.gilbert@dos.ny.gov and ebony.mapp@dos.ny.gov, www.dos.ny.gov/lg

### 1E) Right-Sizing Culverts for Wildlife and Resiliency

Streams are often disrupted by undersized and improperly placed culverts, resulting in habitat fragmentation and increases in erosion, flooding and flood-related damage. Culverts and bridges can be designed to minimize impacts to stream habitats and aquatic connectivity. DEC recently adopted protocols to evaluate road-stream crossings for "passability" and to prioritize crossings with the greatest need of replacement and repair. DEC is also working on funding solutions to help municipalities right-size their culverts and bridges for improved connectivity and resiliency.

**Corbin Gosier**, Biologist 2 (Ecology), Division of Fish and Wildlife, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, (518) 402-8872, corbin.gosier@dec.ny.gov, www.dec.ny.gov

### 1F) Vital Records: Registrar and Clerk Responsibilities

This session will answer your questions related to vital records (births, deaths, and marriages), including EDRS, and recent changes in laws that impact the local clerks and registrars.

**Gary Martinez**, Field Rep, New York State Department of Health, Bureau of Vital Records, (518) 474-8187, gary.martinez@health.ny.gov, www.health.ny.gov/vital\_records/edrs

### 1G) Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act

The Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (Climate Act for short) was signed into NYS law in 2019. You will learn about the energy and carbon goals set by this far-reaching legislation, and how they may impact your community in the near future. You will also learn about the stretch code, a local energy code that is a key element in the Climate Act. The proposed Accelerated Renewables Act will also be discussed.

**Noah Shaw**, Partner; Co-Chair, Renewable Energy Practice, Hodgson Russ Attorneys, (518) 736-2924, NShaw@hodgsonruss.com, www.hodgsonruss.com and **Marilyn Dare**, Senior Project Manager, NYSERDA, (518) 862-1090, Marilyn.Dare@nysesda.ny.gov, www.nysesda.ny.gov

## Session 2

### 2A) Reserve Funds and Long-Term Planning

Reserve Funds are an effective planning tool for local government officials to assist them with their long-term operating and capital needs. This session will discuss the most popular reserve funds including capital reserves, repair reserves, retirement contribution reserves and others. We will discuss how to legally establish reserves, how to properly expend from a reserve and how to effectively account and budget for reserves.

**Laird Petrie**, Associate Examiner, NYS Office of the State Comptroller, (315) 428-4192, lpetrie@osc.ny.gov and **Brent Kremenek**, NYS Office of the State Comptroller, Associate Examiner, (315) 428-4192, bkremenek@osc.ny.gov, www.osc.state.ny.us

### 2B) Focus on Cyber Security in 20/20 and the NYS Shield Act

The program will address the two key challenges organizations face today. Security is important, so what can you do to focus on cyber security with a shoestring budget? And, what does the NYS Shield Act (Stop Hacks and Improve Electronic Data Security), which recently went into effect, mean for your organization? Learn about the new data security and privacy requirements.

**Lisa Atkinson**, Consultant, Zelvin Security, (607) 758-9427, LAtkinson@zelvin.com, www.Zelvin.com

### 2C) Historic Preservation

Historic buildings help define the character of a community. This session will explain why that is, details what it means to preserve a place's older and historic buildings and distinguishes the difference between listing a property on the National Register of Historic Places and local landmark and historic district regulations. Environmental and economic benefits of historic preservation will also be discussed.

**Paula Gilbert**, Local Government Specialist, NYS Department of State, (518) 473-3355, paula.gilbert@dos.ny.gov, www.dos.ny.gov/lg and **Ebony Mapp**, Local Government Specialist, NYS Department of State, (518) 473-3355, ebony.mapp@dos.ny.gov, www.dos.ny.gov/lg

### 2D) How to Enhance Transparency in Planning Proceedings

Public confidence in government is low. Local leaders must find opportunities to bring the public "under the tent" as it relates to planning decisions. Simply "checking the boxes" in terms of open meetings requirements is not enough to ensure that the public understands projects and their potential impact. This session will examine best practices and inexpensive (or free) tools to ensure the public understands the impact of proposed projects and your thought process in arriving at a final decision.

**Matt Horn**, ICMA-CM, Director of Municipal Services, MRB Group, (585) 381-9250, matt.horn@mrbgroup.com, www.mrbgroup.com

### 2E) Municipal Rights of Way

This session will examine a municipality's responsibility with respect to its highways including: highways by prescription (use); width and bounds; encroachments and obstructions by abutting owners; abandonment by non-use and discontinuance; and other issues related to municipal rights of way.

**Lori Mithen-Demasi**, Counsel, Association of Towns of the State of NY, (518) 465-7933, lmithen-demasi@nytowns.org, www.nytowns.org

### 2F) Your Role in a Disaster

You have had a disaster. Now what? Who is going to pay for damages? From acts of God to acts of terrorism, how it all works.

