

TUG HILL COMMISSION

MINUTES OF MEETING

January 25, 2021, Via Video and Audio with Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84212381154>, Meeting ID: 842 1238 1154

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

Opened

Commission members included Messrs. Bogdanowicz, Boxberger, Maciejko and Scriber, and Mdm. Ritter and Cheresnoski. Staff included Katie Malinowski, Gwen Decker, Felicia Passino, Jennifer Harvill, Matt Johnson, Carla Fowler, and Jean Waterbury. Circuit Riders - Angie Kimball, Paul Baxter, and Mickey Dietrich. Guests included Counsel – Lee Willbanks, Harlan Moonen, Norm Paradis town of Worth, Tim Kelley town of Amboy, and Tim Hunt Lewis County Highway Superintendent.

Attendance

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

Agenda Approved

On a motion made by Commissioner Cheresnoski and seconded by Commissioner Scriber members approved the minutes of December 14, 2020.

Minutes Approved

Chairman's report followed.

Chairman's Report

Chairman Bogdanowicz welcomed everyone to the first meeting of 2021 via video conference and introductions were made. COVID-19 vaccination efforts are underway and distribution centers need assistance. Mrs. Malinowski was contacted and she, Mrs. Kimball, and Ms. Mallette are assisting at the vaccination center in Potsdam.

Welcome

The Governor's proposed budget was released January 20. The commission is included in the budget at the same levels as last year. Hopefully, more information on how the state plans to look for other sources of revenue or possible cuts will be out within the next month or two. Mrs. Malinowski will share in her report the continuity of operation plan for the Governor's office, that we put together for the Tug Hill Commission.

There is a change of date for the Commission 2021 meeting calendar. The Annual Meeting was scheduled for October 21, however, that date is now October 14. On a motion made by Commissioner Boxberger and seconded by Commissioner Ritter member approved to change the annual meeting date to October 14, 2021. We are hoping for an in-person meeting.

Letters of a Tug Hill Logger Part 1 zoom webinar presented by Commissioner Leona Cheresnoski and her son Pete will be this Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. This is the first of the three-part series. These are letter that were from her grandfather. They are looking forward to sharing the stories. Registrations for the webinar are near 100.

Executive Director's report followed.

Executive Director's Report

Mrs. Malinowski reported a continuity of operation plan (handout via email) was submitted to the Governor's office as required. The plan is similar to our return-to-work plan that was previously submitted. We provided a webinar for the employer emergency plan and have information available on our website as our municipalities are working on them also.

Administration

The commission is in the Governor's proposed budget. Other executive budget proposals that are of interest include another round of Regional Economic Development grants and Downtown Revitalization, which did not happen last summer. The Army Compatible Use Buffer program is in the proposed Environmental Protection Fund budget. CHIPS, PAVE-NY, BRIDGE NY, legalizing recreational cannabis, real property tax law changes for renewable energy projects and equipment, and county wide shared services are also proposed. We will be monitoring the outcome.

A request to state agencies was made for assisting in the statewide vaccination sites. Mrs. Malinowski and Ms. Mallette are assisting as non-clinical support at Potsdam. Mrs. Kimball is waiting to hear on her assessment to administer vaccines.

Commission staff has facilitated 183 municipal zoom meetings that include board meetings, and planning board meetings. It has been a huge effort for staff in helping communities to enable local governments to continue to do business during this pandemic. An article on this will be included in Headwaters.

Minimum Maintenance Roads existing bill was reintroduced in the Assembly. There were concerns in the Assembly, so we are working with stakeholders on edits. We are working with Senator Griffo's office on modifications to the bill. A copy of the results of the appellate decision with markups (attachment via email) was emailed to members. Mr. Johnson, Mrs. Waterbury and Mrs. Kimball have provided assistance on this.

MMR

We continue to work on broadband. Lewis County's survey is close to completion. Jefferson County is beginning their survey. Oswego County is starting their survey. In Oneida County we are continuing discussions with Mohawk Valley Economic Development District. Herkimer County is interested in partnering with Oneida County. Making broadband affordable at \$15 month was proposed in the Governor's budget. We will see what develops with this.

Broadband

Headwaters is in progress. The annual report will go out electronically by end of March.

Headwaters

Last week the Snowmobile Economic Impact Study got underway. They will be on the trail the beginning of February to do intercept surveys of snowmobilers. Online surveys will also be done as part of the study.

Snowmobile Economic Impact Study

Green Corners solar farm in the town of Watertown and Hounsfield is controversial with landowners. The Article 10 project will be transitioning to 94c. Mr. Johnson and Ms. Mallette are working with the town of Watertown on their zoning. It has been a good learning process for us. We are working on updating our Planning for Offsite Solar Energy Projects issue paper.

