

**Upper Delaware Council**  
**OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**  
**January 28, 2020**

Committee Members Present: Larry Richardson, Aaron Robinson, Al Henry, Fred Peckham, Jeff Dexter, Jim Greier, Harold Roeder Jr., David Dean, Dan Paparella

Committee Members Absent: None

Staff : Laurie Ramie, Ashley Hall-Bagdonas

NPS Partner: Kris Heister, Jennifer Claster

Guests: Cheryl Korotky

The UDC's Operations Committee held its monthly meeting on Tuesday, January 28, 2020 at the Council office in Narrowsburg, NY. Chairperson Roeder called the meeting to order at 8:22 p.m. There was no public comment on the agenda.

**Election of Officers:** A motion by Peckham, seconded by Robinson, to elect Larry Richardson as Committee Chairperson was carried. A motion by Henry, seconded by Robinson, to elect Jeff Dexter as Committee Vice-Chairperson was carried.

**Approval of December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2019 Meeting Minutes:** A motion by Peckham seconded Henry to approve the December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2019 Meeting Minutes was carried. There was no public comment on the agenda.

**Executive Director's Report and Monthly Calendar:**

**Financial Status:**

**FY 2020 Federal Funding:** Ramie prepared the Application for Federal Assistance package (budget, narrative report, and SF-424 forms) for the \$262,500 balance of FY20 funding and submitted it to NPS on 1/7. The UDC is currently owed \$59,167.75 in federal reimbursement, representing a \$1,666.78 deficit for November, \$23,760.78 for December, and \$33,740.19 for January expenses. Next we await the execution of the Cooperative Agreement Modification 14 to release the balance of the UDC's funding through 9/30/2020 and draw down the amount owed. Ramie will submit the UDC's FY 2020 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Financial and Progress Report to NYS by 1/31. Staff will renew the UDC's System for Award Management annual registration before its 3/25 expiration.

**Bank Balance:** The UDC had \$92,858.96 in its Jeff Bank accounts as of 1/27.

**FY 2019 Federal Funding:** Regarding FY 2019 funding, there was \$6,700 left in the account of encumbered expenses to cover the Phase II of the Records Management Contract as well as the Shohola TAG. When Ramie looked at the ASAP system UDC uses for payment today, there was no \$6,700 in the account anymore. Ramie contacted NPS Administrative Officer Michelle Blockberger. Ramie said that it seems to be a snafu because there was an end performance date set by the Contracting Officer without the UDC's knowledge which expired on 12/29. That means the account is suspended right now. Ramie called the helpdesk and they said they see it, NPS Upper Delaware sees it, it's a matter of needing the Regional Contracting Officer to lift that date so it can be drawn down.

**Administration:**

**Job Search:** Ramie said the bills in general are higher because we needed to pay vacation compensation to Pete Golod. He had 194 hours on the books when he left. Ramie terminated the insurance coverages as of 1/10 so UDC is not paying premiums for Golod. She said we promoted this job through every avenue we could think. Jennifer Claster was a huge help in suggesting sources that Ramie would not have thought of, such as the undergrad planning programs at local universities and chapters of the American Planning Association. Ramie said we have the Consulting Services Agreement in the meantime, which does relieve some of the pressure; nevertheless we do want to fill that third staff position as soon as we find the qualified person for the job.

**Board Changes:** A memo was issued on 1/2 to confirm UDC committee memberships and quorums. Ramie responded to Town/ship appointment updates by sending welcome or appreciation letters to incoming and outgoing representatives and alternates.

**Computer Issue:** As of 1/14/2020, technical support, security updates, and software updates were no longer available for the UDC's four desktop computers that currently operate on Windows 7. Staff investigated software options and contacted IT Consultant Jeff Chorba, who recommended upgrading to Windows 10. The upgrade process takes 2-3 hours per PC. Windows 10 requires more hard drive performance. He provided an estimate of \$350 per PC to clone the existing set-up to avoid data loss, install a new 500GB SSD drive, update software as necessary, and transport the four towers off-site over a weekend and then return them to avoid any staff down time. This cost was included in the PA Grant application so that it would be fully covered if approved. A Motion by Henry seconded by Peckham to modify the PA DCED Grant carried. Richardson said he had to do the same thing at his workplace and Ryan from Kristt did a great job setting it all up.

**IRS Mileage Allowance:** The IRS has implemented its 2020 business travel reimbursement allowance at \$.575 per mile, down from \$.58. This adjustment will be reflected in expense check for UDC board members and staff.

**Public Relations:**

**FY 2019 Annual Report:** Ramie will compose the UDC's Fiscal Year 2019 Annual Report for on-line posting and availability of hard copies upon request.

