

TUG HILL COMMISSION
MINUTES OF MEETING
January 27, 2025
Village of Parish, 2938 East Main St., Parish, NY 13131

Chairman Bogdanowicz opened the meeting at 10:12 a.m.

Opened

Commission members included Messrs. Bogdanowicz, Keller, Boxberger, Scriber and Mdms. Chereschnoski and Ritter. Staff included Katie Malinowski, Gwen Decker, Jennifer Harvill, Jillian Lee, Paul Baxter, and Heidi Tompkins. Guests – town of Parish supervisor James Bernys, Oswego County legislator Herbert Yerdon, village of Parish mayor Jacqueline Murphy, Lee Willbanks, commission attorney.

Attendance

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

Agenda Approved

On a motion made by Commissioner Scriber and seconded by Commissioner Yerdon, members approved the minutes of December 9, 2024, with corrections.

Minutes Approved

Chairman's report followed.

Chairman's Report

Chairman Bogdanowicz welcomed everyone and thanked Parish for hosting. The nominating committee for the election of officers was formed in July last year which included Commissioners Scriber, Keller and Ritter. He asked the committee for the slate of officers. Commissioner Keller shared the slate of officers for 2025-26 – Gerry Ritter - chair, Bill Scriber - vice chair, Tom Boxberger - secretary. All have agreed to the positions.

Welcome

Chairman Bogdanowicz asked for additional nominations. He asked a second and third time for additional nominations. There being no additional nominations, he requested Secretary Boxberger to cast a vote for the slate of officers for 2025-26.

On a motion made by Commissioner Yerdon and seconded by Commission Chereschnoski, members voted to approve the slate of officers for 2025-26 as presented.

Gerry Ritter - chair, Bill Scriber - vice chair, Tom Boxberger - secretary.

Commissioner Yerdon thanked Commissioner Bogdanowicz for his service as chair.

Executive Director's report followed.

ED Report

Ms. Malinowski thanked Commissioners Bogdanowicz and Yerdon for their service as chair and vice chair. Mrs. Malinowski reported that Mr. Baxter's retirement date is approximately March 27 and then we will proceed to start paperwork to hire Partick Brady as Local Government Specialist/Planner. Mr. Brady is currently an associate circuit rider for RACOG and CTHC.

Administration

The Governor's proposed budget (handout) was released last week which shows a proposed increase of \$110,000 in personal services for the commission. FTE's and non-personal services remain the same. ACUB funding for the Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust is proposed at \$250,000, which is less than prior years, and has been changed to the DEC line instead of Ag and Markets line. We have been working with THTLT to secure past and current ACUB funds and have attended meetings in Albany with Mr. Pacilio and Mr. Quinn.

Other items of interest in the budget include Article VIII legislation, cyber security, local government planning, strengthening municipalities' ability to deal with abandoned properties, extending NY Helps, grant program for fire departments, and a climate investment fund.

The contract with Turning Stone was approved by OSC, however, we are struggling with DOS on issuing a deposit payment. Sponsorships are down so far and it's still early for exhibitors and attendees. We've received a lot of positive reviews on topics.

LGC

Mrs. Harvill shared we have received 46 full day registration and 16 for the day before. We are down in sponsorship this year, which is a concern, but hoping to get more. Mrs. Malinowski does an initial outreach to sponsors and then another outreach is done. Commissioners Scriber and Bogdanowicz suggested a phone call might be helpful also.

The strategic planning subcommittee (commissioners Bogdanowicz, Boxberger, Keller and Ritter) and Mrs. Malinowski have been working on version 3 of the Strategic Plan (handout). This version 3 is ready to share with the COGs, and then the subcommittee and Mrs. Malinowski will meet in March for any edits.

Strategic Planning

We are talking with CenterState CEO about the possibility of holding a symposium in the fall for local governments to help prepare and inform them about what's ahead. Joe Nehme will provide an update at the Oswego County Conference of Mayors meeting in April/May. We also talked with Tim Stahl and Austin Wheelock at Oswego County. We have also been looking at wetlands maps and could get that to towns if they would like. Commissioner Scriber is concerned about municipalities dealing with major subdivisions regarding Micron's planning and the wetlands. A discussion took place with members on Micron and the wetlands affecting planning and concerns with housing support. Commissioner Scriber suggested that housing development could be an argument for the assembly and senate.

Micron

Ms. Lee shared she is serving on the steering committee for the West Leyden Elementary Reuse Study. The school is operational until the end of this school year. Lewis County is using LaBella Associates for the reuse study. LaBella will send out a survey in January/February to identify reuse possibilities with stakeholders' engagement. In February/March a marketing strategy will be done. By April/May an analysis will be provided.

**West Leyden School,
Deferiet Mill,**

The Deferiet BOA committee is planning for improvements to the mill site. Ideas include a bike and pedestrian trail, residential housing updates, and an RV park. Commission planners Mr. Johnson and Mr. Barboza are working on a first draft for zoning updates. A Restore NY grant was awarded for the mill site and is being used to demolish the old mill buildings as well as the old post office.

Ms. Lee is also working on a paper on weather data she hopes to have done within the next few weeks.

The roads contract with Ayers Law Firm was signed. An initial Zoom meeting was held in December, and we should start seeing memos soon. While working with the commission on MMR roads in Lewis County, the law firm will decline to represent any requests that involve Lewis County roads.

Roads

We continue to work on an ATV draft map and revised issue paper. We met with Boonville, where no decisions have yet been made on opening roads.

ATV

A discussion with members took place on ATV issues in the counties and communities.

Municipal websites may now be required to use .gov on their sites. We'll wait to see what develops.

Website Requirements

The upcoming winter wildlife webinars include Bats on February 12 and American Chestnut on March 12. The Best Practices working with Amish workshop will be held tomorrow in Lee. A discussion with members took place regarding the Amish, building construction, and fires.

Webinars Workshop

AOT asked us to do an article in their magazine referencing our ambulance issue paper. The magazine is out now. Mrs. Malinowski and Ms. Kimball have been asked to be presenters at the AOT conference in NYC next month to talk about ambulance service, councils of governments, and solar/agrivoltaics. Linda Garrett from AFT will also be attending.

Ambulance Article

Ms. Tompkins shared that Salmon Rivers meet last week, unfortunately there was not a quorum but Terry Bennett with Oswego County Emergency Management did a presentation on what municipalities can do in the event of an emergency and how their office can assist them. The town of Richland and village of Pulaski are working on a joint comprehensive plan. Rod Campbell will be filling the associate circuit rider position that Ms. Tompkins previously held. Other projects include working on websites and the new wetland mapping. The transition from Mr. Baxter to Ms. Tompkins is going well.

COG Report

The 2024-25 financial statement (handout) shows 76% on salary line. \$10,000 was moved from database line to legal line. We haven't been charged by the individual assisting us on the database conversion. Mr. Street hasn't started yet, it is taking longer than expected for Williamstown to start their zoning project. The RAV is working fine since experiencing low battery issues during the extremely cold weather.

Finance Report

Commissioner Ritter opened the floor for public comment.

Public Comment

Commissioner Yerdon shared concerns with the new wetlands regulations and issues.

Commissioner Ritter thanked Commissioner Yerdon for serving as vice chair.

There being no further business, on a motion made by Commissioner Yerdon and seconded by Commissioner Scriber members adjourned the meeting at 11:31 a.m.

Adjourn

These minutes were approved by the Board of Commissioners.

Tom Boxberger
Secretary