

TUG HILL COMMISSION

MINUTES OF MEETING

June 17, 2026

Ava Town Hall, 11468 State Route 26. Ava, NY 13303

Chair Ritter opened the meeting at 10:04 a.m.	Opened
Commission members included Mdm. Ritter and Messrs., Boxberger, Munk, Bogdanowicz, Scriber, and Keller. Staff included Katie Malinowski, Gwen Decker, and John Healt. Guests – Pam Dibble, Annsville supervisor, Christine Healt – associate circuit rider, Keith Redhead – Ava supervisor, James Jones – Lee supervisor, and Don Peavey – Civic Affairs.	Attendance
On a motion made by Commissioner Scriber and seconded by Commissioner Boxberger members approved the agenda as presented.	Agenda Approved
On a motion made by Commissioner Bogdanowicz and seconded by Commissioner Munk members approved the minutes of May 20, 2026.	Minutes Approved
Chair’s report:	Chair’s Report
Chair Ritter welcomed everyone and thanked the town of Ava for hosting. She gave a review of the historic town hall. The state budget was finally approved. We had hoped to get a staffing increase for this year, but we did not.	Welcome
The personnel committee, including Commissioners Ritter, Boxberger, Scriber and Yerdon had a second meeting in June to review the first draft of May 11 for changes with flex and comp over 40 times suggested by Mrs. Malinowski to the personnel policy. A second draft for changes was made for the board to vote on.	
Commissioner Ritter shared that there are unique situations for circuit riders with meetings that run over, etc.	
Commissioner Boxberger asked how comp over 40 is paid out. Mrs. Malinowski stated comp over 40 should be used instead of being paid out when leaving the commission. Commissioner Boxberger noted the change to the draft for non-comp time accrued to be kept decreases by 22.5 hours.	
The minimum amount of non-comp time accrued to be kept will change to 15 hours instead of the previous policy of 37.5 hours.	
On motion made by Commissioner Boxberger and seconded by Commissioner Scriber members approved the personnel policy changes as presented.	
Executive Director’s report:	ED Report
Ms. Malinowski reported the final state budget flat for the commission. She plans to set up a meeting with our point of contact in the Governor’s office, Jessica Decerce, within the	Administration

next few months to talk about the increase for personnel. The Councils of Governments are supporting the need for the commissions personnel increase. The town of Orwell passed a resolution for increasing the commission funds. Mrs. Malinowski also plans to meet with newly elected assembly members after the election.

Salary and union negotiations are being finalized. There is no official word for us as we are M/C, which generally follows once those are done. We have increased our personal services expenses line in our budget based on union negotiations. The CLCPA (Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act) implementation is also delayed as part of the final budget. The 2030 deadline for a 40% reduction in emissions pushed out to non-binding 2040 target for a 60% reduction and changed the formula used to calculate emissions. The final budget also included a \$1 billion energy rebate program for utility rebate checks. Utility companies will have a stricter process with the Public Service Commission (PSC) to justify rate increases.

A new amendment in the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) wholly exempt, housing projects with up to 250 units in New York City, up to 300 units in other urban areas outside of New York City, and up to 100 units elsewhere in the state. The exemption will also apply to certain park projects, public school construction in New York City, and water infrastructure projects. The commission staff plans to offer training for the SEQRA changes.

Other state budget items include Tier 6 pension reforms, video conferencing extended from July 1, 2026, to July 15, 2028, and a lot of grant funding. The Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust (THTLT) line in the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) for the Amy Compatible Use Buffer (ACUB) program was included at \$250,000 again.

We have finalized the contract with Turning Stone for April 26 and 27, 2027 for our Local Government Conference. We're working on getting the deposit completed. We went through the bid process for 2027. The state's new law has increased the limit for purchasing services and commodities without a formal competitive process to \$150,000 for state agencies. The process for the LGC for 2028 procurement should be much easier. We will look for final guidance from OSC.

Local Government
Conference

Meetings scheduled from June to October were reviewed with mentions of important dates. One date change is that the NOCCOG meeting was moved to Wednesday, June 24, in Prospect. Note the budget training June 18 and 19 in Altmar.

Meetings

We are in discussions and planning for the educational seminars at Woodsmen's Field Days August 21-23. We are hoping to be in the Wagoner building this year and have a charging area that will entice people to visit.

Tuesday, September 22 is the Super COG meeting at the Redfield Firehall. There will be a light dinner and discussion. Commissioner Bogdanowicz suggested inviting supervisors, clerks, and planning board chairs

Our annual Dinner will be Thursday, October 8 at the Adams Country Club. The cost will be \$30 or \$35.

The staff retreat date is August 19, the location is TBD.