**Robert MacKenzie III**, Director, Lewis County Emergency and Fire Management Services, (315) 376-5303, robertmackenzie@lewiscounty.ny.gov, www.lewiscounty.org/departments/emergency-management/emergency-management

### 2G) PILOTs for Renewable Energy Projects

Wind and solar energy projects are being proposed in many North Country communities. Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) agreements are an important component of many projects and will have an effect on your community's revenue stream and character. This session will discuss how PILOTs are negotiated and things to keep in mind during the process.

**Daniel Spitzer**, Renewable Energy Practice Co-Leader, Hodgson Russ Attorneys, (716) 848-1420, DSpitzer@hodgsonruss.com, www.hodgsonruss.com/

## Session 3

### 3A) The EMS Crisis and Impacts on Municipal Budgets

Who will answer the call? Emergency medical services (EMS) are in crisis. When your life is in jeopardy, how long are you willing to wait? How will the current state of EMS affect your community, your family and you?

**Ann Smith**, North Country EMS Program Agency Director, Ft. Drum Regional Health Planning Organization, [asmith@fdrhpo.org](mailto:asmith@fdrhpo.org), [www.fdrhpo.org](http://www.fdrhpo.org) and **Robert MacKenzie III**, Director, Lewis County Emergency and Fire Management Services, (315) 376-5303, [robertmackenzie@lewiscounty.ny.gov](mailto:robertmackenzie@lewiscounty.ny.gov), [www.lewiscounty.org/departments/emergency-management/emergency-management](http://www.lewiscounty.org/departments/emergency-management/emergency-management)

### 3B) Small Wireless Facilities and 5G in New York State

5G describes the next generation of mobile networks, which builds on today's 4G wireless broadband infrastructure. This next generation of wireless service uses higher-frequency wavelengths transmitted through a network of "small cell" devices, roughly the size of a backpack, scattered throughout communities. As stewards of substantial amounts of public rights-of-way, municipalities are concerned with recent federal actions that undermine local governments' ability to serve as trustees of public property, safety and well-being. This session will discuss this issue and next steps in the 5G infrastructure build-out.

**Rebecca Ruscito**, Counsel, NY Conference of Mayors, (518) 463-1185, [rebecca@nycom.org](mailto:rebecca@nycom.org), [www.nycom.org](http://www.nycom.org)

### 3C) Translating Comprehensive Plans in the Face of Live Projects

We have all been there—we spend a year or more developing a comprehensive plan, a roadmap for our community's future. The plan gets adopted and there's much celebration; then it takes its rightful place on your shelf with all the other plans. There are many reasons that plans are not typically reflected in current development. Those reasons largely fall into two buckets: bad plans and weak implementation. This session will provide a toolkit for evaluating future plan proposals to local planning leaders without strong comprehensive plans. Additionally, we will provide insights on how to get more mileage out of existing planning work; all aimed at ensuring future development aligns with your community vision.

**Matt Horn**, ICMA-CM, Director of Municipal Services, MRB Group, (585) 381-9250, [matt.horn@mrbgroup.com](mailto:matt.horn@mrbgroup.com), [www.mrbgroup.com](http://www.mrbgroup.com)

### 3D) Land Use and SEQR Case Law Update

This session will provide a review of all Court of Appeals and Appellate Division land use, zoning and SEQR decisions for the past year. The top eight to ten cases and an overview of the particular area the case covers will be presented.

**Adam Walters**, Partner, Phillips Lytle LLP, (716) 847-7023, [awalters@phillipslytle.com](mailto:awalters@phillipslytle.com), [www.phillipslytle.com](http://www.phillipslytle.com)

### 3E) Selecting Pavement Preservation Techniques

Pavement preservation is an excellent way to maintain and improve roads and streets. The key is to select the right treatment at the right time in the right place. Come join the fun and see if you can select the proper repair technique for your highways.

**David Orr**, Director, Cornell Local Roads Program, (607)255-8033, [david.orr@cornell.edu](mailto:david.orr@cornell.edu), [www.clrp.cornell.edu](http://www.clrp.cornell.edu)

### 3F) FOIL and Open Meetings Law

This session will include discussion about the scope of the Open Meetings Law (OML), the procedure for entering into an executive session, public participation and recorded meetings, the meaning of "confidential," and many other hot button applications of both FOIL and the OML.

**Lori Mithen-Demasi**, Counsel, Association of Towns of the State of NY, (518) 465-7933, [lmithen-demasi@nytowns.org](mailto:lmithen-demasi@nytowns.org), [www.nytowns.org](http://www.nytowns.org)

### 3G) Climate Smart Communities

Attend this session to learn about two DEC funding programs: 1) grants and rebates for the purchase of electric vehicles (EV) and EV charging stations, and 2) grants for municipal projects that reduce emissions and make communities more resilient in the face of a changing climate. Grants of up to \$2 million are available to local governments through this competitive, 50/50 matching program. The session will also offer an overview of other resources and support that are available through New York State's Climate Smart Communities program.