**"The Upper Delaware":** The Spring 2020 issue is due to Courier Printing on 3/25 for publication release on 4/6. Henry asked if getting the Spring 2020 issue out on 3/25 will cause undue stress? Ramie said we will see when it gets closer. She hopes there's another staff member by then. Ramie knows UDC is the one that sets the deadline dates with Courier Printing in the contract but she takes them seriously.

**Grants/Fundraising:**

**2019 Technical Assistance Grants:** After Shohola's zoning ordinance is approved for substantial conformance, its approval will come before the Project Review and Operations Committees and UDC will publicize its completion. UDC has encumbered the \$5,000 as a FY 2019 expenditure in the ASAP account.

**2020 Technical Assistance Grants:** Mid-term Progress Reports are due by 1/28/2020 with project completions by 8/28 for Delaware, \$1,127; Hancock, \$5,000; Tusten-01, \$10,000; and Tusten-2, \$7,250. It will be listed on Project Review and Operations agendas for approvals as each grant project is fulfilled and accomplishments will be publicized.

**Calendar:** Ramie noted that the rest of the Executive Director's Report and Monthly Calendar could be read at one's leisure. Heister arranged that Ramie will have a meeting with Acting Superintendent Jessica Weinman on 2/5 before she joins us for the full Council meeting on 2/6. Ramie provided the press release on Weinman's appointment to council membership previously. Heister said Weinman has spent her entire career in natural resource Parks and she is really excited to come here.

**Old Business**

**UDC-NPS Cooperative Agreement Submitted to DOI 1/16:** Ramie said it took three drafts to finalize the UDC's comment letter to the NPS on the template that was presented as well as the time it took to put together a Five-Year Budget. Ramie had presented those items on 1/14 to the NPS Upper Delaware and they sent it to the Department of the Interior on 1/16. We met the goal of getting that in and that gives eight months of review time before it would take effect on 10/1/2020. The next step is developing a new Five-Year Plan. That's not due until 7/1/2020, so we have a little bit more leeway. Robinson asked if UDC is going to propose an escalator clause? Ramie said we did not at this time; it seemed unrealistic to the point of it would move it backwards than forwards. This is an agreement but it is modified routinely so it's not to say it could never happen in the Five-year period. Robinson said, "We're at \$300,000 for the next five years?" Ramie said potentially, unless it was modified by some action that took place before that five-year period which is something that UDC would aspire to do. UDC just needs to be able to justify it.

**Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River FY 20 Work Plan Comments:** Ramie said she didn't know if anyone had any other comments to offer to Heister to supplement what Ramie had sent before she finalizes the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River FY 20 Work Plan. Heister had additional information on the Ethnographic study that Ramie can forward.

**PA Grant Application Submitted to DCED 1/24; UDC Project Descriptions:** Ramie said there was 26-page guidance document on how to submit the PA Grant application through an online portal. The best news is that this morning Representative Jonathan Fritz called and inquired how she was coming along with the application and she was able to tell him that it was successfully filed on Friday. Ramie said it had to be done on a Friday between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. through a specific website. She didn't expect that she'd be able to finish it but the advice that she had received from our contact Nadine at the DCED was to initiate it on a Friday between those hours then you can go back and revisit it any day. Ramie said it was a 12-page application and she handed out a few excerpts from the most relevant parts. She said the hard part was the budget because out of the many projects we had for the Townships and the projects UDC is pursuing as an organization and the equipment purchases, it was challenging to separate those expenses into cost categories rather than projects from the chart UDC has been using. The Narratives are included. Ramie included on her cover email to the agency proposed contract dates of 7/1/2019, retroactive to the start of Pennsylvania's Fiscal Year, and ending 12/31/2021. Ramie contacted the Townships and let them know that it was successfully submitted on 1/24. Contract turnaround time is 4 to 6 weeks. Any expenses that were incurred from 7/1/2019 onward would be covered by this. As Ramie mentioned before, there's no match and it's upfront funding. If it gets approved it's \$100,000 for UDC divvy to up. This is all subject to audit and UDC has retained Eckersley and Ostrowski for that purpose which we're paying for out of the grant. Dexter said Damascus Township completed two projects and was able to complete one of the projects for less than estimated. What happens to the rest of the money? Ramie said she will have to see what the contract says about that. Henry wanted to thank Ramie for completing this grant application. Richardson agreed and said that was in spite of receiving very little guidance from this board.

