

Upper Delaware Council
OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
June 28, 2011

Committee Present: Richardson, Rando, Rajs, Roeder, Niflot, Peckham
Committee Absent: None
NPS Partner: McGuinness
Staff: Douglass, Ramie, Soete
Guests: None

The UDC's Operations Committee held its monthly meeting on Tuesday, June 28, 2011 at the Council office in Narrowsburg, NY. Chairperson Larry H. Richardson called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m.

Approval of May 24 Meeting Minutes: A motion by Rajs seconded by Rando to approve the May 24 meeting minutes was carried unanimously. There was no public comment on the agenda.

Public Relations/Fundraising Specialist's Report: Ramie reviewed highlights of her written report. She has been fulfilling the duties of office manager as well as her own position since May 24. The committee had authorized her to accrue up to 10 hours of overtime per week; however, she has had a total of 8.5 hours as of the June 24 pay period end. Peckham asked if that number was per week. Ramie replied that the 8.5 hours pertains to the entire period since May 24 and results from her experience with time management. Richardson expressed appreciation for Ramie's timeliness in drafting the meeting minutes.

Ramie displayed the new Olympus digital voice recorder that the UDC purchased and first used at the June 21 Water Use/Resource Management (WU/RM) Committee meeting. Soete did the product research for it, and also took the lead in learning how to electronically re-set the postage meter and arranging for the required repair of the copier's scanner function.

The Council had to sign up by June 13 to have an informational booth at the 21st Annual Narrowsburg RiverFest. Ramie checked with the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) which has shared the Council's booth space in recent years. Unfortunately, DRBC staff is unable to participate this year due to budgetary constraints. Douglass said he would help Ramie with the canopy set-up and take-down.

The UDC has one remaining, active state legislative grant, TM09050 (\$25,000 for local improvement projects by the eight NYS town members). Ramie reported that five towns – Delaware, Fremont, Hancock, Highland, and Tusten – still have to complete their projects. The Town of Hancock requested permission to revise its scope of work from its originally-approved project. Ramie discussed the procedure with Supervisor Sam Rowe. The deadline for the contract with the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation is August 15, 2012, although Ramie would prefer to close out the reimbursement program within this calendar year.

As Grants Coordinator also for the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway, Ramie is administering four active grant programs on the state and federal level. They are: NYS Grant M060091, \$50,000 for Rt. 97 Landscape Enhancements/Member Beautification Projects, deadline 8/31/12; NYS Grant TM07083, \$25,000 for a Visitor Center Feasibility Study, deadline 8/31/12; Federal Highway Administration FY 07 Grant, \$12,400 for an Invasive Plant Species Educational Campaign and Interpretive Signage Project, 6/1/12 deadline; and NYS Grant TM08104, \$25,000 for a Matching Marketing Funds Campaign, deadline 8/31/12.

The next major Public Relations activities are the Family Raft Trip on Aug. 7, which will be from Barryville to Pond Eddy with Kittatinny Canoes as host livery; and the Fall-Winter newsletter, which must go to the printer by Aug. 12, for a Sept. 1 publication release.

Executive Director's Report: Douglass said he had no report but was prepared to discuss new business. Richardson noted that Douglass has not provided an Executive Director's Report since January and that the committee wants him to resume offering timelines for the various staff projects.

