

# TUG HILL COMMISSION

## MINUTES OF MEETING

September 20, 2021

West Carthage Community Room, 61 High Street, West Carthage, NY 13619

Also Via Video and Audio with Zoom –[us02web.zoom.us/j/82338298144](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82338298144) Meeting ID: 823 3829 8144

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

**Opened**

Commission members included Messrs. Bogdanowicz, Boxberger, Yerdon, Maciejko, Scriber, and Mdm. Cheresnoski. Staff included Katie Malinowski, Gwen Decker, Felicia Passino, Jennifer Harvill, Matt Johnson, and Carla Fowler. Circuit Rider – Mickey Dietrich  
Guests included Wayne Mclroy, village of Carthage; Thomas Stewart, town of Champion; Janet Zando, village of Deferiet; Paul Smith, town of Wilna; Heidi Lehmann, town of Castorland; Sandra March, C2AE; Matt Price, ANCA; Lee Willbanks, counsel.

**Attendance**

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

**Agenda Approved**

On a motion made by Commissioner Cheresnoski and seconded by Commissioner Yerdon members approved the minutes of June 21, 2021.

**Minutes Approved**

Chairman's report followed.

**Chairman's Report**

Chairman Bogdanowicz welcomed everyone, and introductions were made. He thanked the village of West Carthage for hosting the hybrid meeting in-person.

**Welcome**

Executive Director's report followed.

**Executive Director's Report**

Mrs. Malinowski reported that remote meetings are again allowed through mid-January. Some municipalities have shown an increase in Zoom meetings. The state is requiring masks to be worn again in the building and office, regardless of vaccination status, due to the COVID-19 Delta variant. We are waiting on guidance from the Governor's office for staff vaccination status reporting and testing.

**Administration**

Mrs. Malinowski sent letter to the office of the new Governor Kathy Hochul requesting a meeting, and received a nice reply from Melissa Bochenski, Deputy Chief of Staff. Mrs. Malinowski also spoke with Barb Rice, our contact for years at the governor's office, and she will remain on the administrative staff.

We received approval to hire three positions to fill vacancies we've had for several years.

The annual dinner will be in person on October 14 at Tailwater Lodge. We've received 37 RSVPs to date. Deadline for RSVPs is October 4. We anticipate a lower attendance due to COVID-19. The community recognition award will be presented that evening and the Venerable Folks exhibit will be on display also. The fiddlers will provide music for the social hour.

**Annual Meeting**

The Tug Hill Regional Map Brochure (in packets) was updated to reflect current information on the commission and region. Printing of the new map brochure has been completed. The

**Regional Map**

new brochures will be available at the annual dinner next month and then will be distributed to municipalities starting in November.

Mr. Petrie who recently retired from the state comptroller's office, has reached out to us about contracting with the commission to provide budgeting and accounting technical assistance for municipalities. A six-month contract (in packets) for up to \$5,000 from October 1 to March 31, has been drawn up for review.

**Laird Petrie**

We have also reached out to Mr. Street, who retired from the commission two years ago, to see if he would be interested in contracting with the commission to provide training.

Ethics training for the commissioners is overdue. Mrs. Malinowski requested an extension to mid-December. Training will be done at the December meeting.

**Ethics Training**

CTHC will hold their annual meeting September 30 at the Hideaway in West Leyden. NOCCOG will hold their annual meeting October 28 at Gone Coastal in Lee.

**COG Meetings**

We reached out to Mark Schachner for additional legal advice and are waiting to hear back. Both West Turin and Montague are willing to be test subjects for potential new MMR legislation. Mrs. Malinowski hopes to plan legislator meetings within the next month.

**MMR**

Ms. Mallette and Ms. Fowler will do a broadband presentation at the CTHC annual meeting. Lewis County has completed their report. Jefferson, Oswego and Oneida County reports are at various stages of completion.

**Broadband**

The commission has held over 40 webinars and trainings, with over 1200 attendees participating. The 2021 training event tracking sheet (handout) lists all webinar information. Upcoming include Gould's Logging, Town Budget (Laird Petrie), Agriculture and the Lewis County Experience, Comprehensive Planning (Matt Johnson), and more Constable Chronicles. Lewis County, Jefferson County, and NYPF are offering trainings this fall to accommodate the four-hour requirement.

**Training Webinars**

We continue to evaluate facility options for the LGC. Jefferson Community College can't guarantee what their operating status will be due to COVID-19 and they also reserve the right to cancel so we have eliminated this location. Three Willows can accommodate 250, which would be less than half our normal attendance and limit training offerings. Turning Stone has the capacity to accommodate a full scale LGC without limiting attendance. Turning Stone has Tuesday, April 19 as an available date, which is two days after Easter. We are planning to tour the facility. It's difficult to plan an event with the unknowns of COVID-19.

**LGC**

Staff assisted with nine CFA applications this year. The grants chart (handout) lists the applications that were submitted. Five were for groomers for snowmobile trails. We've heard there may be issues with the funds for those due to Buy American/U.S. Steel requirements. Ms. Harvill and Ms. Fowler assisted with the Adams Playground application with a week's notice.

**CFA**

East Branch Fish Creek Working Group will meet October 21 at Snow Ridge in Turin. The group did not meet last year due to COVID-19.

**EBFC**

Mrs. Malinowski is partner with Kelly Blazosky in Oneida County to provide a presentation on the Snowmobile Economic Impact study that the commission was part of last year. Lewis County will do a presentation for their legislative board.

**Snowmobile Impact Study**

Chairman Bogdanowicz acknowledged Mrs. Malinowski's hard work to get approval to fill our personnel openings.

RACOG– Mr. Dietrich reported RACOG will hold a remote board meeting tomorrow at 6:00 p.m. Work continues with LED lighting project, construction expected to start soon and hopefully have completed by end of December if possible. Friends of the Black River group are discussing a floating historical museum. Our intern Ethan has been working with the group and gathering historical information. Both the town and village of Lowville are working on a joint comprehensive plan.

**COG Report**

Mr. McIlroy shared that the LED lighting is a big project and has taken a great deal of effort and appreciates all that Mr. Dietrich has been doing on the project and for the communities.

The financial report (in packets) includes the end of year 2020-21 statement, which COVID expenses changed just a bit as we were reimbursed for some of the expenses. The 2021-22 statement includes Mrs. Waterbury's retirement. We are good with salary and non-salary expenses. We did finally receive three laptops that we've been waiting on. If they fit our needs, we will order more.

**Finance Report**

Commissioner Bogdanowicz opened the floor for public comment.

**Public Comment**

Michael Yerdon shared that this area could benefit from having a National Sanctuary.

Heidi Lehmann commented on LED lighting.

There being no further business, on a motion made by Commissioner Boxberger and seconded by Commissioner Yerdon members adjourned the meeting at 11:00 a.m.

**Adjourn**

These minutes were approved by the Board of Commissioners.

Tom Boxberger

Secretary