

Full House for CTHC Spring Meeting

On Thursday May 16, the Cooperative Tug Hill Council (CTHC) held their annual spring meeting at the Steak and Brew Restaurant in Turin. Sixteen of the twenty-two CTHC municipalities were present, along with six Tug Hill Commissioners, two Tug Hill staff members, three CTHC circuit riders and several other guests, for a total of 46 people. Following approval of the previous meeting's minutes and the current financial reports, the current slate of officers was re-elected with Roger Tibbetts returning as chairman; Doug Dietrich as vice chairman; Carla Bauer as secretary and Ian Klingbail, Steve Bernat, Paulette Walker, and Fran Yerdon returning as directors.

In new business, the proposed work goals for 2024 were reviewed and approved by the members, with an added goal to facilitate the creation of a new cooperative zoning board of appeals to allow more municipalities to use this service. Longtime Associate Circuit Rider Beth Steria has decided not to renew her contract for next year, so the search is on for a new associate circuit rider, with the qualifications and normal meeting schedule provided to the meeting attendees in hopes someone knew an interested party.

The speaker for the evening was Linda Garrett, from the American Farmland Trust. Ms. Garrett talked to the group about "agrivoltaics" and explained how solar projects can work with active agricultural uses on farmland. As several of the CTHC municipalities are working on new or updated solar regulations, this new way of preserving farm functions while also allowing renewable energy projects was quite interesting and timely. Katie Malinowski, the commission's executive director, also gave updates on subjects the council is involved in such as the minimum maintenance roads legislation, planning work in the CTHC municipalities and other items of interest that the commission has scheduled the next few months.



Linda Garrett, American Farmland Trust, explains agrivoltaics to attendees at the spring meeting.



16 out of 22 CTHC municipalities were represented at the Steak and Brew in Turin.

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Register Now for June 13 Black River Watershed Conference

Don't miss out! Registration for the Black River Watershed Conference ends at **12 p.m. this Monday, June 3**. The 14th Annual Black River Watershed Conference will be held on **June 13, 2024, from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the [View Arts Center](#), at 3273 NY-28, Old Forge, NY 13420**. The registration fee is \$50 and includes access to all conference sessions, a continental breakfast, lunch, refreshments, conference materials, and networking opportunities with exhibitors. Registration can be completed online at [ti-nyurl.com/BRWC2024](https://ti.nyurl.com/BRWC2024). Contact Gabriel Yerdon (NYS Tug Hill Commission) at (315) 785-2387 or gabriel@tughill.org, or Nichelle Swisher (Lewis County Soil and Water Conservation District) at (315) 376-6122 or nichelleswisher@lewiscounty.ny.gov with any questions.

GIS Demonstration at NorCOG Meeting

The North Shore Council of Governments (NorCOG) met on Wednesday, May 16 at the West Monroe town hall. The major agenda item was a live demonstration by Tug Hill Executive Director Katie Malinowski of the Tug Hill Commission's GIS (Geographical Information System), and how it could be used in support of North Shore's economic development efforts. Specifically, GIS can be used to identify land parcels with characteristics which make them suitable for various types of development.



NorCOG members reviewed GIS data for their communities.

Following that, the group continued discussions on how to make the best use of a unique North Shore asset, the North Shore Recreational Trail, owned by Oswego County, along the path of the former New York, Ontario, and Western Railway. Discussion topics included public awareness of this asset, its current condition and use, access and parking issues, and connectivity with local roads and Oneida Lake.

The group decided to move forward on a community-by-community basis to identify local parcels which would fit the objectives of the North Shore economic development effort, and to move forward on exploring ways that the North Shore Recreational Trail could be improved for increased public benefit.

The Tug Hill Commission will meet on Monday, June 17 at 10:00 a.m. at the Town of Denmark offices, 3707 Roberts Rd., Carthage, NY, 13619. The public is welcome to attend.

Boonville Plans to Rehabilitate Grove Street Facility

On May 14, the village of Boonville held a public hearing regarding an upcoming project at the former Delta Hardwoods Manufacturing (previous Ethan Allen) facility located at 210 Grove St., in the village of Boonville. The project includes the demolition of two condemned buildings and the rehabilitation of the main building on site.

