

# TUG HILL COMMISSION

## MINUTES OF MEETING

Via Zoom: <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/945843214>, 929 205 6099, Meeting ID 945 843 214

April 20, 2020

Chairman Bogdanowicz opened the meeting 10:02 a.m.

**Opened**

Commission members included Messrs. Bogdanowicz, Boxberger, Maciejko, Scriber, Yerdon and Mdms. Cheresnoski and Ritter. Staff included Katie Malinowski, Gwen Decker, Jennifer Harvill, Matt Johnson, Alaina Mallette, Felicia Passino and Carla Fowler. Circuit Riders Paul Baxter, Angie Kimball, and Mickey Dietrich. Guests – commission attorney Lee Willbanks, commission alumnae Phil Street, Oswego County legislator Herb Yerdon, town of Amboy planning board chair Tim Kelley.

**Attendance**

On a motion made by Commissioner Yerdon and seconded by Commissioner Maciejko members approved the agenda as presented.

**Agenda Approved**

On a motion made by Commissioner Scriber and seconded by Commissioner Yerdon members approved the minutes of January 27, 2020.

**Minutes Approved**

Chairman's report followed.

**Chairman's Report**

Chairman Bogdanowicz welcomed everyone to the new normal for now and hopes everyone is healthy and safe. He gave thanks to health care workers including those retired that returned, the janitorial staff and all those in the front line putting their lives in jeopardy and working so hard across the state during this pandemic. There has been approximately 250,000 diagnosed with COVID-19 and approximately 19,000 New Yorkers that have lost their lives.

**Welcome**

He thanked the Governor's office for including us in the final budget. The state is looking at an upwards of a \$15 billion shortfall. We will have to be very flexible over the next 12 months and how we will continue to offer the great services that we do to our communities.

Mr. Willbanks has agreed to stay on as commission attorney for 2020-21. Chairman Bogdanowicz asked for motion to approve the contract at \$3,500.

On a motion made by Commissioner Maciejko and seconded by Commissioner Yerdon, members approved the contract as presented.

Executive Director's report followed.

**Executive Director's  
Report  
Administration**

Mrs. Malinowski reported

The commission is in the NYS budget for 2020-21. Staff started working from home approximately a month ago. There were a few kinks to work out in terms of technology and making sure everyone was set up with a computer and access to files, but those hurdles have been overcome and the office is operational.

No detailed budget prepared for 2020-21 yet. Only expenses currently incurring are salaries, regular lease payments, some miscellaneous computer expenses to allow remote working. Also purchased a Zoom account to assist our local governments for approximately \$200/month, they have been very appreciative. So far staff has facilitated 22 municipal

meetings via Zoom in the last three weeks and have seven more scheduled for this week. Local governments are trying to do the bare minimum business necessary. Staff is extended to May 15 to work from home at this point. Staff has been putting together FAQs on how communities should hold their public meetings, and how land use decisions are being made during this time, among other topics.

Some staff have volunteered to assist with state efforts, such as food pantry calls and unemployment claim calls. Due to the volume of claims DOL's system crashed and has set up a system using Google and asked for volunteers from state agencies. Ms. Malinowski thanked staff that have been able to help. Mrs. Malinowski has also been doing daily all agency calls. State income tax filing has been extended. The financial deadline for filing as commissioners have been extended to August 17.

Matt Johnson's upgrade to Grade 23 for the planning director position is under consideration.

The NOCCOG circuit rider interviews are scheduled for Thursday and Friday and will be held via Zoom. The ability to hire is in question, however, the interview process will continue until we hear otherwise.

**NOCCOG Circuit Rider**

A summer intern in the office year is on hold. Mr. Johnson worked on the intern policy that was shared with the board for review and approval.

**Intern Policy**

On a motion made by Commissioner Boxberger and seconded by Commissioner Yerdon, members approved the intern policy as presented.

All commissioners received a draft personnel policy for review and comments, as it has been five years since it was reviewed and with new staff coming on board some questions were not addressed. Mrs. Passino, Mrs. Waterbury, Mr. Johnson, and Ms. Malinowski have been working on the edits and will have a final policy for consideration at an upcoming commission meeting.

**Personnel Policy**

Staff is also working on an IT Policy, which is important to have in place especially since staff is all working remotely from home. It will be presented at an upcoming commission meeting.

Headwaters was able to be distributed via mail and email just before the Covid-19 shut down.

**Headwaters**

Mrs. Passino processed all online reimbursements. Mrs. Decker is now in the process of doing the manual reimbursements. She plans to have this done in the next few days and all checks mailed back by Friday.

