

**Upper Delaware Council**  
**OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**  
**May 23, 2023**

Committee Members Present: Aaron Robinson, Larry Richardson, Harold Roeder, Jim Greier,  
Jeff Dexter, Al Henry, Andy Boyar, Bill Dudko.  
Committee Members Absent: Fred Peckham, Ginny Dudko  
Staff: Laurie Ramie, Kerry Engelhardt, Ashley Hall-Bagdonas.  
NPS Partner: Superintendent Lindsey Kurnath  
Guests: None

The UDC's Operations Committee held its monthly meeting at the UDC office in Narrowsburg, N.Y. on Tuesday, May 23, 2023. Robinson called the meeting to order at 7:43 p.m.

**Approval of the April 25, 2023 Meeting Minutes:** A motion by Roeder seconded by Dudko to approve the April 25, 2023 meeting minutes carried.

**Executive Director's Monthly Report:** Ramie provided some highlights of her written report.

***Financial Status:***

- **FY 2023 Federal Funding:** Ramie reported that the balance of \$1,666.37 in the federal account does not cover the \$23,701.34 worth of May bills; therefore, the UDC must draw from its non-federal funds. Kurnath said, unfortunately, the National Park Service's entire financial processing system has been shut down for maintenance through 5/31. The UDC awaits approval of its Application for Federal Assistance package seeking \$300,000 for FY 2023 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Quarters and FY 2024 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarters (4/1/23-3/31/24) that was prepared on 4/25, with an incorrect budget file substituted on 5/2. The Grant Solutions online application was locked until 5/9, which had prevented Ramie from being able to make revisions requested by the Agreements Technical Representative, then was unlocked while she was away and without access to that program. Ramie uploaded the documents on 5/16 as her first post-vacation task. Asked about its status on 5/22, UPDE Acting Administrative Officer Tara Harbert said, "I know that the Agreement is currently sent to our regional specialists for review and they know to prioritize it. I will see if I can get any more specific information and get back to you when I know more." Kurnath said it will likely take some time after the system is up and running again as of 6/1 for the UDC's application to get processed. A copy of the UDC budget for the 4-quarter time period was included in the packets.
- **State and Federal Funding:** Noting that we will discuss a new UDC funding fact sheet under New Business, Ramie announced that NYS Senator Peter Oberacker (51<sup>st</sup> District) is scheduled to come to the UDC on 7/6 at 3 p.m. for a UDC orientation meeting. Sullivan County Republican Committee Chairman Gary Maas had assisted with those arrangements. That visit will precede the full Council meeting on that first Thursday; the senator had a conflict for June 1. His staff has requested the UDC to provide an advance agenda and attendance list if possible. Similarly, after being briefed by Dexter, Wayne County Republican Committee Chairman Steve Adams had reached out to Senator Lisa Baker (20<sup>th</sup> District) about PA funding for the UDC. Senator Baker conveyed that she supports having a \$100,000 line item for the UDC in the Commonwealth's budget. She requested that the UDC submit a letter outlining the current funding situation with documentation from the RMP on the intended funding structure, to be copied to her colleagues, Representative Jonathan Fritz (111<sup>th</sup> District) and Representative Joe Adams (139<sup>th</sup> District). Ramie will do so.

Ramie said other administration items would either come up under New and Old Business, or that her report was self-explanatory in covering these additional subjects: Public Relations – News Releases; Festivals; "The Upper Delaware" Newsletter; RailRiders Promotion; UDC 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Raft Trip; and UDC 35<sup>th</sup> Annual River Valley Awards; Grants/Fundraising – 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Upper Delaware Litter Sweep; River & Shoreline Clean-up Grants; 2023 Technical Assistance Grants; NYS Grants Gateway; UDC PA Grant; and UDC Benefit T-shirts; a list of Special Meetings or Events; and a directory of Documents Produced by the Executive Director since the last month's report.

**New Business**

**Personnel Update: Secretary Vacancy:** Ashley Hall-Bagdonas submitted a resignation letter from the position she had held since 10/4/2018 on 5/17, to be effective on 5/31/23. Ramie remarked that we are all going to miss her and we wish her well, with committee members giving her a round of applause for her service. After consulting the Personnel Subcommittee, Ramie drafted ad copy and updated the position description on 5/18. Ads with a 6/1 application deadline were placed to run in the *Tri-County Independent* (5/23 and 5/27) which includes the LocalIQ online employee recruitment listings for five newspapers including the *Times Herald Record*; the *Sullivan County Democrat* (5/23 and 5/26); *River Reporter* (5/25); and *Pike County Dispatch* (5/25). She submitted online job postings to the PA CareerLink Wayne/Pike Workforce Alliance and Sullivan County Workforce Development/Department of Labor sites; the Upper Delaware Community Network online group; the UDC website (which Engelhardt highlighted on the home page Alert header); and circulated the announcement to the UDC membership to share with their networks. Ramie will collect applications received through 6/1 (preliminarily) to screen with the Personnel Subcommittee and set up interviews with qualified candidates. Ramie and Engelhardt will meet on 5/25 to divide up secretarial tasks during the vacancy, with consideration of seeking temporary help as needed. UDC health plan coverage and SEP retirement match terminations as of 5/31 are in process. Our bookkeeper will calculate final salary hours after the current pay period ends on 5/26 and compensation for any balance of vacation time owed, up to the maximum 30-day cap.