Renewable Energy

Trainings (handout via email)
Letters from a Tug Hill Logger 3 Part Series (Leona and Pete Chereshnoski)
Part 1 - January 25, Part 2 - February 24
Overview of the new local government retention schedule - January 27
Cyber Security Practices – February 9
Farmland Conservation – February 10
Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure – February 25

Upcoming Training

The 480a issue paper is finalized. Mrs. Harvill and Mrs. Kimball worked on putting this together. (handout via email)

490a Issue Paper

NorCOG/SRCG – Mr. Baxter reported municipalities are working on the Employer Emergency Preparedness Plan that is required. Supervisors and mayors feel there is a lack of engagement from board members. Villages are beginning work on their budgets. \There have been additional expenses for municipalities due to COVID-19 practices and procedures. Everyone is trying to tighten budgets. Some municipal buildings have closed as a precaution but are making appointments for people paying taxes or other necessary business. Zoom meetings support for municipalities continues.

CTHC – Mrs. Kimball reported tax collections have changed to appointment only for municipalities. Meetings have been a mix of zoom, hybrid, and some in-person. The village of Adams has expressed interest to join CTHC. We are working to get comprehensive plans adopted and getting official road maps filed. Mr. Johnson and Ms. Mallette are helping. Osceola is looking at minimum maintenance road plans again and discussing adopting a law. A few towns are working on zoning amendments. There have been discussions with the town of Worth to review their zoning. Lewis County is working on the becoming a Climate Smart/Clean Energy community and have begun the process with some of the towns and villages. Lewis County is also working on LED street lighting.

NOCCOG – Mrs. Waterbury reported the Oneida County executive encouraged all communities to go virtual in December. Zoom meetings have continued and some hybrid. Staff is assisting with meeting coverage as well. NOCCOG board met in December and meets again February 4. A new executive board member needs to get installed on board which be done by virtual election. Three circuit riders are covering the 17 communities. John Healt has been with NOCCG and Lisa Bellinger who started in October and Joe Rowlands began in January. We are planning to do a meet and greet with circuit riders, associate circuit rider and commission office staff. NOCCOG is still working on GPS projects and are hoping this spring that Mark Clark can do more projects.

RACOG – Mr. Dietrich reported the village of Lowville joined RACOG. RACOG has been focus on employer emergency planning per the governor’s mandatory requirement. Jefferson County emergency management and Lewis County emergency management came to RACOG board meeting to speak on emergency planning. LED lighting is moving forward, and we are waiting for National Grid sign off on the agreements. Champion and Castorland have decided to go through National Grid. RACOG will have an intern from Fort Drum from March 15 to May 15. RACOG will be looking at the railroad bed project at the next board meeting. Christopher Reeve from NYS with Watertown Jefferson County transportation will speak to RACOG group. RACOG is interested in extended the trail. Zoom meetings continue along with some hybrid and in-person. Town of Wilna is working on switching their website to RACOG. Mr. Johnson and Ms. Mallette are working on with Lowville on their comprehensive plan.

Mrs. Malinowski shared that a COG chairs meeting via zoom is being planned for February 23. Also, the Community Recognition Program was put on hold last year due to COVID-19, we should do this year (handout via email

Commissioner Ritter mentioned that Tug Hill Sages have not been done in quite some time and may be something to consider.

The financial report was sent via email. We added in the snowmobile study for \$5,000.00 and took out the amount from our non-allocated. Due to travel and lodging expenses that are incurring now that Mrs. Malinowski and Ms. Mallette are traveling to Potsdam regularly to assist in the vaccination efforts, making an amendment to the budget to increase our

lodging may be worth considering. Currently we have \$1,000.00 for that. Commissioner Bogdanowicz asked members to increase lodging to \$3,000.00.

On a motion made by Commissioner Chereshnoski and seconded by Commissioner Scriber members approved to increase lodging expenses to \$3,000.00.

Commissioner Bogdanowicz opened the floor for public comment.

Public Comment

Tim Kelley thanked Mr. Johnson and Ms. Mallette for their assistance with the comprehensive plan for the town of Amboy which is wrapping up. Amboy is working on zoning laws and changing the ZBA members from three to five. The planning board and zba will be independent boards.

Commissioner Ritter asked if Oneida County contributed to NOCCOG for this year. Mrs. Malinowski does not believe they contributed. Commissioner Ritter shared that Boonville was hit hard with COVID-19 at various businesses and the nursing home. The lumber company closed and is not reopening.

Tim Hunt shared Lewis County completed the emergency response plan for plowing and it was implemented due to Copenhagen having two employees out and the plan worked well. He is also a circuit rider to Cornell Local Roads. He provides a budgeting class for town highway superintendents. He has previously served as legislative chair for the town superintendents association. He mentioned the importance of CHIPs money for town budgets. The highway superintendent's association is working to meet with a legislator to discuss implementing an extreme winter recovery bill.

There being no further business, on a motion made by Commissioner Boxberger and seconded by Commissioner Chereshnoski members adjourned the meeting at 11:28 a.m.

Adjourn

These minutes were approved by the Board of Commissioners.

Tom Boxberger

Secretary