

**Upper Delaware Council**  
**OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**  
**May 26, 2020**

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

Committee Members Absent: None

Staff : Laurie Ramie, Ashley Hall-Bagdonas

NPS Partner: Acting Superintendent Jessica Weinman, Jennifer Cluster

Guests: Roger Saumure (Shohola alternate)

The UDC's Operations Committee held its monthly meeting on Tuesday, May 26<sup>th</sup>, 2020 via teleconference. Chairperson Richardson called the meeting to order at 7:33 p.m. There was no public comment on the agenda.

**Approval of April 28<sup>th</sup> Meeting Minutes:** A motion by Henry seconded Greier to approve the April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020 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:** On 5/22, Ramie applied to withdraw \$12,220.35 from the ASAP account to cover May's bills. The Federal funding balance is \$141,104.16 through 9/30. The UDC's Fiscal Year 2020 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Financial and Progress Report for January-March was submitted to NPS on 4/30.

**Bank Balance:** The UDC had \$134,860.93 in unencumbered funds in its Jeff Bank accounts as of 5/22, excluding the special PA Grant and Litter Cleanup accounts.

**FY 2021 Documents Due:** Bookkeeper Mike Poska provided the preliminary framework in an Excel file for the UDC's FY 21 budget on 5/22 at Ramie's request. Next steps will be to update budget figures based on past spending trends and projected expenses, prepare a budget narrative report explaining each expenditure, and prepare an Annual Work Plan for 10/1/2020 through 9/30/2021, all of which must accompany submission of a new, interim Five-Year Operating Plan to NPS by 7/1. The goal is to present all four draft documents to the full Council for ratification at its 6/4 meeting, since the next UDC meeting would be 7/2.

**FY 2019 Federal Funding:** NPS verbally approved the extension of the 5/1 Period of Performance end date for this encumbered account to 9/30. Contracting Officer Patrick Reidy has not processed the modification request while awaiting any further action, Jessica Weinman reported on 5/8. Ramie will then draw down the \$5,000 balance to close out this account when the Shohola TAG 2019-02 Zoning Ordinance's substantial conformance review is complete.

**UDC PA Grant:** The first drawdown from the grant proceeds occurred with a \$6,120.23 payment on 5/18 to Chorba Consulting for the Windows 10 desktop computer and hard drive upgrades (4/14-4/17), purchase of three staff laptop computers, and customized data transfers for Hall-Bagdonas's and Ramie's mobile usage, with work finalized on 5/12-5/14. The UDC will pay for the \$212.01 invoice difference in actual costs, primarily due to the same model of laptop not being available from the original estimate for the grant application. The PA Grant account had earned \$12.07 in interest (compounded weekly) as of the 4/30 bank statement. Ramie is setting up the UDC's payment system to disburse funds to the townships. Next steps are to order the UDC's audio-visual equipment, will keep records, engage the auditors, issue ongoing publicity, and draft a Scope of Services for the UDC Business Plan.

***Administration:***

**Resources and Land Use Specialist:** An interview will be arranged between the Personnel Subcommittee and the candidate with whom we'd been unable to meet before the coronavirus shutdown. At our last communication on 4/3 to advise that the UDC was pausing our hiring process, the individual indicated a continued interest in the position.

**NPS Acting Superintendent:** A news release was distributed on 5/19 to announce that Darren Boch, superintendent at Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park in NJ, will start a 120-day detail as UPDE acting superintendent on 6/8. Ramie included a letter received today from NPS Deputy Northeast Regional Director Deborah Conway in response to the UDC's 5/7 correspondence, a copy of which is provided in the packet.

**UDC Strategic Plan Retreat:** Ramie advised facilitator Buck Moorhead and venue provider Damascus Manor Community Center President Linda Dexter on 5/11 of the Council's decision to cancel the 5/30 retreat due to the restrictions on gatherings in response to the pandemic. Next the interim Five-Year Plan must be submitted to the NPS by the 7/1 deadline based on the current document. UDC will discuss the rescheduling of a board retreat when possible and discuss preparatory work with the facilitator.

**Bylaws Change: Next:** Propose an amendment to the UDC bylaws to permanently incorporate the temporary voting rules as addressed in Resolution 2020-08.

***Public Relations:***

**32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Awards:** Ramie issued a news release announcing the identity of the 2020 honorees on 5/7. She began requesting photos for the souvenir booklet or individual tributes. UDC will determine by mid-July whether to cancel the 8/30 banquet at Central House Family Resort in Beach Lake based on public health requirements.