**LGC Reimbursements**

Mrs. Malinowski suggested the new Community Recognition Award be put on hold until 2021, with the ability to hold an annual meeting this fall uncertain. Members agreed to wait on the award until 2021.

**Community  
Recognition Award**

A new regional map is under development, as the commission's 2012 map is out of stock. Ms. Mallette is heading up the project with assistance from Mr. Johnson, Ms. Fowler, Mrs. Harvill, Mr. Dietrich and Mrs. Malinowski as well as Ms. Sheridan. Please review the draft over the next two weeks and provide any comments to Mrs. Malinowski. The printing quote is approximately \$1400 dollars for 5000 copies.

**Regional Map  
Brochure**

After the cancellation of the Local Government Conference, staff has been able to offer some LGC trainings on the commission's website. The Siting Utility Scale Solar Project will be offered on April 22. Mrs. Waterbury and Mrs. Harvill have been working with Barton & Loguidice to provide this via webinar. Laird Petrie will do Reserve Funds and Long-Term

**LGC Training  
Webinars**

Planning webinar on April 28. Staff hopes to offer the Small Wireless Facilities and 5G in NYS webinar in May.

The June Black River Watershed Conference has also been proposed, it would have been a 10-year anniversary event. Mrs. Malinowski provided comments to the Watertown Daily Times last week about the water quality in the Black River for an Earth Day article. Mrs. Harvill added that Ms. Sheridan is working on a detailed assessment of how far the watershed has come in the last 10 years from when the watershed plan came out.

**Black River Watershed**

The Accelerated Renewables proposal made it through the final state budget. The new Office of Renewable Energy Siting was originally proposed to be housed in the Empire State Development, but now the final version is going to be at Department of State.

**Accelerated Renewables**

There is pending legislation for the Lorraine Worth Court consolidation (S6873/A9052).

**Lorraine/Worth Court Consolidation**

There has been no word on the MMR bill. Uncertain how the rest of session will unfold.

**MMR**

ACUB was funded again in the Governor's final budget at \$1 million. Also, the proposed Restore Mother Nature Bond Act made it through so that will be a proposal on the ballot in November.

**ACUB**

The EPF now includes a working forest conservation easement program. This may be a tool for Tug Hill with private landowners that might want to do a conservation easement on their forest land.

**Working Forest Conservation Easements**

CTHC – Mrs. Kimball reported she has the final resolution needed from Worth on the Lorraine Worth Court consolidation. The CTHC spring meeting is officially cancelled.

**COG Reports**

NorCOG/SRCG – Mr. Baxter shared that the Tug Hill Commission has shown strength over the past month in the response to communities and proactively dealt with situations that arise with municipalities. The organization has shown the ability to adapt and be responsive to community needs.

RACCOG – Mr. Dietrich reported the RAOCG communities are using Zoom for meetings. The RACOG Vision Summit was cancelled. The New York Power Authority is starting up the LED lighting design process again with communities.

NOCCOG – Mrs. Malinowski shared that some NOCCOG communities have used the Zoom meetings. Circuit rider interviews are this week. NOCCOG may have a summer intern to do some data collection with the GPS units that were purchased last year. The Oneida County Sheriff's Department presented to the executive committee on the county's drone program.

Ms. Malinowski reviewed the financial report, which is not the 2019-20 year end report as any transactions are still being processed. Overall, it looks like the commission will end well under budget.

**Finance Report**

The Local Government Conference was cancelled early enough that most of related expenses were not incurred. Items such as folders, name badges, etc. that were purchased can be used next year.

DOB did not approve the proposed vehicle purchase to replace the Rav, which has over 100,000 miles.

Commissioner Bogdanowicz opened the floor for public comment.

**Public Comment**

Commissioner Cheresnoski shared news about internet in Osceola internet. Verizon has been working with Spectrum and they are bringing internet in from the west side of town. Mrs. Malinowski shared that Spectrum trucks have also been seen in Boylston.

Commissioner Yerdon shared that the state allotted a little over a million dollars almost three years ago for high speed internet in his town, but it has not been installed yet. He also remarked on the Accelerated Renewables Act.

Commissioner Ritter shared that the Local Government Education Committee cancelled their March training for newly elected official, and are planning a session entitled "What's Your Role in a Disaster." She thanked Ms. Fowler for her assistance to the committee.

There being no further business before the board, on a motion made by Commissioner Yerdon and seconded by Commissioner Boxberger members adjourned the meeting at 10:55 a.m.

**Adjourn**

These minutes were approved by the Board of Commissioners.

Tom Boxberger  
Secretary