**Dazzle Ekblad**, Climate Policy Analyst, Office of Climate Change, NYSDEC, (518) 402-8448, [dazzle.ekblad@dec.ny.gov](mailto:dazzle.ekblad@dec.ny.gov), [www.dec.ny.gov](http://www.dec.ny.gov)

## Session 4

### 4A) Think Before You Tweet

Social media has changed the way local government officials engage with the public. While Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram can foster citizen engagement and cultivate public trust by assisting municipalities in communicating with residents, social platforms can also be a great source of tension and confusion for local governments. This session will discuss the intersection of social media and the First Amendment while outlining the "dos and don'ts" of utilizing this communication method as a local official.

**Rebecca Ruscito**, Counsel, NY Conference of Mayors, (518) 463-1185, [rebecca@nycom.org](mailto:rebecca@nycom.org), [www.nycom.org](http://www.nycom.org)

### 4B) River Restoration and Resiliency

With increasing frequency, duration and intensity of rain and snow events, it is important for communities to learn about the benefits of building resiliency into the hazard mitigation planning process. Hear about examples of culvert and stream restoration as well as other projects and practices that Trout Unlimited and other counties have implemented.

**Jo-Anne Humphreys**, Stream Restoration Specialist Northeast Coldwater Habitat Program, Trout Unlimited, [JoAnne.Humphreys@tu.org](mailto:JoAnne.Humphreys@tu.org), (315) 272-5615, [www.tu.org](http://www.tu.org)

### 4C) Ethical Considerations for Planning Boards and ZBAs

The session will cover a wide range of issues that confront members of local land use decision-making bodies. Discussion will include many gray areas involving conflicts, and particular situations involving appearances before local decision-making bodies that may create ethical dilemmas. State ethics laws that apply in the land use arena will also be reviewed.

**Charles Malcomb**, Esq., Hodgson Russ Attorneys, (716) 848-1261, [cmalcomb@hodgsonruss.com](mailto:cmalcomb@hodgsonruss.com), [www.hodgsonruss.com](http://www.hodgsonruss.com)

### 4D) Q and A for Planning Boards and Zoning Boards of Appeal

**Building 2, Amphitheater 2-107**

This is your chance to ask the expert your burning legal questions. This session is an open-floor format for questions on planning and zoning issues.

**Scott Chatfield**, Esq., Chatfield Associates, P.O. Box 70, Marietta, NY 13110, (315) 636-7911

### 4E) Myths of Traffic Calming and Complete Streets

Roads and streets, traditionally, have been designed to move cars and trucks quickly. There are, however, design alternatives for use by all users, including pedestrians and bicyclists, such as Complete Streets and Traffic Calming approaches. There can be misunderstanding of what complete streets and traffic calming can actually do. This session will cover what a complete street is and what traffic calming actually can do to help improve your community.

**David Orr**, Director, Cornell Local Roads Program, (607) 255-8033, [david.orr@cornell.edu](mailto:david.orr@cornell.edu), [www.clrp.cornell.edu](http://www.clrp.cornell.edu)

### 4F) Email Essentials

Email messages can be official records when created or received in the transaction of public business. The session will discuss how to: identify emails that are records; identify the retention period for e-mail records; consider the best retention strategies; file, maintain, and preserve e-mails; and develop an e-mail policy covering the management and acceptable use of e-mails.

**Michael Martin**, Regional Advisory Officer for Central New York Region, New York State Archives, (518) 486-1741, [michael.martin@nysed.gov](mailto:michael.martin@nysed.gov), [www.archives.nysed.gov](http://www.archives.nysed.gov)

### 4G) Siting Utility-Scale Solar Projects

As solar energy becomes more viable, some municipalities have discovered their zoning codes do not address all the issues that may arise. The siting of a utility scale solar facility often requires that the solar developer apply for a zoning variance or a special use permit. In addition to engineering and environmental review, boards should consider the various legal aspects of such applications, including the necessity for decommissioning bonds and security, landowner authorizations, timing requirements and the sensitivities of neighboring property owners. Towns may also wish to explore the requirement of a Payment in Lieu of Tax Agreement (PILOT) for the various taxing jurisdictions. This presentation will focus on the unique factors that should be thoroughly evaluated in the SEQRA, zoning and legal review processes.

**Stephen LeFevre**, Senior Managing Hydrogeologist, Barton & Loguidice, (315) 457-5200, [slefevre@bartonandloguidice.com](mailto:slefevre@bartonandloguidice.com), [www.bartonandloguidice.com](http://www.bartonandloguidice.com) and **John Langey**, Esq, Costello, Cooney, & Fearon, PLLC, (315)422-1152, [jrl@ccf-law.com](mailto:jrl@ccf-law.com), [www.ccf-law.com](http://www.ccf-law.com)