**Publicity:** One news release was issued: "UDC Announces Honorees for 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Awards", 5/7. Ramie participated in the planning and implementation of the Delaware River Watershed Signage tele-press conference for NYS media outlets on 5/5. She handled UDC and several NPS news release postings to the UDC website in the past month.

**"The Upper Delaware":** Ramie will continue collecting article ideas for the Summer 2020 issue, which is due by 7/22 for publication on 8/3.

**UDC Raft Trip:** We will have to decide whether the 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual UDC Family Raft Trip on 8/2 from Minisink to Pond Eddy with Lander's River Trips is still feasible. Reservations are due by 7/27 at \$29 for ages 13 and up, and \$19 for ages 5-12.

**FY 2019 Annual Report:** UDC's Fiscal Year 2019 Annual Report must be composed for on-line posting and availability of hard copies upon request.

***Consulting Projects:***

**Project Review Workbook Update:** Ramie reviewed Draft 2 on 5/19 and Draft 3 on 5/26 to provide edits and comments to Dorene Warner for her graphic design work. There was discussion on how to proceed with roll-out orientation plans with the UDC-NPS-NPCA (National Parks Conservation Association) planning team on 4/30 and 5/19. Ramie contacted three professional videographers to ascertain interest in assisting with preparing a virtual presentation through 5/20 emails and follow-up calls to two of them, and reached out to Richardson to offer the UDC's videotaped introduction and Tom Shepstone to offer a historical context. They are looking to advance finalization of the print edition of the Workbook by 5/29. Cost and services proposals will be collected from the videographers. Ramie will be participating in a 5/28 UDC-NPS-NPCA planning team call. A new email address to accept land use projects to be reviewed electronically will be set up.

**Upper Delaware Litter Sweep Coordinator:** The 4/22-25 event was cancelled due to the COVID-19 related Executive Orders. The PA DCED contract that includes \$3,000 for this position expires on 12/31/2021.

**Interim Project Review Services:** The "Upper Delaware Council Consulting Services Agreement for Project Review and Substantial Conformance Tasks" was signed with Tom Shepstone of Shepstone Management Co. on 1/24/20 at \$150/hour, exclusive of travel time. Expenditures to date: \$1,425 for services rendered through 2/29/20.

**Upper Delaware Council Fiscal Sustainability Plan:** The UDC will retain a consultant to commission a long-term business plan to guide the organization's fiscal operations and explore how to diversify funding sources. This study will be funded through the UDC's PA DCED grant proceeds, with \$10,678.47 allocated.

**Records Management:** UDC received the Needs Assessment Report and Draft Policy and Procedures Manual from consultant K Sickler-Murphy. **Next:** Staff will review these documents and seek UDC approval through a resolution. Hall-Bagdonas will train staff in the use of the Excel database and future archiving of files.

**Grants/Fundraising:**

**River & Shoreline Clean-up Grants:** Ramie sent a reminder memo on 5/18 to all UDC towns and townships about the 5/22 due date for proposals. UDC received a proposal from the Town of Lumberland on 5/20 and one from the Town of Deerpark on 4/24. A draft resolution will be presented at the 6/4 UDC meeting and award letters will be sent out.

**2019 Technical Assistance Grants:** After Shohola's zoning ordinance is approved for substantial conformance, it will go for approval before the Project Review and Operations Committees, and UDC will publicize its completion.

**2020 Technical Assistance Grants:** Ramie sent a memo on 5/14 to the four project sponsors to reinforce the 8/28 project deadline with additional instructions. UDC will await the project completions by 8/28 for Delaware, \$1,127; Hancock, \$5,000; Tusten-1, \$10,000; and Tusten-2, \$7,250. It will be put on Project Review and Operations agendas for approvals as each grant project is fulfilled and accomplishments will be publicized.

**Calendar:** The June Calendar was included in the meeting packet along with the last week of May. Ramie will be issuing a press release after the NY-PA Joint Interstate Bridge Commission's Annual Meeting tomorrow. Upper Delaware Scenic Byway will be meeting 6/1 this month and Ramie presumes they will be having their regular 4<sup>th</sup> month meeting as well. Ramie expects we will continue meetings via conference call. Sullivan County, through the Mid-Hudson region did enter phase one reopening. It will go in two-week increments. She believes the UDC office would be considered professional services and reopening for that is in the second phase. She said it could be as soon as 6/8 if there are no setbacks.

**Old Business**

**Analysis of Fiscal Year 2020 Budget Status:** Ramie asked Bookkeeper Mike Poska to take a look at where UDC stands. Ramie provided a copy in the meeting packet. Poska projects a surplus at the end of the year of \$42,788. This is largely because UDC has had a vacant salary position and the benefits associated with it since 1/10. We've also had no mileage checks going out to members since March. There are fewer expenses at the office. There may be expenses that Poska hasn't accounted for such as extra costs for the Workbook.

