

# TUG HILL COMMISSION

## MINUTES OF MEETING

March 18, 2024

Village of Pulaski, 4971 N. Jefferson St., Pulaski, NY 13142

Chairman Bogdanowicz opened the meeting at 10:07 a.m.

**Opened**

Commission members included Messrs. Bogdanowicz, Boxberger, Scriber, Yerdon, Keller and Mdms. Cheresnoski and Ritter. Staff included Katie Malinowski, Gwen Decker, Paul Baxter, Gabriel Yerdon, and Jillian Lee. Guests – Paul Smith, Wilna supervisor; Robert North, Richland supervisor; Jan Tighe, Pulaski mayor; Jim Bernys, Parish supervisor; William Potter, Orwell supervisor; Lee Willbanks, commission attorney; Carl Falk, Colleen House.

**Attendance**

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

**Agenda Approved**

On a motion made by Commissioner Ritter and seconded by Commissioner Yerdon, members approved the minutes of January 22, 2024.

**Minutes Approved**

Chairman's report followed.

**Chairman's Report**

Chairman Bogdanowicz welcomed everyone and thanked the village of Pulaski for hosting the meeting. Welcome to Bob Keller our new board member appointment by the governor. In 2011 Bob worked hard to save the commission from budget cuts and testified on the commission's behalf. Mr. Keller has spent a great amount of time volunteering for several environmental conservation organizations including THTLT (Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust) and Lighthawk. He also volunteers on the development of the Tug Hill Traverse Trail. Mr. Keller shared he is happy for the opportunity to work with the commission. Introductions were made.

**Welcome**

Suggested changes to the 2024 Commission Meeting Calendar (handout) due to scheduling of the Local Government Conference and annual dinner. Changes include removing April 15 meeting, changing September 16 to 19 and October 17 to 21; changing location for staff retreat August 19 from Whetstone to Camp Zerbe.

On a motion made by Commissioner Yerdon and seconded by Commissioner Cheresnoski, members approved the calendar changes as presented.

Mr. Wilbanks has agreed to serve as commission attorney for the 2024-25 year, with the contract remaining the same as last year.

On a motion made by Commissioner Boxberger and seconded by Commissioner Scriber members approved the 2024-25 attorney contract.

Mr. Petrie, retired NYS auditor has been providing training to communities and agreed to contract with the commission for another year.

On a motion made by Commissioner Boxberger and seconded by Commissioner Cheresnoski members approved the 2024-25 training contract.

Commissioner Scriber requested a report on trainings Mr. Petrie is providing for the communities.

Executive Director's report followed.

## **Executive Director's Report**

Mrs. Malinowski introduced Jillian Lee, new project specialist for the commission.

### **Administration**

Ms. Lee shared she is from Sidney, New York and has a bachelor's degree in meteorology from SUNY Oneonta and her master's degree in water science and policy from the University of Delaware. Previously she was in Sacramento, California, as a water resources planner for Stantec Consulting Services focusing on water supply reliability, sustainable groundwater management and surface water storage, aquatic habitat improvement, watershed management, climate change and wildfire risk resiliency. She was an environmental scientist for the State of California where she implemented the California Vegetation Treatment General Order. She led site visits throughout the state to ensure wildfire mitigation projects were implemented safely for water quality.

Mrs. Malinowski reported we spoke to budget for an increase in special revenue. The Governor's 30-day amendments increased our special revenue by \$50,000. ACUB (Army Compatible Use Buffer program) has also been included in the budget at \$500,000.

We are happy to have Mr. Keller as a member of the commission board. During the appointment process, we became aware of a policy that was adopted by the commission in 2012 but not added to members manual, which could be due to the budget cuts in 2011-12. Mrs. Malinowski and Chairman Bogdanowicz consulted with Mr. Willbanks regarding our bylaws and policies. Mr. Willbanks recommends the board have a subcommittee do a comprehensive review.

Chairman Bogdanowicz asked for four volunteers for a subcommittee to review bylaws starting next month. Commissioners Scriber, Boxberger, Keller and Cheresnoski volunteered.

On a motion made by Commissioner Boxberger and seconded by Commissioner Cheresnoski members approved the subcommittee to review bylaws.

We are now receiving funds from the GTSC grant, five months after the start of the grant. We are working to reimburse staff time and purchase needed materials. We need to decide on reapplying for October 1, 2024-September 30, 2025. The application is due in May. Mrs. Malinowski would like to try another year as the \$50,000 grant helps with Mr. Barboza as 50/50 traffic safety and planner. He is involved with complete streets, digital radar signs, working with school districts providing presentations for distracted driving. We would like to get him more involved in working with the county, metro count for highway superintendents and mapping.

### **Governor's Traffic Safety Committee**

The Local Government Conference registration numbers as of Friday were at 166 for May 2 full day, reception 70, roundtable 30-40. Exhibitors are sold out but we are still receiving requests.

### **LGC**

Mrs. Malinowski delivered the commission's white paper in January and February to the governor and legislators. She started discussing the need for more funding to meet increased demand as outside the region communities are interested in joining a COG. Richland, Lacona and Lyonsdale have expressed interest. Circuit riders would be stretched thin.

### **Commission White Paper**

The home rule legislation chapter amendment for the town of Lorraine law (A8498/S8045) passed both in the senate and assembly.

## **Minimum Maintenance Roads**

The town of Montague MMR legislation (A8583/S8100) is not moving.

Montague land swap legislation (A09405/S08669) submitted, referred to attorney general for review - relates to conveying approximately 1.2 acres of land located within the forest preserve to the town of Montague, Lewis County, in order to allow the expansion of the town's barn for public use, in exchange for 26 acres of land to be conveyed by such town to the state.