New Business

FY 2012 UDC Budget: The committee reviewed the draft budget for Fiscal Year 2012 line-by-line. Douglass noted that the income column shows \$10,000 less than the current year due to a loss in grant administration fees. The current NYS grant program is for pass-through funds only and Senator Bonacic has not been in a position to secure any additional grant funding at this time. Peckham questioned the health insurance line's increase from \$13,972 to \$15,600, given that only two employees are currently on the plan. When a secretary is hired, there will be a three-month probationary period before that individual could obtain individual health insurance coverage. Douglass located the rate for the new health care plan that the Council had approved effective June 1. It carries an annual premium of \$14,740.40 for three employees. Under Public Relations, Douglass pointed out that \$3,000 has been allocated for "UDC Publication". Ramie explained that this is for a re-print of the Visitor Information Guide brochure, which had been deferred this year to keep expenses down. It was last printed in 2008 at a cost of \$3,886, which was offset by \$875 raised in donations from business sponsors. There are just seven boxes of 300 copies left in the UDC's inventory. Richardson said that the listings for accommodations, restaurants, bait and tackle shops, liveries, and campgrounds are obviously outdated. This would be a good project for which to seek outside funding. Peckham wondered similarly whether the UDC's awards banquet could be sponsored. Businesses that contribute toward it could display their wares at the event. Rajsz noted the zero in the Educational Program line. She said there are many new residents in the river valley that would benefit from learning more about the UDC. Richardson agreed that people don't know what the Council does or that it's independent from the National Park Service. McGuinness said he would like to see a program aimed at landowners, maybe a refresher course on the River Management Plan. Peckham felt that targeting school children would be effective. McGuinness said that NPS has educational specialists on staff that have established local school programs. At the June 23 Local Waterfront Revitalization Program meeting, he heard town supervisors cite a need for training of planning and zoning board members. Richardson said he would love to see the UDC go out on the road to visit all the planning boards. The goal would be to explain the provisions of the River Management Plan and how it can be incorporated into their authorities. Rajsz agreed that it's better to take the message directly to them. McGuinness said he would be willing to participate in these visits also, as should the UDC representative from each town/ship. Once they assess what the needs and concerns are from planning board members, UDC and NPS could work together to coordinate training opportunities for them. Richardson received consensus on his suggestion to move a \$1,500 allocation for Temporary Help/Overtime to the Educational Program line. The Bookkeeping Services line is proposed to increase from \$7,800 to \$9,600. Douglass explained that this is to compensate the bookkeeper for taking over the monthly funding advance requests and quarterly reporting required for the UDC's federal funds, as well as budget preparation. Staff Travel has been cut in half since Douglass said that the Council has been trying to keep that in check, and Postage/Shipping has also been reduced. Regarding overhead expenses, Rajsz asked if we had figured out how much the UDC has saved from the installation of the new, energy-efficient furnace. Douglass said he would have to look into that. Richardson advised to compare it in gallons of fuel usage. Rajsz also questioned the zero in the Directors and Officers Insurance line, since she is under the impression that the UDC has such a policy. Richardson instructed Douglass to investigate that. A \$10,000 allocation for Capital Expenditures pertained to the installation of central air conditioning this year, but Rajsz noted that the project was completed. Richardson said we have been talking about the need to replace the office computers. He suggested taking a \$2,000 portion of that \$10,000 and adding it to the Office Supplies line to initiate a gradual computer replacement program. That will also enable a reduction of the approximately \$36,320 listed deficit by \$8,000. Peckham pointed out that the UDC operated on a \$308,483 budget in FY 2011. This FY 2012 spending plan shows approximately \$336,670 in expenses. The federal funding has remained at \$300,000 since 1988. Roeder said that the UDC has had to repeatedly transfer funds from its equity to cover its deficit budgets. Eventually something will have to give. Richardson reminded the committee of our auditor's prediction that the UDC could only last several more years on the current deficit trend. He added that one of the few discretionary lines in the Council's budget is the \$16,700 allocation for Technical Assistance Grants. If the organization is starving for money, that might be the place to cut. Roeder said he would hate to see that happen since that program is a major benefit for the municipal members. It would only be done under an austerity situation. Richardson agreed that it's a vital service. All of his town's zoning re-writes have been accomplished thanks to TAG funding. Peckham concluded that the UDC needs to get more mileage out of

the money it has and continue the effort to cut back on expenses. A motion by Rando seconded by Rajsz to recommend adoption of the FY 2012 UDC Budget, incorporating the changes discussed, by the full Council on July 7 was carried unanimously.

FY 2012 Operations Committee Work Plan: Ramie noted that this draft work plan had been sent for advance review on June 16. Richardson said that a new task should be added under the Public Affairs section pertaining to the UDC's desire to host an educational program now that an allocation for it is included in the FY 2012 budget. A motion by Roeder seconded by Rajsz to recommend adoption of the FY 2012 Operations Committee Work Plan, with an added Task 15 under Public Affairs, by the full Council on July 7 was carried unanimously.

