

**Upper Delaware Council
OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
October 23, 2018**

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

Committee Members Absent: None

Staff: Laurie Ramie, Pete Golod, Ashley Hall-Bagdonas

NPS Partner: Kris Heister, Jennifer Claster

Guests: Roger Saumure (Shohola alternate)

The UDC's Operations Committee held its monthly meeting on Tuesday, October 23, 2018 at the Council office in Narrowsburg, NY. Chairperson Robinson called the meeting to order at 8:02 p.m. A motion by Dean, seconded by Henry, to approve the Sept. 25 meeting minutes with two abstentions from Richardson and Dexter. There was no public comment on the agenda.

Executive Director's Report and Monthly Calendar:

Financial Status:

FY 2018 Federal Funding: Ramie shared that she submitted the Fiscal Year 2019 budget package to NPS on 10/15 now waiting for it to be processed and authorized. That would allow the release of 18.63% of the funding under the current Continuing Resolution which started at the beginning of the fiscal year and will expire on 12/7. The UDC is currently owed \$14,577.21 for its October expenditures through 10/22. Ramie said this will be paid from the Unrestricted Fund and UDC will pay itself back. In the process of preparing the quarterly report Bookkeeper Mike Poska has given Ramie the SF-425 financial forms and Ramie needs to complete the progress report narrative that encapsulates the last three months.

Bank Balance: As of 10/22, the UDC had \$130,231.27 in its Jeff Bank accounts.

State Funding: No responses have been received to the UDC's 8/2 letters to NYS Governor Cuomo and PA Governor Wolf appealing for state operational funding of the Council as per the cost-sharing scenario envisioned in the River Management Plan.

Administration:

Secretary Position: An email vote of the UDC membership was conducted on 9/25 based on the Personnel Subcommittee's recommendation to offer employment to Hall-Bagdonas. The signed agreement and additional forms were returned on 10/1 and Hall-Bagdonas attended the UDC meeting on 10/4. Official employment began on 10/15. Ramie assembled an orientation folder and secured a new email account through Chorba Consulting. A memo to the other applicants was sent on 10/15 to thank them for their interest. Website maintenance training with Dorene Warner of W Design is set for 11/2.

Office Maintenance: Chorba Consulting was here on 10/5 to repair WIFI signal in conference room. An estimate for buffing and deep cleaning tile floors following the construction work was sought from an individual recommended by Dan Wagner from our cleaning company. Steve Radzicki was in on 10/18 to assess the condition and dimensions, and will provide a cost and timetable estimate. Ramie said if anyone knows any contractors forward their information to the UDC office so we can get a comparable bid.

Emergency Response Guide Project: After a 10/16 *Sullivan County Democrat* article was circulated about the emergency communications associated with the 8/9 train derailment and diesel spill which referenced the 1997 "Emergency Response Guide for the Upper Delaware River Valley: Port Jervis to Deposit", Ramie receive an email from Central New York Railroad spokesperson Melanie Boyer stating, "I see article you are trying to get your guide updated. If you send it to me, I'll get information updated. I don't believe I have a copy." Ramie mailed a print copy and Hall-Bagdonas scanned a digital version that was sent, with an offer for the UDC to facilitate the collection of local emergency contact information, host any meetings to announce plans to pursue the update, and generally help coordinate the project. The NPS has inquired whether the UDC will be taking the lead on this project so that efforts are not duplicated. Ramie would like to send a formal letter on what UDC could do in terms of hosting meetings,

training sessions and collecting information. Heister said UDC is in a unique role and may want to have scoping meeting with county Emergency Management Agencies, Fire & Police to see what they would like to make it better than what it is now. In 1997 they printed 500 copies that the EMAs distributed, organized roll-out sessions at the UDC office and even held a locomotive training drill on-site in Sparrowbush with a Conrail representative discussing emergency response issues with first responders. Richardson made a motion for the UDC to take lead on this, seconded by Henry. The motion carried.

Public Relations:

Annual Report: A narrative report of accomplishments for Fiscal Year 2018 will be prepared for online posting and distribution.