The village applied for funding through the Restore NY Communities Initiative Municipal Grant Program. They applied as the municipal sponsor of the project for \$2 million towards the redevelopment of 210 Grove St., with a confirmed 10% cash match by the property owner if awarded.

According to the village, the old facility on Grove Street is in "various stages of disrepair." There are parts in desperate need of a new roof, and much of the lighting is outdated and does not work anymore.

The building would receive new, modern lighting and a new heating system, as well as exterior improvements, including new blacktop for the parking lot. Two smaller, condemned buildings on site would be demolished. There are additional plans to excavate the land behind the main building so that more structures can be added to the property in the future if needed.



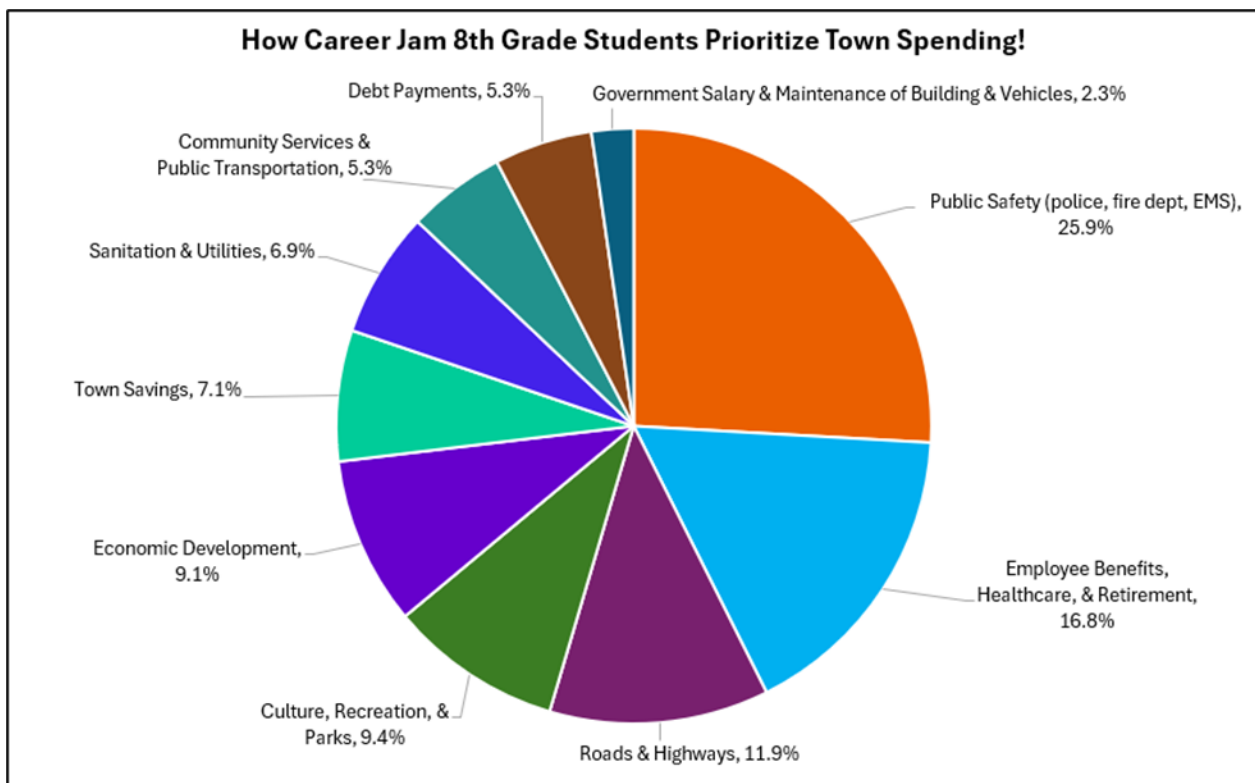
The former Delta Hardwoods Manufacturing (previous Ethan Allen) facility, located at 210 Grove St., Boonville. (Photo by Dina Olmstead)

Tug Hill Staff Attend 8th Annual Career Jam

Jillian Lee (project specialist) and Paul Shepard (Fort Drum intern) attended the 8th Annual Career Jam, hosted by The Workplace, Jefferson-Lewis Workforce Development, and Jefferson-Lewis BOCES. This event had 29 schools attend and aimed to showcase 16 career clusters available in the North Country and help 8th-grade students decide which classes to take in high school based on the career path they might want to choose.

