

**Upper Delaware Council
OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
October 22, 2019**

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

Committee Members Absent: None

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

NPS Partner: None

Guests: Cheryl Korotky

The UDC's Operations Committee held its regularly scheduled monthly meeting on Tuesday, October 22, 2019 at the Council office in Narrowsburg, NY. Chairperson Roeder called the meeting to order at 8:20 p.m.

Approval of September 24th Meeting Minutes: A motion by Richardson seconded by Dean to approve the September 24th, 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 said in terms of UDC's FY 2020 budget, we've been given instructions by the NPS that we are allowed to apply for 12.5% of our annual appropriation, which covers \$37,500. On the last page of Ramie's Executive Director's Report, she's provided a budget. This is how UDC Bookkeeper Mike Poska has proposed we submit this portion of the budget. This takes us to 11/21 only. Then we will have to see what happens next in terms of extending that Continuing Resolution or passing the full budget. Then UDC will have to do another portion of our budget. We also have to submit a budget narrative explaining the figures on each line as well as a work plan that corresponds to what we are going to do for that seven-week period from 10/1 through 11/21 and submit the full SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance to NPS. Step one is done, in terms of coming up with the funding for this period. Now that Ramie has returned from vacation she will work on the other three parts of it. Ramie said as of last year, UDC was told that the NPS is not allowed to approve a budget that extends beyond the Continuing Resolution period. NPS had said the rule had been in place for quite a few years but they hadn't told us about it or hadn't been enforcing it. This puts us in arrears for our October expenses at a little over \$18,000. This is the money we have to take out of our Unrestricted Fund until we have Federal funding flowing again. This funding request is considered a Modification to UDC's Cooperative Agreement. To have the overall 2020 budget there's one key factor that Ramie is still not sure about regarding UDC employee healthcare and that's going to make a big difference. We started at \$312,000 to meet all of our minimum expenses and she whittled it down to about \$305,000. She's not sure if this budget will be able to come in at \$300,000. Ramie said UDC just works within our means generally, but if we show that our demands exceed our income that makes a statement. Henry said UDC is only funded to \$300,000 though. He feels we need to be really cautious about going over that. Ramie said she agrees that's why we work so hard for it to balance \$300,000 every year. Henry suggested taking the money out of the Technical Assistance Grants. Ramie also reminded the committee that she said there may not be enough money for the River Cleanup Grants. Roeder feels it's time that the UDC gets ahold of both Congressmen to give them an update on our situation. Roeder since 1988 we started out with \$100,000 for TAGs for all the Towns and Townships and now we are worried if we have money for the River Cleanup. Robinson said UDC should develop a list of projects that have been tabled or declined by the NPS, to show we have no funding within our organization to do these, and have that list of projects available when we update the congressmen.

FY 2019 Federal Funding: The ASAP account has a balance of \$21,250 as encumbered FY 2019 expenditures (\$16,250 for Records Management Phase I contract and \$5,000 for Shohola TAG 2019-02, which awaits substantial conformance review of the zoning ordinance for payment approval). The UDC's 4th Quarter and Final Fiscal Year 2019 SF-425 financial and progress reports are due to NPS by 10/30. Staff was contacted by Dick Eckersley and his team at Eckersley and Ostrowski have been scheduled for 11/4 and 11/5 to review UDC's financial records to prepare the audit. At the November Operations Committee meeting Eckersley will give his report.

Bank Balance: The UDC had \$126,089.14 in its Jeff Bank accounts as of 10/21, minus \$5,305 encumbered for the Project Review Guide design work.

PA State Funding: Applications have been received from Damascus and Shohola Townships as of 10/22. Damascus Township submitted a series of ideas that list a budget for each. She appreciates they offered UDC some options. Shohola's proposal is a roof replacement at \$32,000. The application doesn't indicate if they would be happy with some of the money. Henry asked if the Townships realize we put a cap on the mini-grants of \$15,000. Ramie said that was stated in all of the literature sent out. The deadline for applications is 11/1.

