

TUG HILL COMMISSION
MINUTES OF MEETING
March 17, 2025
Harrisburg Town Hall, 7886 Cobb Rd., Copenhagen, NY 13626

Chair Ritter opened the meeting at 10:10 a.m.

Opened

Commission members included Messrs. Keller, Boxberger, Bogdanowicz, Scriber, and Mdms. Ritter and Cheresnoski. Staff included Katie Malinowski, Gwen Decker, Felicia Passino, Jillian Lee, Angie Kimball, and Heidi Tompkins. Guests – town of Wilna supervisor Paul Smith, town of Lowville supervisor Bob Mullin, CTHC associate circuit rider Christine Healt, James and Colleen Arvanites, Lee Willbanks, commission attorney.

Attendance

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

Agenda Approved

On a motion made by Commissioner Bogdanowicz and seconded by Chair Ritter, members approved the minutes of January 27, 2025.

Minutes Approved

Chair's report:

Chair's Report

Chair Ritter welcomed everyone and thanked Harrisburg for hosting. Introductions were made. There are many changes happening in the country at the federal level. The commission continues to focus on our work for communities.

Welcome

The 2025-2029 Strategic Plan (handout) has been compiled and is ready for approval. Chairperson Ritter asked if there were any questions or concerns. No questions or concerns were made. Chair Ritter asked for approval on the 2025-2029 Strategic Plan. On a motion made by Commissioner Boxberger and seconded by Commissioner Scriber, members approved the 2025-2029 Strategic Plan as presented.

Strategic Plan Approved

A reminder that the deadline for financial disclosure statements is May.

Executive Director's report:

ED Report

Ms. Malinowski shared that Gabriel Yerdon has left the commission for another state position. The vacancy will allow us to move forward to get Patrick Brady on staff with a possible start date of April 10. We are waiting for his background check. Mr. Baxter's retirement is expected in early April as he is still working on some details. There will be a vacancy to evaluate after his retirement. A retirement gathering in Constantia is being planned for Mr. Baxter.

Administration

The Governor's proposed budget has a proposed increase of \$110,000 in personal services for the commission. We're hopeful the budget gets finalized. Mrs. Malinowski suggested a personnel committee may be formed to discuss how to use the funds.

The 25% deposit payment for Turning Stone was finally processed. It's two weeks until the conference with 85 registered for the two sessions on March 31, approximately 140 for the reception that evening and 580 for the full day on April 1. The program will include a map for session locations and staff will be assisting attendees with directions. We will also be enforcing our no video or audio recording policy a requirement in this year's registration.

LGC

The Headwaters annual report is at the printers and scheduled for mailing and emailing by the end of the month.	Headwaters
Financial disclosure statements for the commissioners are due in May. Members should have received an email.	Financial Disclosure
The Ayers Law Firm continues to work on the legal guidance for us related to roads. We are planning to undertake data collection this field season, possibly looking to use trail cameras. We have been taking pictures for now. Mrs. Malinowski was hoping to have a memo from Ayers to share soon.	Roads
The ATV local road analysis has been completed, which gives us an inventory. We will be reaching out to communities researching case laws and confirming off-road trail data. The SNIRT run was canceled due to insurance issues and permit requirements. Timberview is looking into offering a poker run to fill the void.	ATV
We continue to discuss with partners the possibility of a Micron-focused symposium this fall. Mrs. Malinowski met Andrew Fish at Centerstate CEO in and Dan Kolinski at ESD Syracuse. We also reaching out to AOT, NYCOM, and other organizations for support. Mrs. Malinowski shared a portfolio North Country – Where Innovation Meets Opportunity developed by Assemblymen Scott Gray with materials from North Country organizations.	Micron
Commissioner Scriber suggested asking CenterState CEO for a zone map for Micron.	
We are in the process of getting quotes from the Lake Ontario Conference Center and The OnCenter as possible locations to hold the symposium. Commissioner Bogdanowicz suggested Barbagallo's as a location as well.	
Ms. Lee provided an overview of the new issue paper <i>How Winter is Changing in the Tug Hill Region</i> that she has completed.	Winter Changing Issue Paper
A discussion took place with members on how highway departments will manage roads due to weather related issues and how major repairs would be done.	
As per the requirement for municipalities to use .gov rolls out, we are beginning to see municipalities changing over.	Website Requirements
Hastings is potentially interested in joining NorCOG. Ms. Tompkins plans to attend their upcoming meeting. Rutland also has an interest in joining a COG. Outside the region the village of Croghan is interested in joining, as the town of Croghan is already a member of RACOG. The villages of Lacona and Sandy Creek, and the town of Sandy Creek are also potentially interested in joining COGs.	Joining COG Interest
The grant season is in progress and staff will be assisting the municipalities. The village of Pulaski was awarded a \$10 million DRI grant.	Grants
Ms. Kimball reported the town of Adams is discussing designating some minimum maintenance roads; village of Adams is dealing with water pipes issues and will be looking into grant funding; Constableville is working on mini comp plan and zoning laws; Florence planning board has issue with possible subdivision and discussing zoning amendments; Leyden is reviewing costs for new municipal building, their agreement with NYSERDA regarding energy upgrades has been amended; Lorraine water project is in progress and they submitted their Hazard Mitigation Plan update; Lyons Falls working on water and sewer projects and their NY Forward grant, as well as looking at options for moving out of their municipal office; Martinsburg is working on updating their comp plan and water and	COG Report

sewer plans; Montague has an issue with someone living on a minimum maintenance road, DEC may be using a minimum maintenance road for logging; Osceola board member has resigned, they have a new assessor; Pinckney will need new justice as current one plans to run for State Supreme Court; Rodman has new assessor; town of Turin plans to apply for salt shed grant; village of Turin is starting a water project and codes is dealing with condemned houses; West Turin is working on zoning; Williamstown working on zoning; Worth addressing issue after a PESH inspection at the highway garage, they are discussing options for a new town hall or possibly a new town hall and garage combo building; a public session will be held for the West Leyden Elementary Building Reuse project; the CTHC spring meeting is April 29 at the Glenfield Fire Department.

The 2024-25 financial statement shows salary at 91% which is below budget. Non salary totals show that we have not expended funds because the computer consultant is not charging us for converting the database and doing it on a volunteer basis. Phil Street hasn't done any planning consulting yet as we're waiting for the community. We will plan to renew his contract.

Finance Report

Chair Ritter opened the floor for public comment.

Public Comment

There being no further business, on a motion made by Commissioner Scriber and seconded by Commissioner Chereshnoski members adjourned the meeting at 11:30 a.m.

Adjourn

These minutes were approved by the Board of Commissioners.

Tom Boxberger
Secretary