Publicity: Issued three news releases: "The Upper Delaware Fall/Winter 2018 Newsletter Available On-line and by Mail", 10/1; "Upper Delaware Council Awards Technical Assistance Grants", 10/5; "UDC Finalizes River Clean-up Grants", 10/5; and two meeting notices on 10/5 (for WU/RM) and 10/12 (for PR and Ops). Ramie was interviewed by Isabel Braverman of the *Sullivan County Democrat* on 9/28 for her article on the train derailment emergency response that published on 10/16. Requested permission from the SCD editors to use a photo from the Tusten Climate Smart Community presentation by the NYS DEC in the next UDC newsletter. **Potential next topics:** UDC Hires Secretary; UDC Annual Report; Railroad Emergency Response Guide Update; Project Review Guide. **"The Upper Delaware":** The Fall/Winter 2018 issue was delivered as scheduled on 10/1. Ramie publicized its availability, distributed copies, updated the article index archives. Next will be to prepare a Request for Proposals for FY 2019 newsletter mailing and printing services, with three issues planned as follows: Spring 2019, due to printer 3/13/19, publication date 4/1; Summer 2019, due to printer 7/17, publication date 8/5/19; and Fall/Winter 2019 due to printer 11/20/19 publication date 12/2.

Grants/Fundraising:

2018 Technical Assistance Grants: Damascus Township's extension request for its Comprehensive Master Plan update was approved last month with \$5,583.33 encumbered of FY 2018 funds. Project completion is sought by 12/31.

2019 Technical Assistance Grants: Ramie sent amended applications by Tusten and Berlin to the NPS for review on 9/25 for inquiry on whether they match the federal funding criteria. The UDC approved Resolution 2018-04 authorizing four 2019 TAG awards on 10/4. Golod prepared and distributed contracts for signatures by the sponsoring municipalities. The grants are: Shohola Township, \$5,000, ordinance update; Town of Tusten, \$5,000, municipal software; Town of Lumberland, \$787, Guide to Permits brochure; and Berlin Township, \$600, township informational brochure. **Next:** As each TAG is completed and the payment request is approved, publicize each project.

Non-UDC Meetings or Events:

9/25- Presentation to Leadership Sullivan class at Delaware Valley Art Alliance, Narrowsburg

10/11- National Parks Conservation Association's "Making Connections: Roots of Prosperity in New York and Pennsylvania's Upper Delaware River Region" launch events in Hancock (Friends of the Upper Delaware River office) and Honesdale (The Cooperage)

10/16-17- 9th Annual Water, Water Everywhere Conference by Friends of the Upper Delaware River at the West Branch Angler Resort, Hale Eddy, NY

10/22- Upper Delaware Scenic Byway monthly meeting, UDC office

Greier noted from Ramie's report there was no response from NYS Governor Cuomo or PA Governor Wolf regarding appealing for state operational funding of the Council. Greier mentioned page 22 in the River Management Plan is devoted to funding of the UDC and UDC is supposed to receive four sources of support from NPS, the Commonwealth, NYS and the Delaware River Basin Commission. It specifies how each should be funded. "So they really can't deny their obligation," Greier stated. Ramie stated in the DRBC's case they can't get fully funded themselves for their own operations. Robinson said it has limited UDC's ability to look beyond UDC's federal requirements and locks UDC into a set of criteria that UDC has to comply with that does not allow any flexibility. Discussion arose about publicity regarding not getting an answer from NYS or the Commonwealth. Henry mentioned the Commonwealth's Advisory Council for Hunting, Fishing and Conservation with a contact person Robb Miller. Robinson suggests going on a publicity campaign having members write letters to newspapers

after many attempts to reach the Commonwealth and NYS have not succeeded. Henry feels this contact may be a potential new source to send the UDC's letter. Robinson asked for an explanation via letter of why they have not contributed per the RMP and how they interpret the promise in the RMP. Richardson relayed the challenge is establishing what is the need for the money. The UDC must show projects, which we are unable to do because we do not have the funding. Robinson proposed drafting up some editorials before the next committee meeting.

Calendar: Ramie turned attention to the November calendar handout of UDC meetings, deadlines, and activities. Heister has advised that the meeting on 11/8 for the Subcommittee on Ecological Flows will now be held at Pocono Environmental Education Center in the Delaware Water Gap. Ramie will be on vacation the week of 11/13 through 11/20.

Ramie noted that the rest of the Executive Director's Report and Monthly Calendar could be read at one's leisure.

