

Upper Delaware Council
OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
August 28, 2018

Committee Members Present:	Aaron Robinson, Jim Greier, Harold Roeder, Jr., Al Henry, Jeff Dexter, Fred Peckham, Virginia Dudko (Deerpark alternate)
Committee Members Absent:	Larry Richardson, David Dean
National Park Service Partner:	Absent
Staff:	Laurie Ramie, Pete Golod
Guests:	None

The UDC's Operations Committee held its monthly meeting on Tuesday, August 28, 2018 at the Council office in Narrowsburg, NY. Chairperson Aaron Robinson called the meeting to order at 8:08 p.m.

Approval of July 24 Meeting Minutes: A motion by Greier, seconded by Roeder, to approve the July 24 meeting minutes carried, with Dudko abstaining. There was no public comment on the agenda.

Executive Director's Report & Monthly Calendar:

Ramie offered highlights from her written monthly report, as follows:

FY 2018 Federal Funding: The balance of the UDC's Fiscal Year 2018 appropriation, \$148,429, was released by the execution of Modification 9 to the Cooperative Agreement on 8/20. Ramie drew down \$48,458.27 to reimburse expenditures for part of May, and all of June and July, on 8/21 and filed the August reimbursement request on 8/27, leaving a balance of \$68,727.12 in the federal account. The National Park Service has advised that all final FY 2018 funds must be withdrawn by 6 p.m. on 9/24 since the ASAP system will be closed from 9/25 to 9/30, and reopen on 10/1. Ramie noted that she filed the UDC's 3rd Quarter financial and narrative progress reports to NPS on 7/30. The next task will be developing the Request for Federal Financial Assistance package for Fiscal Year 2019, which will include the budget, work plan, and all associated documentation. Ramie said that there has been no response to the letters that the UDC sent on 8/2 to NYS Governor Cuomo and PA Governor Wolf appealing for state operational funding.

Temporary Help: Lisa Gambini from Damascus started the independent contractor position to assist with file organization and digitization on 7/26, working on a flexible schedule. Partial compensation for the first half of the contracted 160 hours of work appears on tonight's abstract for payment. Work accomplished to date includes digitizing UDC and committee meeting minutes that hadn't been done yet from 1988 to 1992, all Technical Assistance Grant projects from 1988-2018, news clips from Larue Elmore's files, clearing off the shelves that will be razed to make room for the attic stairs, sorting and reorganizing the master files, boxing up records over five years old for attic storage, digitizing substantial conformance files, updating records in the newsletter mail program database in preparation for the next issue, reorganizing book shelves, and assisting with the preparation of meeting packets. Ramie said that she has been tremendously efficient, organized, and eager to take on all tasks asked of her.

Capital Project: The UDC awaits the issuance of a building permit by the Town of Tusten Code Enforcement Officer in order to have contractor Dave Leavenworth start the attic stairs re-build project. Leavenworth provided an insurance certificate and has been asked for worker's compensation proof as the final documents needed to accompany his notarized application, which also included the stamped engineering plans from JHA Companies. The Council issued a \$100 check for the building permit fee. Leavenworth would like to begin his work on Tuesday, 9/4, if the permit is secured. He intends to complete the job by 9/30.

Publicity: Ramie issued three news releases in the past month: "UDC Raft Trip Celebrates 30th Annual River Outing", 8/6; "Upper Delaware Council Publishes Special 30th Anniversary Newsletter", 8/7; and "Sullivan County Public Safety Communications Presentation Featured at Sept. 6 UDC Meeting", 8/24, as well as a news release in

her D&H Transportation Heritage Council secretary's role of "New D&H Canal Documentary Available for \$10" which announces that the DVD covering the Honesdale to Delaware River section of the canal is available through the Wayne County Historical Society.

"The Upper Delaware": The special, anniversary issue of the newsletter was released on 8/6. Ramie read two notes received from the public expressing appreciation for this keepsake edition, including from Barbara Yeaman whose photo of President Jimmy Carter fishing on the Upper Delaware River in September 1984 was used. Ramie noted that the regular Fall/Winter issue will be due to Courier Printing by 9/12 for release on 10/1. That will be a challenge to prepare the camera-ready copy given the extra workload from the secretary vacancy. She said that a Request for Proposals will be issued for the Fiscal Year 2019 printing and mailing services newsletter contract. Three issues are planned for next year.

