

TUG HILL COMMISSION
MINUTES OF MEETING
May 20, 2026
Orwell Town Hall, 1999 County Route 2, Orwell

Chair Ritter opened the meeting at 10:08 a.m.	Opened
Commission members included Mdm. Ritter and Messrs., Boxberger, Bogdanowicz, Keller, Yerdon and Munk. Staff included Katie Malinowski, Gwen Decker, and Heidi Tompkins. Guests – Jan Tighe, Pulaski trustee and SRCG chair, Paul Baxter, and Lee Willbanks.	Attendance
On a motion made by Commissioner Boxberger and seconded by Commissioner Munk members approved the agenda as presented.	Agenda Approved
On a motion made by Commissioner Yerdon and seconded by Commissioner Boxberger members approved the minutes of March 18, 2026.	Minutes Approved
Chair’s report:	Chair’s Report
Chair Ritter welcomed everyone and thanked the town of Orwell for hosting. The Local Government Conference was well attended and a great deal of information provided to attendees. The state budget is still pending. The personnel committee met on May 11 at the commission office to discuss the changes suggested by Mrs. Malinowski to flex time comp over 40 time to make sure staff have a clear understanding. Commissioners Ritter and Boxberger attended in person at the commission office and commissioners Scriber and Yerdon zoomed in. We can consider approving any changes. Mrs. Malinowski will have more on that in her report.	Welcome
Executive Director’s report:	ED Report
Ms. Malinowski reported there is still no state budget, and there have been several extenders. We will wait to develop a 2026-27 budget for the commission until we have final budget numbers from Albany. Hopefully we can have a draft budget for consideration at our June meeting. The budget will be tight this coming year and we may need to move funds from non-personal services to personal services.	Administration
Mrs. Malinowski reminded commissioners should have completed their Financial Disclosure Statements by now.	
The annual Internal Control forms were submitted, with copies provided to commissioners. This year an additional attachment G was also requested for submission.	
We had another successful Local Government Conference. Charts distributed to commissioners have attendance breakdowns for the COGs and outside the region over time. Survey results from session attendees were also provided. Zoning and planning board members comprise more than half of attendees. The Planning for Growth session was well received.	Local Government Conference

We are in the process of planning for LGC 2027. Turning Stone was the only bid received during the procurement process, with dates of April 26 and 27, 2027. We are unable to finalize the contract or put down a deposit until we have a state budget. We have also not been able to pay the outstanding bill from the 2026 conference because of no state budget.

We had a few social media situations over the past month, one regarding a post we had made about the Sugar Maple Solar project receiving its state permit, and the other situation regarding negative posts about the Tug Hill Commission and Mrs. Malinowski made on a Civic Affairs Facebook page in the Western area related to the Local Government Conference. In response to these situations, Mrs. Malinowski, with staff input, put together social media guidelines moving forward, which were shared with the commissioners.

Social Media

A discussion took place with members. Commissioner Yerdon suggested the best policy is no comment. Commissioner Bogdanowicz requested the board members be informed quickly via text in the future, so they are aware of the situation.

Mr. Willbanks suggested in this situation not to react or only state what the commission does. If there is a threat, you should record it and document it.

At last month's meeting we discussed locations for the annual dinner in October. Mrs. Malinowski is trying to keep costs down and suggested the Osceola Ski Resort, however, as an outdoor pavilion with bathrooms not attached, there were concerns about weather and attendee mobility. The Glenfield Firehall, where CTHC held a meeting recently, was suggested as an option, Mrs. Malinowski provided some details about the dinner option there.

Annual Dinner

Commissioner Bogdanowicz suggested looking at Zero Dock Street in Carthage or the Adams Country Club.

The personnel committee (Commissioners Ritter, Scriber, Boxberger and Yerdon) met on May 11 to discuss the changes suggested by Mrs. Malinowski to the personnel policy section of the commission's consolidated policy document, focused on better defining and limiting flex time and comp over 40, especially as we have several new staff. A discussion took place with members regarding changes. Commissioner Boxberger shared that we don't want this to become overwhelming for staff or supervisors having to track time of staff. Commissioner Ritter shared that travel counts as work time for circuit riders. Commissioner Yerdon shared that circuit riders have a unique role with their schedule and evening board meetings, where the length of the meetings are not under staff control. He shared that it would be difficult to have concrete guidelines and the need to be flexible. He shared that he has been on this board for 30 years and never recalls this being an issue and not making a big deal about it. What is currently in place has worked for and should continue. Commissioner Bogdanowicz remarked that times do change and the commission does need to make adjustments at times.

Personnel Policy

Mrs. Tompkins shared that it is very difficult to flex time during the day when office staff are contacting circuit riders for work projects and it can be hard to predict how long board meetings may take.

Commissioner Keller shared that when you are not working, you're not working, but are expected to answer the calls.

Commissioner Munk shared that due to the type of work the commission does you need to be very flexible. If an employee is not working and receives a call from staff, depending on who's call, make a judgment call before answering.

Mr. Willbanks shared that when you're not working, you're not working. Office staff and circuit riders have different schedules. Circuit riders especially accrue time in general due to their role. Supervisors shouldn't be burdened with tracking that and employees shouldn't need to micromanage their time.

The personnel committee will meet again to discuss.

Legislation has been submitted for the town of Redfield to designate certain roads as minimum maintenance. It is probably not good timing due to the ongoing state budget delay.

Redfield MMR

Staff are working with the village of Remsen on dissolution study. The first meeting was last week. The village is split between the town of Trenton and the town of Remsen. The dissolution process will take some time.

Remsen Dissolution

Mrs. Malinowski is researching the increase in questions related to data centers in the region. We are trying to schedule a webinar with Camoin Associates at the end of June to provide communities with information about data centers and planning concerns.

Data Centers

Battery energy storage systems continue to be a hot topic.

Battery Energy Storage
Systems

The Black River Watershed Conference will be on June 3 at the Tug Hill Estate in Lowville. Please let us know if you would like to attend.

Black River Watershed
Conference

Mrs. Tompkins reported that Sandy Creek passed a local law designating certain roads for ATV's., and that they have a new code enforcement officer. Richland is reviewing changes to the local law for campgrounds. Amboy has new board members. The county is asking them to open 13 roads for ATVs; ATV clubs have been attending board meetings and now the board has made a resolution to no longer discuss ATVs at the meetings. Albion is almost done with their comprehensive plan. Their new website is almost ready to be launched. They want to start GPS mapping soon. Town of Parish purchased a new building. Village of Parish is having treatment plant issues. SRCG lost their fiscal officer who was through the village of Parish. Metrocount is being used in the town.

COG Report

Jan Tighe shared that the village of Pulaski received DRI funding and plan for improvements to the Dunbar Park, the Methodist Church for a learning kitchen, signage, along with many other improvements in the village. They are working on a rental registry law.

The 2025-26 financial statement was shared. All items have been processed for end of year. Next year's budget will be tight.

Finance Report

Chair Ritter opened the floor for public comment.

Public Comment

Commissioner Keller shared that a public hearing will be held on June 8 in Boonville regarding ATVs.

Commissioner Bogdanowicz asked if Mrs. Malinowski had received a response from Ken Ayers. Mrs. Malinowski responded that she had not received a response.

There being no further business, on a motion made by Commissioner Yerdon and seconded by Commissioner Boxberger members adjourned the meeting at 11:44 a.m. Adjourn

These minutes were approved by the Board of Commissioners.

Tom Boxberger
Secretary