The two projects that the UDC opted to do for the DCED grant were the Business Plan (Long Term Sustainability for the UDC) and to hire a Coordinator for the Upper Delaware Sweep. Ramie included the UDC Scope of Services for that latter project in the meeting packet. This is time sensitive as it is proposed to take place in April 2020 for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Earth Day. Ramie worked with the Water Use/Resource Management Committee to come up with the responsibilities of this Coordinator. Dan Paparella stepped forward and said he would be interested. For bidding purposes on the PA grant, the threshold for open competitive bidding is \$10,000. The services include assembling volunteers, promotion, publicity, logistics, education, etc. The proposed compensation for that is \$15 an hour up to 200 hours, which adds up to \$3,000. Ramie said before we execute it we would like agreement on it. Richardson said his only concern is does it create a conflict? Ramie said she's included that in the last sentence that the compensation needs to be disclosed on the UDC Conflict of Interest forms. She said it doesn't mean you can't do it, it just means you have to acknowledge you are doing it and compensation is being made. Paparella said he would also recuse himself from this vote. Henry said the Water Use/Resource Management Committee appreciates Paparella's willingness to take the lead on this project and Paparella has a lot of experience in championing these causes. Ramie said Paparella attended the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway meeting last night as that group will be in partnership with this event and they were percolating ideas for it. Claster said she could potentially make GIS maps to help coordinate the volunteers. A motion by Henry seconded by Peckham to approve the Upper Delaware Sweep Coordinator contract carried with an abstention by Paparella.

**Other:** Greier said during one of the last committee meetings when he wanted to speak on an issue he was asked if he had a positive or negative comment. Greier said negative and he was denied the floor. He comes down to represent his Town whether it's positive or negative. Richardson said if you remember that committee meeting it was going on and on and everyone had a negative comment. He said as Chairman of that committee he said if it wasn't positive he wanted to move on. He said obviously, you can speak up and say "I don't care, I want to say this." Richardson said he does appreciate that we moved on. Greier said he had lost his hearing aid that day and didn't hear when the motion was passed; otherwise he would have spoken up then. Richardson said it's not his intent as Chairman of this committee to stifle discussion. He did say his mission this year is to build a better rapport between us, and between the UDC and the NPS. We can have friendly, courteous discussions about differences of opinion.

**New Business**

**Personnel Subcommittee Report:** Henry said the Personnel Subcommittee looked at 12 applications for the Resources and Land Use Specialist and have narrowed it down to a first round of interviews of three. Interviews will be set up starting at 5:30 p.m. on 2/6. Henry thanks everyone who applied and they are looking for the best qualified individual. Greier thanked Ramie for publicizing the job description so well.

**Fiscal Year 2020 Budget Balance:** Provided in the meeting handout, these were the numbers Ramie submitted to the NPS for the balance of UDC's funding. This was as of 1/6. The third column is the most relevant as it's UDC's \$300,000 for the year. One change we made was under Contractual. Our bookkeeper and auditors agreed that we should have Records Management on its own line. Ramie said we had to cut back on River Cleanup Grants currently unless we somehow find money. Right now we only have \$2,323.

**April 26 Awards Banquet Venue and Keynote Speaker:** Ramie and Hall-Bagdonas were discussing the Awards Banquet today. Since Bill Rudge had told us that it's the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Department of Environmental Conservation, Ramie thought we could ask Commissioner Basil Seggos to be UDC's keynote speaker. If he said yes, then we should probably be on the NY side as NY DEC has travel restrictions sometimes. Another consideration is Representative Fritz may be an appropriate person to invite, given that he is our sponsor for the PA DCED grant. Ramie said we've been at Central House for the past three years because they are so excellent to deal with. Discussion continued. A group consensus decided on booking Central House and sending a keynote speaker invitation to Seggos.

**UDC Five-Year Operating Plan Retreat Discussion:** Ramie said by 7/1/2020 UDC needs to have this Five-Year Operating Plan. Ramie thinks it would benefit UDC this year to have a retreat off-site and have someone guide us through the process. She asked committee members to start thinking about it now so format a can be discussed further. Richardson said Buck Moorhead may be someone to consider. A Motion by Dexter seconded by Henry to investigate a facilitator carried.

**Summary of Pending Bills 1-27-2020:** A motion by Henry, seconded by Greier to approve the bills was carried.

**Financial Statement 1-31-2020:** Richardson said the financial statement is offered for individual review.

**Other:** Paparella said he knows Damascus Township gives out trash bags, vests and gloves for trash pickups. He asked if any other Town/ship does that? Dexter said they get them from PennDOT. Richardson said his suggestion when they were trying to spend money was to buy recyclable trash bags. You could get the UDC logo or river map put on it.

**Public Comment:** None

**Adjournment:** A motion by Robinson seconded by Greier to adjourn the meeting at 9:10 p.m. was carried.

*Minutes prepared by Ashley Hall-Bagdonas, 2/4/2020*