

# TUG HILL COMMISSION

## MINUTES OF MEETING

October 19, 2020, Via Video and Audio via Zoom

[us02web.zoom.us/j/82463486372](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82463486372), Meeting ID: 824 6348 6372

Chairman Bogdanowicz opened the meeting 10:06 a.m.

**Opened**

Commission members included Messrs. Bogdanowicz, Maciejko, Boxberger, Yerdon, and Mdm. Ritter and Cheresnoski. Staff included Katie Malinowski, Gwen Decker, Felicia Passino, Jean Waterbury, Alaina Mallette Jennifer Harvill, and Carla Fowler. Circuit Riders - Angie Kimball, Paul Baxter, and Mickey Dietrich. Counsel – Lee Willbanks, Sandra March – C2AE Architects and Engineering, Tim Kelley – Town of Amboy.

**Attendance**

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

**Agenda Approved**

On a motion made by Commissioner Ritter and seconded by Commissioner Maciejko members approved the minutes of September 21, 2020.

**Minutes Approved**

Chairman's report followed.

**Chairman's Report**

Chairman Bogdanowicz welcomed everyone to the video conference meeting. Summer was great and now we are into fall weather. As winter develops its extremely important to remember COVID-19 is not going away anytime soon. There has been a tremendous amount of uptick of positive cases, particularly in the Midwest and Wisconsin. We need to keep vigilant in our personal lives and our work lives and stay safe. Do not let your guard down. Be sure to social distance and wear a mask. Do not go out if you do not have to.

**Welcome**

At our September meeting Commissioners Boxberger, Cheresnoski and Ritter were appointed to the nominating committee for election of officers for chair, vice chair and secretary, which are 2 year terms per our bylaws. Commissioner Cheresnoski shared the slate of officers that includes Tom Boxberger (secretary), Jan Bogdanowicz (chair) and Mike Yerdon (vice-chair), as all have agreed to run. Commissioner Bogdanowicz asked for any other nominations. With no other nominations made, on a motion made by Commissioner Cheresnoski and seconded by Commissioner Yerdon, members accepted the slate of officers as presented. Commissioner Bogdanowicz reminded members that nominations will remain open and can continue to be made at the December meeting.

Executive Director's report followed.

**Executive Director's Report**

Mrs. Malinowski reported staff continues to operate remotely and at 50% scheduled in the office at a time. No approval has been received on the request for a modified return to plan to increase to 75% capacity in office and increase more than one employee at a time in state vehicles that was submitted. Our DOS partners Ms. Catcher and Ms. Martel will continue to work remotely through January. We are doing meetings as needed with a mix of full remote and some hybrid. She continues to do weekly staffing reports to the Governor's office.

**Administration**

To date we have not received any new budget bulletins from DOB. We continue to be frugal with our non-personnel expenses. We are watching for payroll bulletins on performance advances, cost of living increases and longevity payments that were delayed in April. Some

state agencies with PEF and CSEA-represented employees have received performance advances, however M/C as not yet.

Via email you received a copy of the DOB program inventory report which provides a summary and metrics on our operations and services we provide for planning, natural resources, community development and training to communities. The report was submitted to DOB.

Mrs. Malinowski will be reaching out to commissioners to schedule individual meetings with each of them before the end of December.

We are offering several hybrid trainings in September and October, giving the option to do in-person or virtual. This was our first attempt at this from doing only virtual trainings. We did a survey for planning and zba board members to see if they would prefer in-person or virtual trainings. The survey showed an interest in both. Mr. Johnson and Ms. Mallette provided zoning law amendment workshop in Lowville and a zba board basics workshop in West Carthage presented by attorneys from Conboy Law Firm. The trainings were interactive on both ends. There was a great deal more online attendance than in-person. DOS may be looking to change requirements for the open meetings law permanently that would allow doing business virtually to continue.

Mrs. Malinowski has continued work on the bill, with the entire Tug Hill delegation now on the bill. She has a meeting set up with assembly transportation committee staff later this month. She has also reached out to the rural resources commission members to get their support. We now have Assemblymember Santabarbara and after election plan to reach out to other members. There will be a new bill number in 2021, as 2020 is at the end of the legislative session. All sponsors and co-sponsors will be carried over. The Tug Hill delegation that includes our senators and assembly may do a sign on letter to get more interest from other state legislature.

**MMR**

The Weikel/West Turin case went to Appellate court once and got thrown back due to a technicality. Mr Weikel refiled and Judge McCluskey ruled in his favor and the town appealed again. It was fully submitted in July to the Appellate court and is waiting on an opinion. The date to hear the appeal was April but has been delayed due to COVID-19. We continue to track the case.