NY State Funding: Ramie said there is an effort underway by a number of partners who came together on 10/9 to meet with Senator Jen Metzger in Liberty, NY. Ramie was invited to participate and it is various groups including the Friends of the Upper Delaware River (FUDR), the Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed, NY League of Conservation Voters, Sullivan County Water and Soil Water District, and others. Ramie said basically anyone that works in the conservation community within the Upper Delaware headwaters would like to convince NYS of the need to fund the Delaware River in general. Ramie said this was the opening salvo to get the group together and decide what the mechanism would be for the approach legislatively. Ramie said she is actively participating to gain those contacts for the UDC as well. Ramie will share proposals once they are drawn up.

Administration:

2020 UDC Officers: The UDC chairperson is responsible for naming a Nominating Committee at the 11/7 Council meeting which will present a slate of candidates for 2020 at the 12/5 Council meeting, in advance of the election in January. Ramie said if anyone is interested in an office or being on the Committee to select the slate of candidates, you might want to reach out to Roeder so he knows who to call upon at that time.

Railroad Emergency Response Guide: Ramie communicated with Central New York Railroad Public Affairs Director Melanie Boyer to set up a meeting to facilitate the update of the 1997 Railroad Emergency Response Guide. She sent invitations to federal, state, county, and other emergency management agencies, officials, and UDC municipalities along the Southern Tier Line. A Doodle poll was set up to select a preferred date of 10/29 at 4 p.m. at the UDC office. Staff requests reservations by 4 p.m. on 10/25. Besides talking about the guide update, they will also offer information on training through the Operation Lifesaver Program. Peckham, Henry, Dean and Roeder confirmed they would like to attend. Dean requested that Jack Flynn, Deerpark Emergency Management Director, be added to the list.

Cooperative Agreement Renewal: Ramie sent a copy of the current UDC-NPS FY 2016-2020 (covering 9/9/2015-9/30/20) Cooperative Agreement and a Comparison of Revisions made to that document upon its last renewal to the subcommittee (Roeder, Dean, Henry, Robinson, and Roger Saumure) to begin research.

Building Maintenance: We have several contracts that are new for FY 2020 which have been implemented. Two of them are for our cleaning services and our trash and recycling pickup. Ramie notified all bidders as well as getting all proper documents.

NYS Sexual Harassment Policy: Ramie investigated the requirements for NYS employers based on 9/26 notification by Mike Preis Insurance. She forwarded the information to the Operations Committee and uploaded templates and forms, and adapted a new Sexual Harassment Policy and Complaint Form for the UDC. She reviewed training options and scheduled staff training for 10/1 to view two videos and have interactive discussion. Staff signed acknowledgment forms. She prepared a draft resolution for the UDC to adopt the Sexual Harassment Policy on 10/3. A board policy and training program will be held at the 11/7 UDC meeting. Richardson said he brought this subject up at the last Cohecton Town Board meeting and the Town board is going through training now. He said their insurance company had advised that UDC be trained as well. Ramie said she did see that there were fines involved but that is more for companies that don't participate in the training.

Public Relations:

Publicity: UDC has issued two news releases: “Three UDC Towns Complete River and Shoreline Clean-ups”, 9/26, and “D&H Canal 1 1/2 Bus Tour Nearing Capacity”, 10/10 (for the D&H Transportation Heritage Council). Ramie gave a final report on the River and Shoreline Clean-up Grants Program at the 10/3 meeting. The next press release she is working on is to announce the 2020 Technical Assistance Grants.

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 Fall/Winter 2019 issue is due to the printer on 11/20 for publication on 12/2.

Grants/Fundraising:

2019 Technical Assistance Grants: Ramie sent a letter to Superintendent Heister on 9/25 appealing the NPS recommendation against funding the Berlin Township website update \$710 application with justifications and addressed additional concerns raised. She received and circulated the NPS response to the UDC’s letter on 10/2. After Shohola’s zoning ordinance is approved for substantial conformance, and it is approved by the Project Review and Operations Committees, it will be publicized for its completion.

