

Commission Holds Last Board Meeting of 2025

The Tug Hill Commission met on December 8 for their last board meeting of 2025. It was also the last official meeting for Commissioner Leona Chereshnoski, who is retiring from the board on December 31 after 42 years of service to the Tug Hill Commission. Commission chair Gerry Ritter remarked on Leona's long history of service to the Tug Hill region and her deep family roots in Lewis and Jefferson counties. Leona became a Tug Hill commissioner in November 1983, serving more than 80% of the time the Tug Hill Commission has been in existence. During her time on the board, she helped oversee the hiring of three of the four commission executive directors, made countless trips to Albany, and attended well over 200 board meetings. She was recognized as a Venerable Folk of Tug Hill in 2017, and she produced the popular three-part series "Letters from a Tug Hill Logger" with her son Pete during COVID.



From left to right: Tom Boxberger, Fred Munk, Bill Scriber, Katie Malinowski, Leona Chereshnoski, Gerry Ritter, Mike Yerdon, Jan Bogdanowicz, and Bob Keller.

In other business, the commission adopted its 2026 meeting calendar as well as an updated vehicle policy. The board also discussed the 2026 Local Government Conference, pending bills related to forest tax law, planning work with communities, the changing energy landscape in NY, and the large number of newly elected town and village officials across the region.

In This Issue

- Commission's Last Meeting of 2025
- 2026 Commission Meeting Calendar
- RACOG Board Meeting January 22
- Planning for Solar Energy Projects Summary
- Non-Profit Board Training Successful
- Do You Know a Road That's Not Plowed
- Coliform and Lead in Drinking Water Workshop January 15
- Local Government Efficiency Grants Due February 4
- CHIPS Funding
- Trails Education Funding Available
- Transitioning to Town Clerk Position Webinar January 15
- Association of Town Newly Elected Training January 2026

2026 COMMISSION MEETING CALENDAR

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 21, LOWVILLE

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18, LORRAINE

WEDNESDAY, MAY 20, ORWELL

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 17, AVA

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, CLEVELAND

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 8, ANNUAL DINNER

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16, WATERTOWN

RACOG Board Meeting January 22

The River Area Council of Governments (RACOG) board will convene on January 22, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. at the Castorland Fire Hall. During the meeting, the board will elect officers and adopt a 2026 budget. Jennifer Harvill and Jillian Lee of the Tug Hill Commission will also attend to assist RACOG in beginning its strategic planning process. The objective is to develop a five-year strategic plan outlining RACOG’s priorities and goals for the future.

For additional information, please contact Mickey Dietrich at (315) 681-5023 or by email at mickey@tughill.org.

Planning for Solar Energy Projects: Two-Page Summary Available

The Tug Hill Commission released an update to its Planning for Solar Energy Projects issue paper in August of this year. The paper addresses legislation impacting the renewable energy field, evolving technology, tools that have been developed to aid siting, agricultural considerations, and much more. A two-page summary of the paper is now available [here](#). Please contact Maria Covey (maria@tughill.org) with any questions.




ISSUE PAPER
SUMMARY
AUGUST 2025

PLANNING FOR SOLAR ENERGY PROJECTS

ISSUE PAPER OVERVIEW

The Tug Hill region has been experiencing an increase in interest from large-scale solar developers. This paper dives into the various ways communities can plan and be prepared for incoming solar proposals. Topics include agrivoltaics, battery energy storage systems, host community agreements, and more.



SCAN TO READ
THE FULL PAPER

Third Non-Profit Board Training a Success

Over 60 people attended the third session in the *Non-Profit Bootcamp* training being offered by Lewis County, in partnership with the Northern New York Community Foundation and the Tug Hill Commission. Held on December 3 at the newly renovated Strand in Watertown and with an online option, The Gifford Foundation executive director Sheena Solomon provided an engaging and enlightening presentation on board development. The PowerPoint and additional shared resources are available [here](#), and a YouTube recording of the presentation is available [here](#).

The next session in the Non-Profit Bootcamp series is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, February 5 and will focus on board meeting management. The first two sessions of the series discussed getting a non-profit started, as well as financial oversight.





KNOW A ROAD THAT'S NOT PLOWED DURING THE WINTER?

How to Report on Google Maps:



- Open Google Maps & Select the road
- Choose "Suggest an edit"
- Select "Close or open a road" or "Fix an address/road"
- Add details and dates if known

How to Report on Apple Maps:



- Using the Apple Maps app → Report an Issue
- Submit through Apple's online Maps feedback form

How to Report on Waze Maps:



- Using the [Waze maps editor](#)
- Add details and dates if known

How to report through carriers:

- UPS – 1 (800) 742-5877
- FedEx – 1 (800) 463-3339
- USPS – 1 (800) 275-8777
- Amazon – 1 (888) 280-4331



MINIMUM
MAINTENANCE VS.
SEASONAL ROAD?

LEARN MORE



It is the time of year when drivers unfamiliar with local highways get stuck on seasonal and minimum maintenance roads. Communities with unplowed roads may want to consider submitting information to the most common navigation apps and delivery services to minimize problems and disruptions, as many of those roads are part of the snowmobile trail system.

Back to Basics – Coliform and Lead in Drinking Water Workshop January 15

Regulatory changes and uncertainties have been the focus of water systems in recent years, but many core regulations remain intact. Presenters from NYS Department of Health and RCAP Solutions will review foundational drinking water regulations including the Revised Total Coliform Rule (RTCR) and the Lead and Copper Rule Revisions (LCRR) combined with hands-on practice in coliform sampling procedures and pipe material identification. This free, in-person workshop for small system drinking water operators has been approved for four hours of renewal credits by NYSDOH.