Conference/Workshop Attendance: Among the list of upcoming educational conferences and workshops that Ramie included in her report, she pointed out that 8/31 is the requested deadline for any board members who would like the UDC to sponsor their registration for the 9th Annual "Water, Water Everywhere" Conference by Friends of the Upper Delaware River to be held 10/16-17 at the West Branch Angler Resort in Hale Eddy, NY. Currently set to attend are Golod, Ramie, Peckham, and Shohola Alternate Roger Saumure.

Leadership Sullivan: Ramie has been invited to offer a 20-minute presentation on the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River to the Sullivan County Chamber of Commerce Foundation's Leadership Sullivan class of business representatives on 9/25 when they visit Narrowsburg. While the organizers previously invited officials from the National Park Service and Upper Delaware Scenic Byway to participate as well, due to limited time, Ramie has been asked to handle it.

Raft Trip: The final guest count for the UDC's 30th Annual Family Raft Trip on 8/5 from Skinners Falls to Ten Mile River was 90 (71 adults and 19 children) for an exciting trip with a river height of 7.5 feet.

Non-UDC Meetings or Events: Ramie attended the Rising Nation Journey kickoff in Hancock by the Lenape tribe and an educational program on acid factories presented at the Calder House Museum in Equinunk on 8/4 on her own time to cover and photograph these events for two articles in the upcoming newsletter.

She noted that the rest of the report would be covered under other agenda items or is self-explanatory. The September calendar handout of UDC meetings, deadlines, and activities indicates a very busy month ahead.

New Business:

Technical Assistance Grant 2018-01: Town of Tusten, \$6,000.00 payment: Ramie noted that, with the Project Review Committee having approved the completed project at its earlier 8/28 meeting, the next step is for the Operations Committee to approve the payment. A motion by Roeder, seconded by Henry, to approve the \$6,000 payment to the Town of Tusten for TAG 2018-01 carried unanimously.

River Clean-up Grants: Deerpark \$1,480.29; Lumberland, \$775; Tusten \$885: Ramie said that the 8/17 was the deadline for towns and townships to complete their River and Shoreline Clean-up Grants projects, with the exception being the extension to 9/14 granted to the Town of Deerpark to do another sweep of the Hawk's Nest area. Damascus Township's river clean-up was previously approved and paid. A motion by Peckham, seconded by Greier, to approve the payments of \$1,480.29 to the Town of Deerpark; \$775 to the Town of Lumberland; and \$885 to the Town of Tusten carried unanimously. Ramie added that the award to Tusten had been \$900.

Fiscal Year 2018 Budget Status and Projected Spending by 9/30: A handout prepared by UDC Bookkeeper Mike Poska showing the status of spending through August by budget category and projected expenditures through 9/30 was reviewed by Ramie. Given the decision by the Project Review Committee earlier to extend Damascus Township Technical Assistance Grant 2018-02 which has been obligated in FY 2018, the surplus will be \$5,583 less. There are

also known invoices and credit card charges that are pending in an amount that Ramie adjusted to \$942, which leaves a potential surplus of approximately \$9,000. Ramie said she will further analyze the worksheet and develop a list of proposed expenditures to present at the 9/6 UDC meeting for discussion and approval.

Personnel Update: Secretary Vacancy: Following the 8/10 resignation letter of Linda Drollinger as UDC secretary, effective with one week's notice on 8/17, Ramie placed ads in four newspapers for two insertions each, submitted a County Workforce listing through the Department of Labor, and posted an updated position description on the UDC website. The application deadline is 9/3. She provided the Personnel Subcommittee with review packets including the initial six applications tonight and will pass along additional applications to them for consideration in setting up interviews with candidates of interest.

Summary of Pending Bills: A motion by Henry, seconded by Peckham, to approve expenditures as noted on the August 28, 2018 Abstract of Bills handout, carried unanimously.

Financial Statements 08-31-18: Robinson questioned a hand-written notation on the Financial Statement of \$5,305 for W Design. Ramie explained that this funding was allocated for the Project Review Guide graphic design but not yet spent since the document isn't finished. Therefore, it counts as a liability against the Council. Henry asked for the balance of the UDC's Unrestricted Fund. Ramie noted that there is currently \$113,033.11 in our bank accounts.