NPS Funding Requirements and Bookkeeper Extra Services Proposal: UDC part-time bookkeeper Mike Poska has proposed fees of \$75-100 monthly and \$100-150 quarterly for the preparation of the paperwork required for the UDC's monthly funding advances and quarterly reports to the National Park Service for its federal funding. Richardson asked whether there is enough funding left in the bookkeeper's FY 2011 budget line to cover these expenses through October. Douglass replied yes. Rajsz pointed out that a portion of the office manager's salary is available to cover this expense also. A motion by Rajsz seconded by Rando to approve the proposed fees for extra services by the bookkeeper was carried unanimously. The UDC's annual Cooperative Agreement requisition request to NPS is due by July 11. A meeting with the Upper Delaware unit's fiscal officer has been arranged for July 6 to review the complete requirements.

Status of UDC Secretary Search: Richardson reported that the UDC received 47 applications for the secretary position by the June 20 deadline. Staff had been asked to review the resumes and narrow down the list. The Personnel Subcommittee (Richardson, Niflot, Rajsz, and Peckham) met prior to this meeting to discuss those 10 recommendations. They have selected six candidates to interview. The target date is July 20 starting at 5:30 p.m. Richardson observed that there are some very highly qualified people looking for jobs. The subcommittee will present its recommendation of who to hire to the full Council for consideration. If they can't come to an agreement, there are more fine choices among the applicants.

IRS Mileage Reimbursement Increase to 55.5 Cents Effective 7/1/11: A June 23 news release from the Internal Revenue Service was handed out, announcing an increase in the optional standard mileage rates for the final six months of 2011. The business mileage rate is changing from 51 cents to 55.5 cents for the period of July 1-Dec. 31, 2011. The announcement states, "While gasoline is a significant factor in the mileage figure, other items enter into the calculation of mileage rates, such as depreciation and insurance and other fixed and variable costs." Richardson said that since the UDC has a policy to automatically accept the federal government rate for its mileage reimbursements, no further action was necessary.

Delaware River Basin Conservation Act of 2011 Introduced in the U.S. Senate: A June 23 news release headlined, "Sens. Carper, Coons, Lautenberg, Menendez, Schumer, Gillibrand and Casey Introduce Bill to Protect and Enhance the Delaware River Watershed: Bill Strengthens Environmental and Economic Health of Vital Water Source", was handed out. Ramie noted that DRBC Executive Director Carol Collier had referenced this pending legislation in her report at the June 2 UDC meeting. It states, in part, "The Delaware River Basin Conservation Act of 2011 would establish the Delaware River Basin Restoration Program at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The program would be charged with instituting a partnership to identify, prioritize and implement restoration and protection efforts in the Delaware River basin. In particular, the bill requires the director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to create and adopt a single, basin-wide plan that will guide restoration efforts and the implementation of the Delaware River Basin Restoration Program... The bill also authorizes \$5 million a year in competitive grant funding that will support local, on-the-ground, voluntary restoration projects led by nonprofits, universities, state and local governments, and others, with a maximum federal share of 75 percent." Rajsz asked if we know what the impetus was for this legislation. McGuinness said the release points out that there is currently no federal program dedicated to the Delaware River like there are for other nationally-significant watersheds like the Chesapeake Bay and the Long Island Sound, despite the Delaware River Basin's importance as a critical resource and economic generator.

Summary of Pending Bills / Financial Statements: The committee was provided with an abstract of bills dated June 28 to review. A motion by Peckham seconded by Rajsz approving the bills for payment was carried unanimously. The financial statement for the period ending May 31 was handed out. Ramie noted that the mystery has been solved of why the Friends of the Upper Delaware group had been appearing intermittently on the Profit & Loss statement as an income source, despite the fact that the program has been defunct for many years. The bookkeeper had confused the Friends of the Upper Delaware name with the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway, which was the source of a \$2,750 donation to the UDC in 2011.