**PA DCED Grant Voucher and Records System:** Ramie mentioned at last month's meeting we did get the direct deposit of \$100,000 in grant proceeds. Ramie made the first draw down from that to pay for the computer upgrades done through Chorba Consulting. Ramie said we have now paid the \$6,120.23 out of the \$100,00. Ramie is working on the voucher system that was discussed. If the Townships complete a project they can submit for reimbursement. Richardson said we can't praise our Pennsylvania legislators enough for securing this grant.

**Other:** Henry recommends by the next Operations meeting the committee come up with a list of projects, or projects that have been formerly recommended, and see if they can get covered by some of that lapse money because it's a rarity UDC has an excess.

**New Business**

**2020 River & Shoreline Clean-up Grant Proposals:** Ramie sent out a reminder the week proposals were due and we received two proposals. This is the least we've ever had compared to having six participants once. Ramie said times are tough right now and COVID-19 may be result of it. Fortunately, the Town of Deerpark has a fantastic idea to do three clean-ups at the Hawk's Nest area. They have timed their clean-ups after Memorial Day, Independence Day, and Labor Day. Those are when the most trash seems to accumulate along the shoreline at the bottom of the Hawk's Nest. Clean-up will be done by Town Highway Department employees. The Town of Lumberland will hire an individual to do a trash collection along the shoreline from Camp Tel-Yehudah to the Mongaup River Access at the Deerpark border every other week. The total cost for the two projects would be \$4,385.71. Ramie said we can

afford that. A Motion by Henry seconded by Greier to increase the budgeted amount for the 2020 River & Shoreline Clean-up Grants and draft a resolution for the 6/4 meeting carried.

**Draft Fiscal Year 2021 Budget, Narrative and Work Plan:** Ramie included in the packet what she said was the absolute barebone, necessity expenses for FY 2021. Her next task will be to review the figures, and if we had basically the same amounts in the fixed expense category as this year, we'd have a little over \$36,500 left to distribute among the other items such as Outside Consulting Services, Technical Assistance Grants, River Clean-Up Grants, Education, Trainings, etc. In terms of Outside Consulting, one project listed in our PA DCEd Grant which we haven't initiated yet is a Long-Term Fiscal Sustainability Plan for the UDC. We have until the end of 2021 to complete that project. Richardson said one thing that sticks out to him is the Outside Consulting. Tom Shepstone hasn't been used much for Project Review projects and we are hoping to get a Resource Specialist position filled and may have a need for his services for training purposes.

Weinman said Ramie has brought up how NPS is transitioning to a new financial assistance management program. Patrick Reidy, Chief of Financial Assistance and Grant Management Specialist in our region, along with Administrative Officer Michelle Blockberger and Weinman met. The current system NPS uses in going to go down in early September. The new system Grant Solutions won't come until 10/13/2020; which is into the new fiscal year. There's COVID-19; it's an election year; it's a new program; there are all these things that could hold up funding in a timely manner. Weinman said NP Upper Delaware finds themselves with extra funds; because they are not operating normally; there are lapse positions as well. Weinman said if the Cooperative Agreement gets to Reidy he could obligate NPS's excess funds this year, under this system, so there would be no lapse in funding when we hit the new fiscal year.

**Draft Interim Five-Year Strategic Plan:** Discussed above.

**Summary of Pending Bills 5-26-2020:** A motion by Robinson, seconded by Henry to approve the bills was carried.

**Financial Statement 5-31-2020:** Richardson said the financial statement is offered for individual review.

**Other:** None.

**Public Comment:** Roeder said he's happy to report positive news from the Town of Delaware: the Trust for Public Land took possession of the old Upper Delaware Campgrounds in Callicoon on 5/13. They are working with the County to develop a County Park. They are going to put in a new access site at Callicoon. It's an 85-acre river front parcel that has been vacant for a decade or more because of flooding. It will also be the site for the new wastewater treatment plant for the Town of Delaware which has been trying to move that out of the floodplain.

Henry wanted to thank Weinman for her time here though most of her Acting Superintendent tenure has been through tele-conference. Weinman said it was really great working with UDC. Richardson said before the meeting ends he wanted to acknowledge Ramie and Hall-Bagdonas as they are working under harsh conditions and UDC thanks them for that.

**Adjournment:** A motion by Roeder seconded by Dean to adjourn the meeting at 8:13 p.m. was carried.