Engelhardt said when she was posting the announcement, she felt that the job title of “secretary” was inappropriate and doesn’t reflect the true scope of this position. It is more of an office manager role. Ramie agreed that secretary is likely an outdated term in this context. Calendars now recognize Administrative Professionals Day as encompassing many of the tasks associated with this full-time position, for example. After discussion, the committee agreed by consensus to change the job title from Secretary to Administrative Support. Ramie said that while it’s too late to revise the newspaper ads that were placed, she will change the title on all other listings, directories, and future mentions. Engelhardt also suggested that the UDC include a compensation range in the posting as customary. Ramie said that the Personnel Subcommittee has generally preferred to discuss compensation and benefits details during the interview process.

**UDC Funding Support Letter Writing Campaign:** Copies of an “Upper Delaware Council Funding Issue Fact Sheet” and a list of Upper Delaware Corridor federal and state elected officials that Ramie had prepared and originally distributed on 5/5 were included in the packets. The objective is for anyone who would like to write individual letters on this subject to potentially use this information as talking points. Engelhardt posted a link with an explanatory message and homepage alert on the UDC website. Robinson said he was disappointed to only receive a form letter from U.S. Senator Fetterman’s office and no other acknowledgements of his correspondence from the round of letters he had taken a considerable amount of personal time to write and send. “Our government has failed us,” he said, while adding that he’s nevertheless not going to stop his efforts. Kurnath remarked that when she read through the fact sheet, she didn’t see the Council’s successes reflected in it. Boyar said he thinks that it is too long. The two-page document includes bulleted sections under the headings of History, Mission, The Problem, and Potential Solutions. Ramie said that she had attempted to be comprehensive in describing the 35-year-old issue and assumed people would take certain points from it to focus on with their remarks. Ramie will work to revise or supplement the fact sheet to incorporate the UDC’s accomplishments since 1988. Robinson said he wishes we could find a way to elevate this to a national publicity campaign. We soon need to start work on our next Five-Year Plan but with no inflationary adjustments in our federal funds or any state appropriations, it’s questionable whether we can sustain our operations for another five years. We could get an arbiter involved as the next step. Robinson said the UDC is legislatively mandated, but we are in a politically fragmented region where the UDC’s plight hasn’t been anybody’s cause. We need some radical attention. He asked everyone to consider methods and contacts to help raise awareness of the UDC’s fiscal sustainability crisis for maximum impact.

**Summary of Pending Bills 5/23/2023:** A Motion by Henry seconded by Boyar to approve the bills and pay them in the normal fashion carried.

**Financial Statement 5/31/2023:** Robinson said the financial statement is offered for individual review.

**Other:** None.

**Old Business**

**Vanguard Account Activated:** Ramie received a letter from Vanguard dated 5/9 confirming that the UDC has successfully opened a Federal Money Market Fund brokerage account. Additional correspondence confirmed that UDC Executive Director Laurie Ramie, Bookkeeper Mike Poska, and Secretary-Treasurer Al Henry are designated as the authorized signatories. The next step is to fund it. Robinson suggested transferring \$120,000 into the Money Market fund which he said is currently paying over 5% interest, then look into purchasing a 10- or 15-month term Certificate of Deposit (CD) for \$100,000 of that. Ramie said she is concerned with the current delay in receiving our federal funds, not knowing how long that will last. Robinson suggested leaving approximately \$25,000 in the Jeff Bank checking account for easy access while noting that Money Market Funds can be liquidated quite quickly if needed and without penalty, unlike a CD. A motion by Robinson seconded by Henry to approve transferring \$120,000 of the UDC's unrestricted (non-federal) funds into the Vanguard Federal Money Market Account to yield interest income was approved, with Richardson abstaining.

**2023 Litter Sweep Finances:** Ramie provided an accounting of \$4,250.76 in revenue (new 2023 donations added to last year's \$1,488.31 balance) and \$3,935.16 in expenses for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Upper Delaware Litter Sweep, leaving a balance in the dedicated bank account of \$315.60. However, this does not yet include the \$2,000 grant allocated through Sullivan County Legislator Nadia Rajsz's District 2 discretionary funds. The contract for that grant requires that the UDC name the County of Sullivan as an "additional insured" on its minimum \$1 million liability insurance policy. Ramie requested this change of endorsement from our carrier on 5/16. When it is received, she will return the declarations page with three signed, original agreements and a Schedule of Services to the County Attorney's office to execute the contract and then submit a voucher to request payment. She will also issue a news release to express appreciation to the Litter Leaders, sponsors, and volunteers who made the event a success, for which she credited Hall-Bagdonas particularly for her overall coordination work on the Council's behalf.

**UDC Social Media:** Hall-Bagdonas gave her final monthly social media report to the committee.

**Other:** None.

There was no Public Comment.

**Adjournment:** A motion by Dudko seconded by Henry to adjourn the meeting at 8:39 p.m. carried.