This workshop will be held on Thursday, January 15, 2026, from 8:15 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Oswego County Health Department, 70 Bunner Street, Oswego, NY 13126. Registration is required [here](#). Due to limited space, registration cannot be guaranteed for more than two operators per organization. Contact Becky Sims, RCAP Solutions, bsims@rcapsolutions.org, 607-233-3824 with questions.

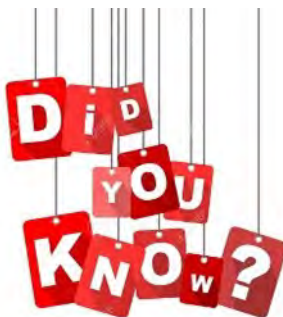
Local Government Efficiency Grants Due February 4

The NYS Department of State (DOS) has announced that the [Local Government Efficiency Grant \(LGEG\) program](#) is again available for municipalities to apply for funding to streamline government operations and services which reduce current or future costs, resulting in savings for local property taxpayers. The \$8 million initiative incentivizes two or more local governments to team up to apply to plan for or implement shared services, consolidations, and dissolutions. In this current funding round, priority points will be given to regional projects; regional or local projects being implemented as part of a previous LGE planning grant or that was included in a Countywide Shared Services Initiative (CWSSI) plan; or regional or local projects that aim to address:

- Information Technology Services (ITS), including Cybersecurity.
- Emergency Services.
- Countywide or Multi-County Code Enforcement or Municipal Planning.
- Water and/or Wastewater Management Systems; or
- Clean Energy Initiatives.

The LGEG program is comprised of approximately \$7.2 million available for implementation grants and \$800,000 for planning grants. Implementation grants are capped at \$250,000 for each participating municipality (not to exceed \$1,250,000 in total) and require a 10% local match, while planning grants are capped at \$20,000 per municipality (not to exceed \$100,000 in total) and require a 50% match.

Eligible entities are counties, cities, towns, villages, special improvement districts, fire districts, public libraries, association libraries, public library systems (if they advance a joint application on behalf of member libraries), water authorities, sewer authorities, regional planning and development boards, school districts, and Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES). Applications are evaluated based on the potential return on investment (ROI), project need, service delivery benefits, operational changes, local and regional capacity, project readiness (ability to complete the project in five years) and the comprehensiveness and specificity of the work plan and budget. Schedule an eligibility consultation by calling 518-473-3355 or emailing LGE-program@dos.ny.gov.



CHIPS Funding

It is possible for NYS Department of Transportation [CHIPS](#) funding to be used as match for a salt shed grant application through the Water Quality Improvement Program ([WQIP](#)). However, whenever CHIPS funding is used, the municipality's match must be cash - not financed or bonded. Similarly, if funding for the construction of a salt shed is done without a grant, the project can be reimbursed with CHIPS funding, provided it has a ten year life span. Questions? Contact the office at 315-785-2380.

Trails Education Funding Available

Funding is available through the Recreational Trails Program administered by the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation for trails education. The total funding available is \$100,000, and the maximum grant award is \$50,000, with a 20% match requirement. This is a reimbursement program. Eligible project proposals must achieve one of the following objectives related to providing trail-based training, trail-use monitoring, and non-law enforcement trail safety programs:

- Development and dissemination of publications to promote safety and environmental protection,
- Operation of educational programs

Applications can be submitted from **November 21, 2025, through January 23, 2026**. Award announcement will be February 13, 2026. For more details, including examples of education projects, is available [here](#). **Eligible applicants are limited to municipalities and prequalified not-for-profit organizations.** Information on the prequalification process can be found [here](#). Questions regarding prequalification can be submitted to the SFS Helpdesk at Helpdesk@sfs.ny.gov or Prequalification Specialist, Karen Ferguson at Karen.Ferguson@parks.ny.gov.



NEW YORK STATE
**TOWN CLERKS
ASSOCIATION**

Transitioning into the Town Clerk Position Webinar January 15

Join the NYS Town Clerks Association (NYSTCA) officers on Thursday, January 15, at 10:30 a.m., for an informative webinar designed to support both newly elected town clerks and those with years of experience.

This session will offer a comprehensive overview of the town clerk's role, valuable insights, and an opportunity to ask questions in advance. Email advance question to: townclerk@cantonny.gov. For more information, or to register, visit the NYSTCA [website](#).

Association of Towns Newly Elected Training Schools January 2026

The NY Association of Towns (NYAOT) is holding their Newly Elected Town Officials (NETO) school in January at two locations – Albany and Corning. NETO is a comprehensive training program designed to help newly elected town officials start their term with confidence. Co-sponsored by the Office of the State Comptroller, this program provides essential guidance on topics such as budgeting, fiscal responsibilities, cash management, and retirement, offering practical insights for effective local governance. Tailored specifically for town supervisors, board members, highway superintendents, fiscal personnel, attorneys, and clerks, this training equips participants with the foundational knowledge needed to serve their communities successfully.

Registration costs \$250 for both members and non-members of NYOAT. Classes run all day on Wednesday, Thursday plus half-day on Friday. All attendees are invited to Wednesday evening welcome reception at each location, and the registration fee includes all class materials, breakfast and lunch. Attendees must book their own hotel room reservation by online booking link or calling the hotel reservation line.

To register, please click below on your chosen location to be taken to an online registration for that location. If you prefer to register offline, please click [here to download a paper registration form](#).

[Albany](#), January 14, 15 & 16, Albany Capital Center

[Corning](#), January 21, 22 & 23, Radisson Hotel Corning

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deadlines, and meetings,
view our [calendar](#).