

# **TUG HILL COMMISSION**

## **MINUTES OF MEETING**

**September 22, 2025**

**Town of West Monroe, 46 County Rt. 11, West Monroe, NY 13617**

Chair Ritter opened the meeting at 10:10 a.m.	Opened
Commission members included Messrs. Bogdanowicz, Yerdon, Munk, Scriber, Keller, and Mdms. Ritter and Cheresnoski. Staff included Katie Malinowski, Gwen Decker, Heidi Tompkins. Guests - Brittney Jerred, Assemblyman Barclay's office; Melissa Snavlin, C2AE; Paul Baxter, Carole Kupelian.	Attendance
On a motion made by Commissioner Bogdanowicz and seconded by Commissioner Keller 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 June 16, 2025.	Minutes Approved
Chair's report:	Chair's Report
Chair Ritter welcomed everyone and thanked West Monroe for hosting. Introductions were made. The commission staff, board and associate circuit riders participated in the August retreat in Remsen. The day included team building, brainstorming, and visiting some historical sites. The annual dinner will be held October 9 at the Delta Lake Inn in Rome. The focus will be on agriculture with a good line up of speakers. Ms. Cheresnoski submitted her letter of retirement from the commission board effective at the end of this year. Ms. Cheresnoski has been the longest serving board member for the commission.	Welcome
Executive Director's report:	ED Report
Ms. Malinowski reported progress on the salary upgrades paperwork in Albany, the Governor's office has signed off and now is at appointments for their sign off. The last stop will be the Division of Budget, where effects on the state budget because of changes with the federal government are still being determined. We have not received the 2026-27 budget call letter yet, it should be coming soon.	Albany Items
Ms. Malinowski shared that we worked with the Office of the State Comptroller and Department of State to outline an improved procurement process using an Invitation For Bid (IFB) for the 2026 Local Government Conference. There was one response to the IFB, from Turning Stone, and we now have signed a contract with Turning Stone for the Monday and Tuesday April 20 and 21, 2026. We are working to make the 25% deposit to Turning Stone, as well as developing the program. There will not be a specific assessor track this year because we are short one small room. Looking ahead we toured a hotel in Liverpool under renovation that could be an option for 2027.	LGC
The annual dinner will be held on October 9 at the Delta Lake Inn. Beeches was holding the date for us, but by the time we had confirmed our speakers for October 9, Beeches had booked a band in an adjacent room, which would have interfered sound-wise with our event, so we pivoted to the Delta Lake Inn. Registration is currently at 56.	Annual Dinner
Ms. Malinowski reported that we began emailing Tug Hill Times via our new platform (Emma) on July 18. The provided report shows the statistics for all newsletters sent to date,	Email Distribution Platform

including rates for delivery, opening, bounce, and opt-outs. There are other features within the platform that we have not yet used.

Our *ATV Recreation: Considerations for Municipalities* paper is complete and was presented by Taylor McKinney at last week's CTHC fall meeting. A press release on the paper will be sent tomorrow. We continue to work on additional issue and technical papers, with an update of *Protected Lands* to be completed next.

Issue Papers

We continue to work closely with the Ayers Law Firm and are pleased with the thoroughness of the information provided to us. One of the immediate outcomes has been revised law templates for municipalities based on the law firm's feedback. We continue to digest the volume of material provided and are working to communicate that in an easy-to-understand format for our communities. Outstanding items we are still working with Ayers on include how to address logging operations that need to access property for timber harvest without violating the minimum maintenance road designation or damaging the roads, as well as legalities related to counties taking over ownership of town roads. Both topics, logging access and county-town road transfers, need additional work from Ayers, but we have expended the initial \$15,000 that was approved for the contract, even with Ayers discounting his bills significantly. This will be discussed later in the meeting under the financial reporting section. A discussion took place with members on Lewis County taking over town roads.

Ayers Update

At the CTHC fall meeting topics raised by supervisors regarding concerns for dog control due to new requirements in state law, emergency management services costs, and the Department of Labor contractor registry. A discussion on dog control issues took place.