The language regarding WMAs and property tax payments looks like it will be included in both Region 6 and 7 sections of the new Open Space Plan.

## **Wildlife Management Areas**

Ms. Harvill has received updated 480a numbers and is working on updating our information prior to scheduling of Albany meetings.

Mrs. Malinowski will be in Albany to attend the Rural Resources Fair (handout) on March 27 and Fort Drum Day on May 7.

## **Albany Visits**

NYSACC (NYS Association of Conservation Commissions) planning for the fall conference is underway. The date change to September 19 for the commission annual meeting was done to coincide with the conference. The annual meeting will be held at the Hayloft in Port Leyden.

## **NYSACC**

Gabriel Yerdon reported:

## **Watershed Plan Update**

The Oneida Lake Watershed Nine Element Watershed Management Plan is building on the 2004 Management Strategy for Oneida Lake and its Watershed and the 2003 State of the Lake and Watershed Report. The new plan's modeling team includes representatives from Cornell University, Upstate Freshwater Institute (UFI), and Cornell University Biological Field Station. The focus of the plan is phosphorus (P), with the ideal total concentration of 20 micrograms/liter. The lake is around that level of P now, and has hovered near 20 for the past 30 years. The plan is also looking at sediment, invasive species, and other related topics. Plan outcomes will be best management practice recommendations and monitoring. A public meeting was held in January 2023, focus groups will be held late February/Early March, and a final public meeting with results of the plan will be held in Fall 2024.

Sandy Creeks Nine Element Watershed Management Plan builds on 2007 EBM Pilot Plan. Outreach has included a January 2023 stakeholder meeting, focus group meetings including agriculture, conservation, lake/pond shore owners, business and rec, large landowners, and summary public meetings. The Jefferson and Oswego County Soil & Water Conservation Districts as well as UFI sampled key tributaries for nearly a year. This week's meeting will deliver the results of that water sampling, and go over possible modeling scenarios. The purpose of this plan is to create a baseline and address concerns over bacteria, excess nutrients, and HABs. At the same time, the town of Sandy Creek and Oswego County have funded HAB sampling and water quality sampling, and UFI has developed a North Sandy Pond Management Plan.

The Black River Adaptive Modeling Project Phase I is focused on data summary and gap identification. The 2016 Black River 9 Element plan was developed at the outdated HUC11-scale. Phase I (current phase) includes engaging with the public, reviewing existing data, identifying data needs, and identify water quality monitoring needed to support the watershed model. For the data gaps identified, Lewis, Oneida, and Jefferson County are

sampling a total of 9 locations March – June 2024. Phase 2, which is not yet funded, will potentially Develop a watershed model at the HUC12 scale. We are meeting with DEC partners, UFI, Ramboll, and the five soil and water conservation districts in the next few weeks to form a plan for funding, sampling, and what type of watershed plan will be pursued.

The Marten, Clean Energy Communities and Red Flags were all held in February. The Birds were done last week. Lead Service Line Inventory and RACOG Summit will take place next week.

**Presentations  
Workshops**

The NorCOG economic resiliency plan is complete. The implementation phase is beginning and will be meeting later this week (handout). The plan is also available on the NorCOG website.

**NorCOG Economic  
Resiliency Plan**

A Draft Housing/Energy policy paper (handout) was provided to members to review. Staff have been working on the paper with Roger Tibbetts.

**Draft Housing Paper**

Bill Potter, Orwell supervisor – working on water project for years 3 now, hoping complete end of this year. Working on land use and subdivision farmland; solar and wind energy policy, plan to review West Monroe law.

**COG Report**

Jim Bernys, Parish supervisor – trying to stay afloat and doing what we can.

Jan Tighe, Pulaski mayor - updating zoning laws, looking at subdivision laws; submitted a Pro Housing application. Busy working on the budget and plan to apply for DRI. Storm water projects, doubling sewer capacity, changing wastewater treatment. Hoping to work with CNYRPDB (Central NY Regional Planning and Development Board) to plant trees.

Mr. Baxter reported there is potential interest from a few communities to belong to COG. This would require additional resources for staff by the commission.

Amboy is working on zoning; Constantia is working on zoning and sewer. The village of Parish had the former bank building donated to them. The historical society is working to come up with a plan for the building.

West Monroe – Vern Sundet is stepping down as supervisor. We hope to have him stay involved in the COG.

The Route 49 survey is starting; the Oneida Lake Nine Element plan is underway.

The 2023-24 year to date financial statement (handout) was reviewed. We are in good shape on the budget. Salaries are the bulk of expenses. We have been waiting on funds for the highway safety grant. There is the \$5,000 contract for Laird Petrie. We are less on our computing line. The RAV purchase came out of last year's budget. Looking forward we hope to replace the Fusion after it hits 100,000 miles.

**Finance Report**

The Tug Hill WPBS video will be available on our website.

The commissioner mileage sheet has been changed to include your starting address on the travel form for meetings.

Commissioner Bogdanowicz opened the floor for public comment.

**Public Comment**

Mr. Falk shared that he has noticed heavy equipment near Mud Creek, Lindsey Creek, Chipman Lane, and North Pond and wondered if it involves a project. It was suggested he could check with DEC.

Commissioner Ritter shared the main street in the village of Boonville looks very nice. The village plans to do a great deal of work with the \$4 million DRI grant they received. They also brought in a few new businesses.

Herb Yerdon thanked the commission for the work they do.

There being no further business, on a motion made by Commissioner Boxberger and seconded by Commissioner Scriber members adjourned the meeting at 11:33 a.m.

**Adjourn**

These minutes were approved by the Board of Commissioners.

Tom Boxberger

Secretary