

Upper Delaware Council
OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
February 27, 2018

Committee Present: Aaron Robinson, Alan Henry, Harold Roeder, Jr., Larry Richardson, Fred Peckham, Jeff Dexter, David Dean, Jim Greier
Committee Absent: None
NPS Partner: Kris Heister, Carla Hahn
Staff: Laurie Ramie, Pete Golod
Guests: None

The UDC's Operations Committee held its regularly scheduled monthly meeting on Tuesday, February 27, 2018 at the Council office in Narrowsburg, NY. Robinson called the meeting to order at 7:48 p.m.

Approval of January 23 Meeting Minutes: A motion by Richardson seconded by Greier to approve the January 23 meeting minutes was carried. There was no public comment on the agenda.

Executive Director's Report: Ramie referred members to the written report provided in their packets. She noted that she had offered a chronological presentation of the Fiscal Year 2018 Federal Funding issue to summarize activity that has occurred since last month's report on Jan. 23. That includes steps taken as the Department of the Interior's (DOI) review of the UDC's Cooperative Agreement continued to delay access to the annual funding appropriation. Actions included soliciting legal counsel recommendations, continuing to provide information to our federal representatives, compiling an "Authority for Federal Funding of the Upper Delaware Council" document as the basis for a potential legal brief, updating the UDC office closure plan with a March 30 deadline to shut down operations and lay off staff which the full Council accepted on Feb. 1, and responding to media inquiries.

On Feb. 2, the National Park Service (NPS) Northeast Region Contracting Officer provided determinations on several outstanding issues with the UDC's FY 2018 financial documents, which required revising the budget, the budget narrative, and the SF-424 application forms. Copies of the Feb. 6 updated budget and the narrative which reflects in bold print the changes that were made were provided.

On Feb. 8, we were notified by Congressman Faso's office and NPS Upper Delaware (UPDE) Superintendent Kris Heister that the DOI had completed its review and authorized NPS to release funding to the UDC. Ramie referred members to copies of letters that went out to Congressman Faso and to the Sullivan County Legislature acknowledging their support of the UDC during the recent funding crisis. Ramie added that the Sullivan County Legislature's resolution also called for New York State to provide its funding share outlined in the River Management Plan to help mitigate potential federal shortfalls like this in the future. The execution of Modification #7 to the Cooperative Agreement enabled the deposit of \$107,700 into the UDC's on-line account. That amount represents funding credited during Continuing Resolution periods from Oct. 1, 2017 through Feb. 8, 2018. Ramie drew down the funding to cover the expenditures for Oct.-Dec. 2017 and Jan. 2018 that had come out of the UDC's Unrestricted Fund balance on Feb. 12, then applied for the amount of the February abstract of bills on Feb. 26. That leaves a balance of \$5,462.98. Congress has extended the latest Continuing Resolution under which many departments of the federal government, including the DOI/NPS, are operating to Mar. 23.

Heister commented that when she advised the Council at the Feb. 1 meeting that she believed the UDC's funding issue would be resolved soon, that was based on "being on the phone every day" to ask about the status of the DOI review and her knowledge that "the director of the National Park Service walked this agreement through DOI." She noted that the UDC could wait until after the Mar. 23 Continuing Resolution expires or ask NPS Upper Delaware to file for a Modification #8 of the Cooperative Agreement to seek the release of an additional percentage of funding from Feb. 8-Mar. 23. She said that paperwork may not actually be processed by Mar. 23, but it is an option.

Henry asked Heister whether she has received any information about the status of the NPS inquiry into the UDC's Unrestricted Fund Account. Heister replied that it is with their Account Operations Center. Ramie noted that the Contracting Officer had advised as of Feb. 2 that this review of the information that UDC submitted on Nov. 30, 2017 "is ongoing". The Council was directed to amend its FY 18 budget to

incorporate the \$7,828.96 of allowable federal costs for accounting services into our \$300,000 spending plan. A request for additional NPS funds to cover this unanticipated expense will be considered, subject to their availability, after UPDE has its final budget. Richardson noted that NPS should reimburse UDC for these legitimate expenses.

Ramie continued her report with an update on the secretary vacancy. She outlined what steps had been taken to advertise the full-time position and where. By the Feb. 26 deadline, 10 applications were received. She provided packets of these applications to the Personnel Subcommittee members tonight to review, with her interview recommendations indicated. Ramie provided details on the temporary transfer of responsibilities. Dean said that the UDC should find an appropriate means of expressing appreciation to Cindy Odell for her excellent service during her tenure from August 29, 2011 through Feb. 16, 2018.

Ramie noted that this tends to be the busiest time of the year for her as the Spring/Summer issue of "The Upper Delaware" comes due on Mar. 14 and preparations for the 30th Annual Awards Ceremony are underway. She is actively arranging articles and interview requests for the newsletter with a copy deadline of Mar. 5. She referenced the 2018 UDC Awards Banquet Timeline attached to her report and gave an update on what tasks have been accomplished to date to secure the Central House Family Resort in Beach Lake, PA for the Apr. 22 event, choose the buffet menu, invite a keynote speaker, and solicit award nominations from the public which are due by Mar. 16. The committee discussed who to ask to serve as keynote speaker if the original invitee is not available. Ramie said she'd like to have that individual's identity confirmed in time for the newsletter deadline.