2020 Technical Assistance Grants: Resolution 2019-09 was approved by the full Council on 10/3 to award \$23,377 for four projects (Delaware, \$1,127; Hancock, \$5,000; Tusten-1, \$10,000; Tusten-2, \$7,250).

Consulting Projects:

Records Management: UDC received delivery of 10 cartons of corrugated boxes from NYS Individuals with Disabilities for records packing and storage on 9/27. Ramie sent summary of custom metal shelving bids to the board for review in advance of 10/3 ratification of Draft Resolution 2019-10 to formally award the UDC Records Management Project contract to K Sickler-Murphy on 10/3. Ramie notified all bidders of the outcome. Next she will schedule records inventory work. The shelving units are due to be installed during the week of 11/4.

Ramie referred to the November calendar and said if there are any questions to let UDC staff know. Henry asked what the Unrestricted Fund level was? Ramie said it’s not separated out that way. She has what the bank balance is in the Executive Director’s Report. Ramie said Dick Eckersley will be telling us that information shortly in his report because he does separate it out. Richardson said didn’t we ask a year ago or longer to have a periodic report? Ramie said in the financial statements, on the balance sheet that we review, is where that information appears.

Old Business

UDC Project for PA DCED Grant and Township Proposals due 11/1: Ramie said two out of the five townships have submitted proposals. Then we have the UDC share. We don’t have to use it; we could pass it all to the Townships if we choose to. In terms of UDC’s ideas it was discussed at the last Project Review meeting to hire someone like Tom Shepstone to review the UDC Supplement. She asked if that project has value when the NPS has said quite definitively that they do not support a supplement. Ramie agrees with the philosophy of using this State funding to get away from the types of projects where the NPS can say yes or no. It still has to have merit of course. Robinson said if the UDC feels something has merit we have to get used to diverging from NPS’s opinion. He said we’ve been led down the road and it’s incremental and it has put us in an awful position. He said we are an advisory board and we represent the Towns and Townships and if something has merit and UDC has the funds to accomplish it we should pursue it without the NPS’s negative opinion. Peckham said in Hancock and many Towns, they do creek and tributary restoration studies. He said he can’t see anything more advantageous for a Town or Township than having a study done on their tributaries to guide them in what to do when it floods, etc. Roeder said he’s seen at a local level in the Town of Delaware where there was a major problem with the North Branch Creek. Richardson said he thinks pursuing Tom Shepstone would be worthy and we should move forward with it. Henry said wasn’t there a list of projects that were tabled that Ramie handed out in the August meeting? Ramie said correct, that list was provided a few times and she has been waiting for the committee to offer a definitive idea for the grant usage.

Other: Dexter said he can barely get to his house in Damascus with the Skinners Falls Bridge being closed and work on River Road. He said it’s hard to say which roads will be open on any given day.

Ramie asked Richardson how Carla Hauser-Hahn's 10/19 Retirement party was since she was on vacation then? Richardson said he thought it went very well. It was well attended at The Inn at Lackawaxen with good food and music. He believes the only Superintendent who was there in person was Cal Hite. Superintendent Sean McGuinness sent something to read, as did Superintendent John Hutzky. Richardson presented the UDC Resolution 2019-08: Appreciation to Carla Hauser-Hahn Upon Retirement from the NPS. David Soete took photos.

New Business

Summary of Pending Bills 10-22-19: A motion by Henry seconded by Peckham to approve the bills was carried.

Financial Statement 10-31-19: Roeder said the financial statement is offered for individual review.

Other: Henry said the NPS number one delegate to the UDC is Gay Vietzke and the alternate is Superintendent Heister. We have not had a National Park Service representative with authority at the Operations meetings. It would be nice to talk about financial matters. He recommends contacting the regional office to see if NPS representation will be at future Operations meetings.

Public Comment: None.

Adjournment: A Motion by Dean seconded by Greier to adjourn the meeting at 8:55 p.m. was carried.

Minutes prepared by Ashley Hall-Bagdonas, 10/25/19