The Tug Hill Commission had a display table and two student activities as part of the Government and Public Administration career cluster. The first asked students to play the role of town supervisor and prioritize spending \$10,000 for their local town. Students used critical thinking when deciding where to spend the money (see chart below with results from the 394 participants). Feedback from the students was insightful. Public safety was most important to many students. Some mentioned a lack of clean water and public transportation, and others said putting money into economic development could benefit all categories listed.

The second activity was a toxic waste team building game that had four to five students work together to figure out how to transfer toxic waste (i.e., black beans in a coffee can) into another empty can without going into the toxic waste zone, outlined by a red square on the ground. Students could only use two bike tire tubes and five pieces of string provided and had to work together to solve the challenge. Overall, the primary purpose of the activities was to highlight that students can impact their local government, especially if they work together. It also helped inform students about [New York State's Seal of Civic Readiness](#), which starts in 8th grade and is a formal recognition that a student has attained a high level of proficiency in civic knowledge, skills, mindset, and experiences. New York State Department of Labor Commissioner Roberta Reardon also introduced herself to staff and learned about what the Tug Hill Commission does.



Winona State Forest UMP 10-Year Update Info Session

The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) held a session to solicit public input on the development of the 10-year update to the Winona State Forest Unit Management Plan (UMP) on May 30, at the Mannsville Manor Elementary School. The meeting included a short presentation by DEC Region 6 Division of Lands and Forests, followed by an open table session with DEC staff to facilitate conversation and answer questions.

Updates that have been completed at Winona over the past 10 years include four new trails, four new trail sections, some separation of winter user groups on different trails, infrastructure updates, and 790 acres of timber harvesting. Planned work that was not completed includes upgrading one trail to be Americans with Disabilities Act compliant, harvesting a total of 2,000 acres of timber, maintaining up to date kiosks, and establishing a trail classification system. The presentation also highlighted other changes to consider in the new UMP, such as Winona receiving less snowfall and fewer winter lake effect storms due to climate change, and timber stock changes from 49% to 45% softwood, and 35% to 82% large diameter trees. Winona is also experiencing an increase in invasive species presence, while carbon capture and resilient and diverse forestry are DEC goals in the face of climate change.

The Winona State Forest contains 9,233 acres and is located in southern Jefferson County (towns of Lorraine and Ellisburg) and in northern Oswego County (town of Boylston). The state forest includes the site of the Civilian Conservation Corps Mannsville Camp. Due to the amount of lake-effect snow the area receives, the state forest contains many recreational trails used for cross country skiing, snowmobiling, and other winter activities. In recent years, these trails have seen increased use for summer activities. The update examines forestry, maintenance, and recreation activities on the unit over the past 10 years and looks at future recommendations to meet needs for the next 10 years. This plan will update the 2013 Winona UMP.

Comments can be sent through mail to Andrea Mercurio, NYS DEC, 7327 State Route 812, Lowville New York, 13367, or by email to r6.ump@dec.ny.gov. DEC will accept public comments on these documents through July 11, 2024. For more information and to view the current UMP, please visit the Winona State Forest [webpage](#).

Army Corps Public Notice for Micron

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Buffalo District, issued a [New York Public Notice](#) for Micron Semiconductor Manufacturing LLC about the permit application under Authority of Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Micron is proposing to permanently discharge fill material into wetlands and streams for the construction of their semiconductor manufacturing facility which would include the loss of 204.17 acres of federally regulated wetlands and 6,716 linear feet of federally regulated streams. The Department of Commerce is the lead agency for the review and preparation of the Micron Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is seeking public comment about the work described in the public notice.