Ramie gave an overview of publicity outreach that has occurred since last month, including the issuance of three news releases and various media interviews.

Moving on to the calendar of UDC Meetings, Activities and Deadlines, she reiterated that March will be very busy and made note of all the deadlines listed in bold print. An April preview is also provided.

New Business

Draft Letter to PA DCNR Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn re: Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Funding of the Upper Delaware Council: Ramie noted that this letter had been circulated in advance, with one piece of missing information regarding the amount of river corridor acreage in Pennsylvania. Hahn distributed a handout which offers Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River acreage estimates for each municipality and state based on Geographic Information Systems data. A motion by Henry, seconded by Peckham to send the draft letter to the Mar. 1 UDC meeting for action with the Operations Committee's recommendation for approval was carried unanimously.

UDC Meeting Travel Tracking System: Ramie explained that the NPS Contracting Officer had accepted the UDC's new Member Fee reimbursement remuneration policy established in Fiscal Year 2018 after consulting with the Solicitor's Office. He offered some suggestions to improve accountability in tracking meeting participation and business travel should the Council's program ever get audited. Ramie noted that the current system had been to provide the meeting minutes to the bookkeeper for his consultation of the attendance list in order to issue checks for meeting participation and mileage using the round-trip figures that the UDC had obtained from each board appointee. The first recommendation by NPS was to not assume that every representative and alternate travels directly from his or her home addresses to the UDC office. To address that, Ramie designed an "Upper Delaware Council Meeting Travel Log" that she proposes to pass around at each meeting of the full Council and three standing committees. The form would stay at the UDC office for use by the bookkeeper. Samples were handed out for the four meetings. The forms include the names of the appointees for each municipal member that could be initialed by that individual, space for round-trip miles if it deviates from the original figure on file, total mileage reimbursement due at the IRS standard rate, and meeting fee due. Richardson said this is a good policy for checks and balances. Henry said it was the intent of the Member Participation Policy that there should be a sign-in sheet at every meeting so this form would fulfill that expectation. The second recommendation was to assure that the meeting fees that representatives and alternates receive do not exceed the compensation received by each town's Supervisor (NY) or Chairperson of the Board of Supervisors (PA) as is required by the River Management Plan. Ramie said that the total number of UDC meetings from January through December, including the special Project Review Committee meeting held in September to review Technical Assistance Grant applications, would amount to 49 if there were no cancellations. The maximum amount collectable at \$35 per meeting would be \$1,715 if an individual was never absent. Ramie said that she can

contact all 13 municipal members to survey the salaries of the top elected officials if that information isn't known by the UDC representatives. Henry observed that the Commonwealth of PA sets the salaries for supervisors based on the township code classification. A third cautionary note by the NPS Contracting Officer was that, representatives or alternates who participate in UDC meetings on paid time as part of their official duties should not receive the \$35 fee; instead, the town or township should receive the fee as per the River Management Plan. Heister clarified that the intent is not double-pay people who participate in the UDC as part of their town/township jobs. The committee questioned whether that extends to town council members and to township supervisors who are not the elected chairs of their boards. A memo will be sent advising each municipal member of this information. A motion by Richardson, seconded by Henry to accept the implementation of the Upper Delaware Council Meeting Travel Logs was carried unanimously. Ramie said circulation of the forms will start at the Mar. 1 UDC meeting.

Personnel Update: Secretary Vacancy: Personnel Subcommittee Chairperson Henry reported that Ramie had recommended interviewing five of the secretary candidates. In order to move this process along, he suggests supporting her recommendations, contacting those individuals, and seeing whether it is possible to start the interview process on Mar. 1, when the Personnel Subcommittee members will already be present for the monthly Council meeting. Robinson noted this will be a pre-screening. Members opted to begin the interviews at 6 p.m. Richardson said it will be necessary to convene a special meeting after that since that won't provide adequate time to meet with five people, if they were all available.

Summary of Pending Bills: A motion by Henry, seconded by Peckham to approve the bills listed on the Feb. 27 abstract was carried unanimously.

Financial Statements 2-28-18: A copy of the UDC Financial Statements were handed out for individual review.

Other: Richardson inquired whether the UDC had received a support letter from the Town of Cocheton for the Council's funding proposal to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. Ramie said no. Richardson said he would follow up with this since he is aware that they approved a letter.

Old Business:

Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River FY 2018 Work Plan: Ramie noted that a Feb. 27 deadline had been set for members to complete their review of the draft work plan for the NPS Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River that was previously circulated so that Superintendent Heister can finalize the document. She reported that Richardson had contacted Heister directly to say he found no issues with the draft. Written comments and questions by Robinson and Henry were included in the packets. Ramie said if anyone else has comments to offer, please convey them to Heister.

Other: None

Public Comment: None

Adjournment: A motion by Roeder, seconded by Richardson to adjourn the meeting at 8:43 p.m. was carried unanimously.

Minutes submitted by Laurie Ramie, 3/1/18