We continue to monitor the Lorraine/Worth Court Consolidation legislation as it has not been delivered to the Governor's office to date. The Assembly and Senate have passed it. Lorraine and Worth and CTHC sent letters of support to the governor's office.

**Lorraine/Worth Court Consolidation**

Upcoming training webinars:

**Training/Webinars**

Constable Chronicles Part 2

Virtual Black River Watershed Conference, 3 more sessions

Fall 2020 Planning/Zoning Board, 2 more sessions;

Planning Board Basics, Florence - Mr. Johnson and Ms. Mallette (hybrid)

Renewable Energy and Landuse, Waterton – Dave Geurtsen and Jim Burrows, Conboy Law Firm (hybrid)

Assessors training November 18, Tailwater Lodge, Altmar (in-person with social distancing).

A survey sent out to assessors showed interest in the training. Information went out Friday, registrations are due November 11.

Via email you received the training events spreadsheet that shows the trainings we are offering. Even though the LGC had to be canceled we have been continuing to offer trainings virtually and hybrid. We have had over 1300 participating in the trainings.

Via email you received a 480a issue paper draft with policy recommendations. We have shared this with our partners for feedback. Mrs. Harvill and Mrs. Kimball have been working on it. Osceola has had some issues with Molpus and East Branch Fish Creek properties. Most of the impact is in Lewis County, towns, and school districts. Chairman Bogdanowicz suggested sharing it with Senator Griffo and Assemblyman Blankenbush. Mrs. Malinowski has also shared it our DEC contact.

#### **490a Issue Paper**

Mrs. Malinowski received a call from Bill Farber last week regarding the Adirondack Inter-County organization that meets monthly at various locations. Mrs. Malinowski was asked to do a presentation about the Tug Hill Commission at their October meeting in Lewis County.

#### **Adirondack Inter-County**

NorCOG/SRCG – Mr. Baxter reported towns are working on budgets. They have had new expenses such as cleaning and sanitizing products related to COVID-19. Municipalities are uncertain about budgeting and spending and may need to reduce levels in the new year if revenues do not come in at the level they are budgeting for currently.

#### **COG Reports**

CTHC – Mrs. Kimball reported towns are working on budgeting, which is challenging this year. Town of Adams highway superintendent is retiring. Harrisburg clerk is resigning. Worth highway superintendent resigned. A few towns are working on water and sewer projects and some are waiting on funding. Port Leyden is waiting for funding on sewer project. Williamstown, Florence, and Lewis are finishing up salt shed projects. Lewis approved their minimum maintenance road law at their public meeting in September. Pinckney is the last town in CTHC to approve and update their special areas map. We are working with them on their official highway map and Ms. Mallette has been assisting.

NOCCOG – Mrs. Waterbury reported the Mr. Healt, Mr. Moonen and Ms. Bellinger has been covering all municipal meetings. Ms. Bellinger signed a three-month contract and plans to have a one-year contract beginning next year. NOCCOG sent out their annual meeting information in September including bylaws, budget and voting of officers. requesting the survey be completed by October 15. Associate Circuit Rider Harlan Moonen will not renew his contract. Joe Rowlands is interested and NOCCOG has offered him a contract. Mr. Rowlands will step down from the NOCCOG board. Mrs. Waterbury reached out to Ed Davis and he is interested in the NOCCOG board vacancy. NOCCOG meets in December and will discuss the changes.

RACOG – Mr. Dietrich reported there are 16 participants in shared services project for LED lighting. Champion opted out. West Carthage, Copenhagen, Deferiet, Lyons Falls, and Croghan have all opted into the program. In talking with the village of Lowville, Carthage, and town of Martinsburg it appears they will move forward. Still unsure are Castorland, town and village of Adams, Sackets Harbor and Denmark. Jefferson County plans to add LED lighting as part of their shared services plan. Lewis County would like us to assist them with a shared services plan. A developer has purchased the railroad depot in Carthage and Memories former restaurant in Lowville and is working on plans for a scenic railroad and pedal cars. The town and village of Lowville are working on comprehensive plans and Mr. Johnson and Ms. Mallette are assisting.

We continue to host zoom meetings and in person meetings for communities. Communities are very appreciative of the commission providing this free service for them.

The financial report was sent via email. We have kept expenses low. We are being very conservative. We are a little over on internet services and on software maintenance and support.

**Finance Report**

Commissioner Bogdanowicz opened the floor for public comment.

**Public Comment**

Mr. Kelley thanked Mr. Johnson and Ms. Mallette for helping the town of Amboy with the updating of their comprehensive plan.

There being no further business, on a motion made by Commissioner Cheresnoski and seconded by Commissioner Yerdon members adjourned the meeting at 11:22 a.m.

**Adjourn**

These minutes were approved by the Board of Commissioners.

Tom Boxberger

Secretary