All comments must be submitted by July 1, 2024. Electronic comments should be submitted to: micron.public.comments@usace.army.mil. All written comments should reference the application number LRB-2000-02198 and be addressed to: US Army Corps of Engineers, Buffalo District, Attn: Margaret Crawford, 7413 County House Road Auburn, New York 13021.

Videoconferencing Extended Until July 1, 2026

From the [Committee on Open Government](#) website: On April 20, 2024, Governor Hochul signed into Law Chapter 58 of the Laws of 2024. Part KK of Chapter 58 provides for a two-year extension – without other modification – until July 1, 2026, of the amendment to the Open Meetings Law (OML) established by Chapter 56 of the Laws of 2022 expanding the use of videoconferencing by public bodies to conduct open meetings, under extraordinary circumstances, regardless of a declaration of emergency. See previously issued guidance on this topic, which remains applicable, [here](#).

In addition, Chapter 58 also amended Public Authorities Law to add a new § 2829 to clarify and reinforce the fact that state and local authorities are subject to both the Freedom of Information Law and the OML: All state and local authorities, as such terms are defined in section two of this chapter, as well as all subsidiaries of such state and local authorities, as such terms are defined in section two of this chapter, shall be subject to the provisions of articles six and seven of the public officers law relating to the freedom of information and open meetings laws respectively. The amendment further provides that all such authorities and their subsidiaries shall, to the extent practicable, stream all open meetings and public hearings on their website in real-time, post video recordings of all open meetings and public hearings on their website within five business days of the meeting or hearing and maintain such recordings for a period of not less than five years. This amendment relating to public authorities goes into effect on May 20, 2024.

NEW YORK STATE ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION COMMISSIONS

CONFERENCE ON THE ENVIRONMENT 2024

REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN!

[TINYURL.COM/NYSACC-CONFERENCE-REGISTRATION](https://tinyurl.com/nysacc-conference-registration)

Find all event details on [our website!](https://www.nysacc.net/2024-coe)

www.nysacc.net/2024-coe

**WEDNESDAY
SEPTEMBER 18**

Virtual presentations: Renewable Energy | Natural Resources Economy | Environment | Recreation & Tourism | Student - Professional Networking
In-person social hour to follow.

**THURSDAY
SEPTEMBER 19**

Explore the outdoors or learn about the history of Tug Hill through field trips.
Conference reception to follow.

**FRIDAY
SEPTEMBER 20**

Join us for spectacular views of Trenton Falls only open a few times a year!

Questions?

Contact Jillian Lee at 315-785-2406 or jillian@tughill.org



\$750,000 Available Under ZEV Rebate Program

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) announced the next round of [DEC's Municipal Zero-emission Vehicle \(ZEV\) Rebate Program](#), which will provide \$750,000 to municipalities for the purchase or lease of zero-emission light- and medium-duty fleet vehicles.

A total of \$750,000 is available from DEC for municipalities to apply for funding on a first-come, first-served basis starting April 25, 2024. DEC is accepting applications on a rolling basis through Sept. 27, 2024, or until funds are exhausted, whichever occurs first. Rebates are available to municipalities across the State that purchase – or lease for a minimum of 36 months—an eligible vehicle placed into municipal service at a dealership in New York State between Sept. 30, 2022, and Sept. 27, 2024. All electric, plug-in hybrid, and hydrogen fuel cell vehicles are eligible for rebates.

[More details can be found in the Request for Applications \(RFA\) posted on the DEC website.](#) Applications are available through the [NYS Statewide Financial System Grants Management System](#).

June 6 Webinar on Land Acquisition Funding for Source Water Protection

Did you know that acquiring lands to protect your source of drinking water is a project that the [Water Quality Improvement Project \(WQIP\) Program](#) funds? Funding is currently available through the [Consolidated Funding Application](#), and will remain open until 4:00 p.m. on Friday, July 31, 2024.

Join NYS Department of Environmental Conservation on Thursday, June 6 at 1:00 p.m. for an informational webinar to learn more about the [WQIP Program - Land Acquisition Projects for Source Water Protection](#). Register [here](#). For full program details and requirements, including maximum award amounts, required match, and project type descriptions, view [DEC's WQIP webpage](#).