External Meetings and/or Travel Requests: Soete requested permission to attend the June 30 public hearing meeting for the Multi-Municipal Task Force's Road Preservation Law to be held at 7 p.m. at Sullivan West High School in Lake Huntington; and the Lackawaxen Township Board of Supervisors' meeting on July 20 at 6:30 p.m. that will continue the conditional use hearing for Holbert Quarry. Ramie requested permission to attend the quarterly meeting of the Delaware & Hudson Transportation Heritage Council to be held in Summitville at a time to be determined on July 20; the Grave of the Unknown Soldier Ceremony organized by Pike County Historian George Fluhr on July 22 at 1:30 p.m. in Lackawaxen, PA; and RiverFest on July 24 from 10-4 in Narrowsburg. A motion by Rando seconded by Rajsz to approve those five meeting requests was carried unanimously.

Douglass requested permission to attend the two-day stakeholder meeting for the USGS's WaterSMART study of the Delaware River Basin to be held on Sept. 7 (9 a.m. to 6 p.m.) and Sept. 8 (8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.) at the Shawnee Inn in Shawnee-on-the-Delaware, PA. A handout was provided with details. Registration cost for the program and three meals is \$95, with reservations due by June 29. Douglass said he would drive home on the evening of Sept. 7 rather than book a room offered for \$77. He noted that 47 people are being invited to participate in the meeting, the purpose of which is to make sure that the scope and direction of the USGS's three-year technical assessments of water use and availability will address the needs of Delaware River basin stakeholders. Ramie said that the WU/RM Committee had discussed this initiative at their June 21 meeting and recommended that the UDC have a seat at the table for this important issue. Peckham said that the Council will expect a good report back from Douglass about the study's objectives. Niflot asked if the UDC will be making a written statement at the meeting. Douglass said they are looking for input through participation at this meeting. Soete noted that the invitation included an input form asking organizations and agencies to list three issues that they feel should be addressed in the study. The WU/RM Committee recommended three issues to cite. Peckham said he wanted to see that list since everyone on the Council might not agree with putting forward those issues. Ramie said that the three points were described in the June 21 draft minutes that were circulated on June 24. A motion by Rajsz seconded by Rando to approve Douglass' attendance at the Sept. 7-8 USGS WaterSMART Stakeholders' Meeting was carried, with Niflot opposed.

Other: None

Old Business

Report on NPS Wild and Scenic Rivers Act Training Workshop: Soete attended the National Park Service's two-day training at PPL's Environmental Learning Center in Lake Wallenpaupack on June 23-24. He displayed the thick binder of information he brought back and noted that many of the documents are also available on-line at www.rivers.gov. The objective of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act is to ensure that rivers remain free-flowing, and that the outstandingly remarkable values for which they were designated are protected. Soete said that the workshop was interesting and he could try to do a written report if the committee wished. The Act was discussed in detail and case studies of sample proposals were done to see how it would apply. McGuinness said that staff from the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River and the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area learned about how Wild and Scenic Rivers get designated, how councils are set up, and the procedures to follow to comply with the Act's Section 10 that pertains to non-degradation of water quality and Section 7 that pertains to any water resource projects that could obstruct free flow. The agenda for the workshop was handed out at the June 21 WU/RM Committee meeting.

Westfall Township UDC Representative and Alternate Vacancies: Ramie updated the committee that Westfall Township will need to appoint a new representative due to Peter Kenny's recent resignation. He had served from March 2, 2010 to June 2, 2011. They have also been lacking an alternate since the end of 2009. Niflot clarified that Westfall is still a member of the UDC but is currently not being represented on the Council. Peckham suggested that Douglass contact the Westfall Township Board of Supervisors and ask about the status of their search. Richardson said to send a letter stressing the importance of their participation, particularly to hear directly about opportunities such as the current solicitation for Technical Assistance Grants.

Review of UDC Fund Raising Plan from 1993: Rajs said that she and volunteer Dolores Keesler had not yet had a chance to review this plan to develop any recommendations. She asked to defer the item.

Other: None

Public Comment: None

Adjournment A motion by Peckham seconded by Rando to adjourn the meeting at 8:12 p.m. was carried unanimously.

Minutes prepared by Laurie Ramie, 7/1/11