CTHC Topics

Upcoming meetings and events include:

- RACOG Board Meeting, September 25 with guests Jefferson County Administrator Ryan Piche and Lewis County Manager Tim Hunt.
- EBFC Working Group October 2, West Leyden
- Welsh Ramble, Remsen, October 4
- Commission annual dinner meeting, Delta Lake Inn, Rome, October 9
- NOCCOG annual meeting October 23
- North Shore/Salmon Rivers joint annual meeting October 30
- SuperCOG November 20? Is there interest in having one?

Upcoming Meetings and Events

Ms. Tompkins reported that Constantia is continuing work on their sewer project. All funding opportunities are currently on hold until Oswego County goes out to bid for the Southern Oswego County Regional Interceptor Sewer (SOCRIS) project. Oswego County continues to make steady progress on several sewer initiatives, with some projects now in a waiting phase as grant announcements are anticipated later this year or early next. The county legislature will also be reappointing members to the Oswego County Water & Sewer Committee, which provides guidance on future public water and sewer initiatives.

NorCOG and Salmon Rivers COG Reports

The SOCRIS project is expected to impact all North Shore communities and may also affect municipalities within the Salmon Rivers COG if Phase 2 is pursued. West Monroe has gone out to bid for a preliminary engineering report for their sewer project. Ground was broken this week for the new Kleis sports complex in West Monroe. The West Monroe Codes Office has seen increased activity related to Micron's regional growth, and a future DMV office is being considered.

Comprehensive plan updates are underway across the region. Central Square continues to face challenges after its offices were damaged during last winter's snowstorms and is weighing options for either repairing the building or constructing a new facility. Constantia is nearing completion of its zoning updates with the THC planning department. The town will also see new leadership, with a new town supervisor, highway superintendent, and board member taking office. Cleveland has requested assistance with updating their comprehensive plan, and Ms. Tompkins is also supporting their website upgrade efforts.

Ms. Tompkins also reported that the Civic Service Student Activity Program (CSSAP), designed to increase student involvement and understanding of local government, is off to a strong start. The program was initiated in response to concerns from COG representatives about student engagement and general knowledge of local operations. Ms. Tompkins, Ms. Lee, and Mr. Brady recently met with CiTi BOCES superintendents and administrators to discuss the program and will continue meeting to refine its planning. Additionally, Ms. Tompkins is working with a Syracuse University intern who will be assisting her through the end of the year.

The 2024-25 end of year financial statement shows that we ended the year under budget, with not much change from last statement.

Finance Report

The 2025-26 financial statement shows salary expenses year to date at 46%, as well as various other non-personal services expenses, including a tire replacement on the RAV.

The proposed modified budget moves funding from the following non-personal services lines: advertising (\$1,000), LGC (\$7,500), planning consultant (\$2,000), research and analysis (\$4,000), website upgrades (\$3,000) to the following lines: legal consultant (\$9,000), computer equipment (\$8,500). The proposed modified budget also moves \$73,300 from unallocated salary to allocated salary. Commissioner Scriber suggested a detailed memo be done for modifications in the future, in addition to the modified budget chart that was provided.

On a motion made by Commissioner Scriber and Commissioner Cheresnoski members approved the 2025-26 proposed modified budget as presented.

Chair Ritter opened the floor for public comment.

Public Comment

Brittney Jerred from Assemblyman Barclay's office shared our newsletter outreach stats seem good. Today's meeting was very informative.

Commissioner Cheresnoski shared wind damage in August was very bad. Two wood lots that she owns were severely damaged. Loggers are taking down cherry trees and using them for mats on wet spots on trails.

Mr. Baxter shared concerns about ash trees dying. Other concerns were about wetlands and commercial activity in West Monroe.

There being no further business, on a motion made by Commissioner Keller and seconded by Commissioner Yerdon members adjourned the meeting at 11:42 a.m. Adjourn

These minutes were approved by the Board of Commissioners.

Tom Boxberger  
Secretary