The Black River Watershed Conference held on June 3 was a success. Presentations were good. Attendance was a bit less this year. Ms. Lee had her baby and is now out on maternity leave.	Black River Watershed Conference
The minimum maintenance roads legislation submitted for the town of Redfield did not move forward. It's on the books, so will pick it up again next season. Turin has finished updating their local MMR law based on guidance from Ken Ayers. Lorraine is almost through their process.	MMR
Mr. Johnson will be taking part in a Data Center webinar on June 25 along with some staff from Camion Associates. WWNY has reached out to Mr. Johnson for an interview.	Data Centers
The New York Association of Towns has formed a new Rural Communities Council and has invited us to join. Some of our communities have joined.	NYAOT
The Center for Community Studies will be holding a fall energy public presentation in November. They plan to invite New York Independent System Operator, Clarkson University and the commission to present.	Center for Community Studies
Salmon Rivers and North Shore Council of Government are moving forward on special areas. There is an overview of special areas in the Tug Hill Reserve Act. Commissioner Ritter suggested Mr. Street could provide consulting for this.	Tug Hill Reserve Act
Staff are working on eight comprehensive plans and four zoning plans with our communities. We are working with Annsville on a CFA grant. Enroute to today's meeting it was nice to see the salt shed in West Turin being working on, which is a grant we assisted with.	Planning & Grants
Commissioner Bogdanowicz suggested modifying our strategic plan scorecard on our website, so it is clickable and would show the communities we have worked with in various areas.	
Mr. Healt reported that NOCCOG received the signed agreement with Oneida County for the full \$7,500 requested. Mr. Healt addressed the county legislators in May. He attended the CNY Legislative Networking breakfast sponsored by Oneida County Tourism and several legislators were in attendance. The Oneida County Town Clerks Association meets regularly and are working to offer summer trainings sessions. On June 29 is a session from NYS Division of Consumer Protection in Forestport and July 27 will be Games of Chance/BINGO. Mr. Healt and Supervisor Pam Dibble presented awards for the NOCCOG scholarship program at Camden High School awards ceremony. Mr. Healt also presented awards at Holland Patent's award ceremony. The NOCCOG executive board meeting changed from June 18 to June 24. The village of Boonville is addressing ATV issues and petitioned Oneida County open the section of road on Rt. 65 that would connect the village to the Lewis County trail system. Veterans brass grave markers are being stolen from cemetery in the village and town of Camden. Supervisor Pam Dibble mentioned that the local VFW is replacing the stolen markers with plastic ones. The village of Holland Patent is working on updating zoning. The village of Remsen dissolution committee is in early stages of working through the dissolution process. Sylvan Beach has reached out to the county for direction with the county required short term rental registry but haven't heard back. They would like to do their own registry. Annsville is working with the commission for funding for the Coal Hill Bridge. They also received a grant from the Wadas Foundation for a new playground.	COG Report

Ava wants to change the term length of the highway superintendent and the town supervisor for two to four years. They held a public hearing in May, and it should be on the ballot this fall. They submitted their comprehensive plan to the county. The town of Remsen is discussing a solar battery storage moratorium and are assisting with the village of Remsen's dissolution committee. The town of Steuben would like the highway superintendent and clerk to move from elected to appointed positions. Forestport has discussed a moratorium due to data centers. Trenton has issue with abandoned properties. Municipalities are having dog control issues.

The 2026-27 proposed draft budget shows the general fund of \$1,310,000, special revenue of \$150,000, totaling \$1.460,000. The calculated allocated salary of \$1,158,912. Additionally, would like to increase salaries for three staff members.

Finance Report

Contractual services are similar to last year with Mr. Petrie for accounting training, Mr. Willbanks commission legal consultant and Mr. Ayers legal consultant for roads, and Mr. Street planning consultant. Contracts with Turning Stone for the Local Government Conference. Printing costs for Headwaters, annual dinner invitations and LGC brochure. Research and analysis zeroed out. Other costs included training, vehicles insurance and repairs, website domain maintenance. No website upgrades. Travel expenses have held steady. Computer equipment is lower, new computers purchased last year. Bumped up the cost for gas due to the price hike.

After preparing the draft budget document, we were asked to contribute \$1000 for a new 2027 Tug Hill Recreation Guide. The four counties and the commission have been asked to contribute for the group effort. The guide is distributed to visitor centers, tourist locations, and other various locations. Corey Fram of Thousand Islands Internation Tourism Council works with people for distribution of the guides. We have several of the previous edition of recreation guides in stock that need to be distributed.

Commissioner Bogdanowicz suggested circuit riders and commissioners could help distribute locally. Commissioner Scriber requested to review the distribution list before a decision is made on contributing money. Mrs. Malinowski shared that circuit riders try to distribute guides whenever possible. She will request a distribution list from Mr. Fram.

On a motion made by Commission Boxberger and seconded by Commissioner Bogdanowicz members approved the 2026-27 proposed draft budget as presented.

Chair Ritter opened the floor for public comment.

Public Comment

Mr. Peavey asked if the commission's budget was level with other state agencies that are like the Tug Hill Commission.

Mrs. Malinowski responded that there is not another state agency that does what the commission does, there is no apples to apples comparison.

Commissioner Ritter asked Mr. Peavey if his entity is a state agency and if there is a Facebook page. Mr. Peavey responded that his group is NY State Civic Affairs, and they do have a Facebook page.

There being no further business, on a motion made by Commissioner Scriber and seconded by Commissioner Munk members adjourned the meeting at 11:43 a.m. Adjourn

These minutes were approved by the Board of Commissioners.

Tom Boxberger
Secretary