

**Upper Delaware Council
OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

August 27, 2019

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

Committee Members Absent: None

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

NPS Partner: Kris Heister

Guests: Roger Saumure (Shohola alternate), Susan Sullivan (Town of Tusten), Cheryl Korotky, Bill Dudko

The UDC's Operations Committee held its regularly scheduled monthly meeting on Tuesday, August 27, 2019 at the Council office in Narrowsburg, NY. Chairperson Roeder called the meeting to order at 8:22 p.m.

Approval of July 23rd Meeting Minutes: A motion by Henry seconded by Greier to approve the July 23rd meeting minutes was carried. There was no public comment on the agenda.

Roeder said Susan Sullivan would like to speak about New York State funding. Sullivan said she had the chance to meet with Senator Metzger's representative, Ari Mir-Pontier, and they discussed why UDC hasn't heard anything from NYS. Sullivan said she was very helpful and gave her a page of information, Sullivan said the Town of Tusten wanted this to happen and the Town came to her and asked her for an answer. Sullivan told her Town Board she would draft a letter that the Town is requesting to know why that funding was not given. Mir-Pontier told her that was a great idea and that would hold much more weight than an individual letter. Sullivan drafted the letter and wanted to bring it up to the UDC first for approval and second to share it with New York Towns. Sullivan read from the draft letter: Our Town has benefitted directly from the UDC's Technical Assistance Grants (TAG). Our experience with the grant process has been entirely positive, and the funds have helped our Town to develop a Comprehensive Plan, Open Space Plan, Zoning Amendments and Updates, and more. The Town of Tusten values the role of the Upper Delaware Council (UDC) in balancing concerns of our citizens regarding both preservation of the scenic, cultural and environmental heritage we have here in the Upper Delaware River Corridor, with concerns about appropriate economic growth. Therefore, the Town of Tusten writes in support for the UDC in its efforts to obtain financial assistance from NY State. Sullivan said the letter goes on to ask what happened regarding the appropriation request. Sullivan urges those that met with Assemblywoman Gunther or Senator Metzger to add their names to the letter. The questions the letter asks are: To which Office/Department/Agency was the submission directed? Was there any reason for denial offered? What is the appropriate format and timeframe to sponsor and submit this request? She also added any other avenues the UDC might pursue to achieve this goal would be appreciated. Mir-Pontier mentioned State and Municipal (SAM) Grants which Sullivan said Senator Bonacic secured to help the towns. Mir-Pontier said Senator Metzger steers people to the SAM Grants. Richardson asked Ramie if the line ever made it to the draft budget? Ramie said Assemblywoman Gunther introduced it and when she asked for details on where it went Ramie never got an answer. Sullivan said she asked and the response was regarding the Assembly: the mandated information must be there or the request is put on a no action pile. Sullivan encouraged the other New York Towns to write letters. Sullivan will provide a digital copy to Ramie to proofread before sending the letter out.

Ramie said since we are on this topic, she was at a meeting with Senator Metzger on 8/13 at the Roscoe Beer Company. Senator Metzger independently mentioned that a group from the UDC had visited her and she's outraged that NYS has not funded UDC up to this point. Ramie said she brought that up on her own volition. We did make an impact during that visit we had with her. Ramie added that while she was reviewing the literature that Heister provided on the Land and Water Use Guidelines and the Federal Register process, she noticed a letter from Jim Coleman, NPS Director at the time, who said NYS was signing on to the River Management Plan (RMP) with some reluctance because they did not agree at that time with the State share of the operational funds but they wouldn't derail the adoption of the River Management Plan over it. Ramie said that was the first reference she ever saw with financial difficulty dating all the way back to the 1980s. The committee thanked Sullivan for her initiative.

Executive Director's Report and Monthly Calendar:

Financial Status:

FY 2019 Federal Funding: Ramie said an 8/26 drawdown request of \$23,309.77 from the federal ASAP account to cover August's bills to-date leaves a balance of \$66,931.60. Funding must be withdrawn by 6 p.m. on 9/25, when the ASAP system will be suspended for Fiscal Year 2019 close-out work before reopening on 10/1.

FY 2020 Federal Funding: Ramie said UDC must prepare its Fiscal Year 2020 budget, work plan, and SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance package for submission to the NPS to initiate the availability of funding for the fiscal year starting 10/1. By her review she said we do have a Federal Budget so there isn't a fear of a Continuing Resolution or government shutdown. The current five-year UDC-NPS Cooperative Agreement will expire on 9/30/2020. Negotiations should ensue by mid-fiscal year for its renewal.

Administration:

Upcoming Conferences: The NPS Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River will host the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Council Steering Committee on 9/10-12, with the UDC offering meeting space and program participation on 9/11. Friends of the Upper Delaware River, Inc. (FUDR) will host the 10th Annual Water, Water Everywhere Conference on 10/7 (stream restoration sites tour) and 10/8 (presentations) at West Branch Angler Resort in Hale Eddy, NY. The Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed will host its annual conference on 10/16-17 in Allentown, PA, with approval given last month for Golod to attend and represent the UDC.