Other: None

Old Business:

Letter to NPS: Advance Payments for Cooperative Agreement P15AC01769: A copy of an 8/15 letter directed to NPS Northeast Regional Director Gay Vietzke was included in the packets. The letter inquires about options and implications for the UDC to seek advance payments of its Federal award rather than the monthly reimbursement system. A response is pending.

Federal Funding for River-Related Law Enforcement Surveys due by 9/5: A copy of an 8/13 memo directed to UDC Member Towns and Townships seeking the return of a survey on Federal Funding for River-Related Law Enforcement by 9/5 was provided. It's based on the June 14 report that the NPS prepared tracing the history of support for law enforcement and trash removal contracts, and the current status. Ramie said we decided to compile a one-page survey to gather information from the municipalities about law enforcement specifically as a follow-up action. Responses to date have come from the Town of Lumberland and Shohola Township. Westfall Township advised that they will raise the issue at their 9/10 Board of Supervisors meeting and reply thereafter. Ramie said she will continue collecting completed surveys and will share the initial responses at the 9/6 UDC meeting. She anticipates some towns and townships will need more time.

Other: Robinson commented that if there is one item to attack with every ounce of energy, it's the UDC's funding mechanism. We can't go through another year like we just did, with the uncertainties threatening the office's closure and affecting our staff. When you go back to the 32-year-old agreement, this is not the way it was supposed to happen. He said that the UDC is allowed to make 10% variances on its overall budget without requiring NPS approval for changes, which amounts to any differences of \$30,000 over original spending plans, yet the UDC is asked to account for how it will reallocate small amounts of money such as for the secretary's salary until someone is hired. He doesn't understand the micromanagement. The organization should be allowed latitude for internal decisions. Greier asked how did we get to the point where the NPS looks over our shoulders constantly and determines what we can and can't do. Dudko asked at what level of NPS management is this direction coming. Henry reminded everyone that there was a review by the Inspector General of the whole Department of the Interior (DOI) that they failed miserably. Our funds, which come from the DOI, have been scrutinized more closely since then. There was a major shakeup because people weren't doing their jobs properly. Ramie said that included a sweep of the individuals in the Contracting Office who had been familiar with the UDC and the special circumstances of our partnership role with the NPS to all new staff. Greier said throughout these federal changes, the

UDC's budget stays the same and yet the Upper Delaware budget increases "by leaps and bounds". Ramie said that NPS officials have disputed that, saying they've experienced cuts. Robinson said that the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River's budget is available on the Internet and comes up as approximately \$3.2 million. Henry recalled when he started working for the NPS in 1979 with Superintendent John Hutzky, they had \$150,000 to run the whole operation and \$250,000 to distribute to the communities for law enforcement. Henry acknowledged that there are numerous mandated costs in the NPS unit's budget that they can't control. Robinson pointed out that they recently hired three full-time positions, including two newly-created jobs, which probably accounts for at least \$250,000 in salaries and benefits. He said he's not critical of their operation, "but don't take it out on our hide". Greier said the NPS needs to live up to the obligations spelled out in the River Management Plan. Henry said we have to get the funding situation remedied. If it requires going to every state and federal official, we should make that concerted effort. It is an election year, he noted. Roeder said he's witnessed testy situations here over the years which were usually internal but he has never seen this level of tension with the Park Service. Robinson said as much as we are told to re-read the River Management Plan, they have to re-read it as well because they are not living up to its terms. Henry said to keep in mind that the NPS representative to the UDC is actually the Regional Director, while the local superintendent is an alternate. The UDC may be dealing at the wrong level. Robinson said maybe we need a strategy meeting to go after our funding and air our concerns. Greier said the Upper Delaware is not a national park and the local leadership has to adjust to that mindset. There can't be a "my way or the highway" attitude. You can't close us down; we live here. Robinson said he feels that the UDC is not treated in any high regard lately. There is no sense of partnership or cooperation. We have been told we're not doing enough but when we try to propose projects, they get shot down left and right. Roeder said maybe we are not talking to the right people.

Public Comment: None

Adjournment: A motion by Roeder, seconded by Greier, to adjourn the meeting at 9:03 p.m. was carried.

Minutes prepared by Laurie Ramie, 8/31/18