Capital Improvement Grants for Pro-Housing Communities

Empire State Development (ESD), through the Consolidated Funding Application, is offering capital improvements grants for pro-housing communities. The focus of the program is to incentivize capital investments within pro-housing communities to support infrastructure improvements, blight removal, and placemaking investments to create thriving and sustainable communities. While the pro-housing communities program only applies to cities, towns, and villages, this capital improvement grants program is also open to counties and not-for-profits to apply for funding as long as the project itself is located within a pro-housing community. See [Empire State Development](#) (page 7) for more information. A presentation about the funding and a [recorded webinar](#) about the funding are also available.

- Up to \$40,000,000 will be made available;
- Minimum award is \$100,000; Maximum award is \$3,000,000;
- Applicants will not be considered for more than 50 percent of the financing for any project based on the eligible total project cost. For example, a \$1,000,000 investment could receive up to a \$500,000 grant from ESD.

An example of funding available includes **Infrastructure and Blight Removal Projects**. Capital projects with a justified economic benefit will be considered for funding with the intent to award smaller-scale infrastructure projects. Eligible projects include but are not limited to:

- New or reconstruction of infrastructure including but not limited to water, sewer, or other utilities that will support development projects with a justified economic benefit;
- Site development and preparation including but not limited to blight removal, demolition, and environmental remediation; and
- Construction, expansion, and/or rehabilitation of facilities or space leading to an increase in economic development.

Applicants are encouraged to reach out to their [ESD Regional Office](#) to discuss their project prior to submitting an application.

Project examples include but are not limited to infrastructure improvements within a downtown that will lead to additional mixed-use housing, water and/or sewer infrastructure that will increase capacity to support business expansions, transit orient development improvements within a downtown, demolition of an existing facility and infrastructure improvements within a downtown to support additional development, etc.

For ESD grants, city, town, and village applicants must be certified by NYS Homes and Community Renewal (HCR) as a [pro-housing community](#) prior to receiving an award.

North Country Current Issues Survey Results

Jefferson Community College's [Center for Community Studies](#) (CCS) recently completed a [survey](#) of North Country residents on a variety of topics centered on six themes: quality of life, national issues, north country agriculture, short-term rental properties, recreation and exercise, and the 2024 presidential election. Relevant local government survey results include:

Q1. 48% of respondents said that quality of life overall has gotten worse while 40% said it has stayed the same, and 12% said it has gotten better.

Q7. 50% of respondents said they strongly agree that actively farmed land is more important than solar projects, while 21% said somewhat agree, and 10% of people disagreed.

Q10. 95% of respondents said that farming and agriculture are important to our local economy.

Q12. 52% of respondents said that local government should provide small grant programs to maintain and increase our locally grown food supply, and 31% somewhat agreed with that as well. 12% were not sure and 5% disagreed.

Q15-Q28. Across many questions about legislation concerning short term rentals:

- 90% respondents said it was important to keep noise levels at residential levels
- 69% of respondents said that a local registry was important
- 94% said that removal of trash and litter were important
- 83% of respondents said having a local point of contact for tenant concerns was important
- 53% of people said that it was important to have regulations around owners of short-term rentals paying occupancy taxes similar to hotels
- 91% said having fire and safety regulations was important
- 65% of respondents said that large events held at rentals should have regulations
- 87% said it is important to have local regulations for a procedure for owners to respond to neighbor or tenant concerns.

**NEW YORK STATE
CANNABIS
ENFORCEMENT**

TOWNS & VILLAGES

PRESENTED BY OCM'S GENERAL COUNSEL
LINDA BALDWIN
via WebEx

MONDAY, JUNE 3 @ 3:30 PM OR **TUESDAY, JUNE 4** @ 10:00 AM

[RSVP FOR 6/3 EVENT](#) [RSVP FOR 6/4 EVENT](#)

 **Office of Cannabis Management**

Contact Us

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To request our newsletter electronically please email gwen@tughill.org.

For upcoming trainings, grant deadlines, and meetings, view our [calendar](#).