Building Maintenance & Equipment: The new desk for the bookkeeper and wire shelves for the attic were delivered and assembled by Kristt Kelly Co. on 8/8, with the old desk removed. General Contractor Tom Coacci of Damascus has agreed to do junk removal and disposal for the UDC on 9/6 at a cost of \$150 per truckload. Dan Wagner Window Cleaning of Honesdale will pressure wash the UDC building on 9/7 for \$300.

Insurance: UDC has received renewal rates for its VSP Vision Care Plan of \$6.14/month (up from \$6.02), with a total annual cost of \$221.04 to cover three staff members. That rate will be in effect from 12/1/2019-11/30/2021.

Raft Trip: Ramie said the UDC Raft Trip went very well this year. On Sunday 8/4, the only change we had was the itinerary. That's never happened before. Kittatinny Canoes called on Friday 8/1 and said the stretch we intended from Ten Mile River to Barryville was too low to go on in rafts and it would be a better experience if we started from Luke's Landing, Barryville to KC Pond Eddy, with a concluding shuttle. Staff was able to send an email out to those attending about the change as well as setting up an alert on the UDC website. Hall-Bagdonas and Ramie staffed the registration table and welcomed 91 guests (76 adults & teens, and 15 children ages 5-12). Ramie took photos, issued a news release on 8/6, and updated the UDC Raft Trip Directory, 1988-2019. Hall-Bagdonas handled the bookkeeping and posted new photos to the UDC raft trip gallery. Richardson asked if we sold any shirts there? Hall-Bagdonas said that's a good idea for next year.

"The Upper Delaware": UDC received an early delivery on 7/31 based on the 8/5 contractual due date. A donation of \$50 from Davis R. Chant Real Estate of Milford, PA was received on 8/12 to cover the costs of mailing 50 copies of each newly-published issue for distribution to their offices. Ramie sent a thank you letter. The Fall/Winter 2019 issue is due to the printer on 11/20 and will come out on 12/2.

Promotional Materials: Hall-Bagdonas oversaw the design and ordering of two retractable color display banners from Spencer Printing of Honesdale (\$550) and a UDC logo-imprinted fabric tablecloth (\$218) from Quality Printing of Honesdale for exhibit purposes.

Publicity: UDC issued three news releases: "The Upper Delaware Summer 2019 Newsletter Available On-line and by Mail", 8/1; "UDC's Raft Trip Attracts 91", with photo, 7/6; and "Lumberland Completes 2019 UDC Grant", 8/12. Ramie provided information and contacts to Elizabeth Lepro from *The River Reporter* on 8/21 based on her inquiries about the Ten Mile River Access discussion at the 8/20 WU/RM Committee meeting.

Administration:

River & Shoreline Clean-up Grants: UDC received preliminary clean-up photos from the Town of Lumberland on 8/23. UDC received a \$900 payment request from the Town of Tusten on 8/26. The deadline is 9/16 from the Towns of Deerpark (\$3,303.78) and Lumberland (\$1,100).

Consulting Projects:

Records Management: Ramie said the Records Management Project is very active right now. Ramie shared the Request for Proposals with UDC members. Ramie placed ads in five newspapers on 8/14 and has a proposal deadline of 9/3. Ramie secured a list of consultants and went to the county government as Richardson suggested for assistance. Ramie said she has received calls and emails requesting more information. Ramie calculated that UDC has 270 cubic feet of files stored in boxes plus portions of 21 file cabinets of materiel. Ramie said one consultant is coming for a site visit tomorrow. Ramie received a bid today and will be bringing the proposals to the 9/5 full Council meeting. UDC will want to get a contract started this fiscal year with our outside consulting services money. She said she is suspecting UDC may have to do this over two fiscal years. It's a fantastic project. Ramie said we will be thrilled when we have everything organized. Richardson asked if UDC received any interest from a company from Iron Mountain Document Capture Services? Ramie said she sent it to them but they weren't interested so far. She said they did the digitization project for the UDC meeting minutes and newsletters.

Substantial Conformance Reviews: Ramie asked Golod on 8/13 to begin developing specifications for Outside Consulting Services to perform substantial conformance reviews of UDC member municipalities to have this scalable project ready-to-go as funding allows.

Ramie said the September calendar is available in the packets for review.

New Business

Fiscal Year 2019 Budget Status: Quotes for Phone System and Electrical Work: Ramie provided a handout for the meeting packet of what Bookkeeper Mike Poska put together to show where UDC stands. This includes anticipated expenditures as well. The bottom line reads \$23,233. That's largely because we have not spent the outside consulting money yet. UDC budgeted about \$13,000 for that and \$3,000 for staff training for the GIS class. Ramie is predicting spending between \$18,000-\$20,000 on the consultant. We will spend down the rest on things that are useful.