Old Business

Federal Funding for River-Related Law Enforcement Surveys- Next Steps: Robinson thanked Heister for compiling the municipal responses to the UDC's survey which he said each town is individual in terms of their approach to this funding issue. Robinson wondered if there is a way to uniformly develop a funding program because of some of the variables. He asked how can we work with NPS in facilitating a methodology a township could adopt so UDC may help the towns along with these requirements and get some funding. Ramie also mentioned the UDC's role in making recommendations to NPS about programs like this. Robinson stressed a lot of these issues are not NPS issues. They are Federal issues; something he will address under the report on 10/18 meeting with Debbie Conway. Henry recommends that participating towns should have a meeting with NPS. UDC could send a letter to participating municipalities are interested in the federal funding and need more information or information clarified please come to this meeting, whether it's Operations or a separate meeting. After reviewing the survey results several Council members felt further guidance may be needed for those towns. Heister said she sent a letter to every Township asking for an informal meeting to discuss these issues. Heister met with Westfall Township and has yet to hear from anyone else. Heister said there needs to be a discussion about the Upper Delaware only having \$16,000 and not the \$271,000 as in the program's beginning. In 2011 decisions were made about townships that would be a priority for this funding as opposed to others based on visitor use, number of accesses, number of businesses, and river-related recreation. These were Highland, Lumberland, Deerpark and Sullivan County Sheriff Department. Heister referenced the survey question: Would your municipality be able to pay the wage rates plus benefits established by the Department of Labor for these services (\$36.78 /hour), noting the fact that the DOL does not have a category for constables. At Town of Delaware's meeting Roeder brought up there might be a misunderstanding regarding funding. Some reactions at the meeting were 'Even if they got the money to pay for the people you would still need to pay for a vehicle and insurance' and 'it may have been beneficial when there was the campground.' Richardson brought it up at the Town of Cocheton meeting and they are not interested. Heister said Request for Proposals go out in January. Dean shared that the Town of Deerpark has benefited from the program, especially for Route 97 patrols, and he would urge everyone to try to get involved with this. Robinson asked to circulate an email with available dates for a meeting starting with NPS availability.

Report on 10/18 Meeting with Debbie Conway, NPS Northeast Region Deputy Director: Robinson and Ramie met with Heister and NPS Northeast Region Deputy Director Debbie Conway at Rohman's Inn in Shohola, an interesting, historic spot on the Upper Delaware, for what Robinson considered a very productive meeting and a good icebreaker. Ramie shared that Conway was the former superintendent of Steamtown for 6 ½ years and has been in this Deputy Director position since October 1st. They discussed the UDC's relationship with NPS and the municipalities. Conway was receptive to listening and getting a sense of where the UDC is at in terms of our ability to function under financial duress. Robinson felt there was a sense of things being reviewed or reconsidered. Heister said she felt Conway was clear on some things like Continuing Resolutions and how the funding that comes to UDC is outside NPS's control. Those types of issues can't be revisited. Robinson said from conversation at that meeting he did get good information on variations on how UDC can approach funding. UDC can put in an Advance ahead of the actual occurrence of a bill or expenses that would have to rebalance at some point. Heister talked about shifting it off of the fiscal year. The whole issue comes about because UDC is tied to NPS's fiscal year. If there is a

Continuing Resolution on 10/1 then the UDC is impacted too. What Conway talked about was if UDC was able to get some infusion of funding that would allow it to operate from October to the end of December, that would kick it off of the federal year cycle. The likelihood of NPS having a full budget at the end of December is much more likely than NPS having a full budget on October 1st. Robinson said it requires external funding. Heister said it's only once. Robinson said once a quarter. Ramie said there were a lot of good ideas at the 10/18 meeting on strategic planning and having on-the-shelf projects that can be pulled out when there are funding opportunities. Ramie noted Heister's success in securing funds for various projects in the Upper Delaware. Also, by partnering on certain projects UDC and NPS could get a lot more done. Also discussed was the need to strengthen the UDC as an organization to prove our value to our membership. NPS and UDC agreed they both need to get out to towns and townships more to tell them what UDC and NPS offer, what is on the table, and what assistance can be provided. Robinson shared with the committee a conversation from the 10/18 meeting on how does UDC stimulate local economies. One thought Robinson had was running or investing in train excursions up the Delaware. This could have the 'cruise ship' effect in which a large group of people stop in a town and go spend some money. A copy of Ramie's thank you letter to Conway was included in the packets.

Other: None

New Business

Draft Resolution 2018-05: Fiscal Year 2019 Budget and Work Plan Approval: Henry made a motion seconded by Robinson, with all in favor to send Draft Resolution 2018-05: Fiscal Year 2019 Budget and Work Plan to the full Council.

Summary of Pending Bills 10-23-18: Robinson made motion to approve the bills, seconded by Henry, with all in favor.

Financial Statement 10-31-18: Robinson said financial statement is for individual review.

Other: None

Public Comment: None

Adjournment: A motion by Roeder seconded by Dean to adjourn the meeting at 9:08 p.m. was carried.

Minutes prepared by Ashley Hall-Bagdonas, 11/1/18