Ramie noticed poor sound quality coming from some of our UDC phones. At a past meeting it was discussed that our current phone technical support was moving to Florida and we talked about moving to a cloud-based system. The Council and Ramie were not comfortable at that time because they preferred having a local company. Ramie said we've lost the opportunity to host some meetings here because we do not have a sufficient speaker phone. We are also unable to reprogram our on-hold music. Ramie found a local vendor, Bedik Communications, Inc. with offices in Mountandale and Monticello that could provide us with this service. Ramie said we have six phones in the building but she asked them to give her a quote for seven on the theory that we could install one in the attic. Ramie included the quote in the meeting packet and it includes the seven phones. The proposal is \$3,150. Henry moved to approve the proposal by Bedik Communications, Inc. as well as one by Rapid Electric of Glen Spey for \$795 seconded by Robinson and unanimously carried. Ramie said the electrician from Rapid Electric said we will be astounded by how the replacement of the CFL bulbs for the LED lights will save us in electricity. CFL bulbs are really high maintenance for us to replace frequently. Henry asked if the conference room lights were LED or fluorescent? Ramie said we are just proposing to change the lights in the front. A Motion made by Henry to also swap out the conference room lights to LED bulbs seconded by Peckham carried unanimously. Golod said that's an additional 36 lights. Ramie said they will have to add on to the labor cost because it will take longer. She will request a revised quote.

Discuss UDC Project and Township Proposals and PA DCED Grant Application: Ramie sent around a list of project ideas to stimulate discussion. Since the Special Meeting on 8/20 Ramie contacted Nadine Ibberson at PA DCED and Ramie told her what the general plan was in terms of allocating \$75,000 to be disbursed among the five PA member Townships, have approximately \$18,000 for a UDC project, and spend \$7,000 on the audit. Ibberson said what you are proposing sounds doable, and thanked for us being so thorough in the use of taxpayer money. Ramie also informed Representative Fritz, Representative Peifer and Senator Baker's aide about that plan.

Representative Fritz wrote back on 8/23 saying: “Very pleased that this funding is able to help the UDC!” Ibberson told Ramie when submitting the online application, when doing the budget section, to list \$75,000 as one item on a subcontract. Under the narrative part of the application, we will have to list every individual project. If UDC is passing through these funds we are the grantor and we must make sure the grantees follow all the laws and regulations applicable to Pennsylvania such as bidding requirements and prevailing wages. Ramie requested a template for a contract and she just received that. Ramie did notice there is a \$10,000 threshold, if you are under you go by your municipality’s bidding requirements. Only over that do you have to do an open competitive bidding process. To Ramie’s understanding that’s when the prevailing wages would kick in. Ramie said the next step is Ramie she will develop an application form with a deadline attached for their submission of proposals. Ramie asked what is UDC doing with the \$18,000? A Motion by Henry seconded by Greier to table the discussion until the next Operations meeting carried.

Approval of Payments for Fiscal Year 2019 Technical Assistance Grants: A Motion by Henry seconded by Peckham to approve payments for Fiscal Year 2019 Technical Assistance Grants carried. Ramie said it’s the Town of Tusten \$5,000 payment for its TAG specifically.

Approval of Payments for Fiscal Year 2019 River Cleanup Grants: A Motion by Henry seconded by Peckham to approve payment for Fiscal Year 2019 River Cleanup Grants carried. Ramie said that is also the Town of Tusten at \$900 for the River Cleanup Grant.

Friends of the Upper Delaware River 10/7-8 Conference Sponsorship: Ramie sent out a notice that UDC has previously sponsored registration for all interested board members and staff. It is at a cost of \$30 for both days or \$15 per day. UDC does not host a conference like this so this is the next best thing and really well done. Ramie would like to register everyone under the UDC credit card at one time. Secondly, FUDR has asked the UDC to be a sponsor at a \$250 level which we have done in the past. A Motion by Henry seconded by Dudko for UDC to sponsor Friends of the Upper Delaware River 10/7-8 Conference at a \$250 level and covering the cost of staff and board members for the conference carried unanimously.

8-27-29 Support Letter for D&H Canal Corridor Trail Work: A copy of the draft support letter was provided in the meeting packet. Ramie said this is to benefit the Delaware & Hudson Canal and Gravity Railroad Conservancy which is based in Orange County. She said they have a state-funded grant but are unable to get the permissions needed to do work in the park system in Orange County. They also have a ten-year license that is expiring at the end of October. Ramie works with this organization because of the UDC’s voting membership on the D&H Transportation Heritage Council. A Motion by Henry seconded by Robinson to approve the support letter for D&H Canal Corridor Trail Work carried unanimously.

Summary of Pending Bills 8-27-19: A motion by Henry seconded by Peckham to approve the bills was carried.

Financial Statement 8-31-19: Roeder said the financial statement is offered for individual review.

Other: None.

Public Comment: None.

Executive Session: A Motion by Henry seconded by Dudko to go into Executive Session for potential litigation reasons at 9:11 p.m. carried. A Motion by Richardson seconded by Robinson to come out of Executive Session at 9:45 carried. Richardson noted that no action was taken during Executive Session. A Motion by Robinson seconded by Dexter for staff to obtain a report and pursue the situation carried.

Adjournment: A Motion by Richardson seconded by Dudko to adjourn the meeting at 9:46 p.m. was carried.