

**Upper Delaware Council  
OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
September 28, 2021**

Committee Members Present: Jeff Dexter, Fred Peckham (Zoom), Jim Greier (Zoom), Al Henry, David Dean (Zoom), Aaron Robinson.

Committee Members Absent: Larry Richardson

Staff: Laurie Ramie, Shannon Cilento, Ashley Hall-Bagdonas (Zoom)

NPS Partner: Absent

Guests: Roger Saumure- Shohola Township Alternate, Susan Sullivan-Town of Tusten Representative

The UDC's Operations Committee held its monthly meeting at the Council office in Narrowsburg, NY. on Tuesday, September 28, 2021. Chairperson Dexter called the meeting to order at 6:37 p.m.

**Approval of August 24<sup>th</sup> Meeting Minutes:** A motion by Henry seconded by Robinson to approve the August 24, 2021 Meeting Minutes was carried.

**Personnel Subcommittee Report:** Cilento said she spoke with members of the Personnel Subcommittee. As of 10/15 she will no longer be at the UDC. She has accepted a position in November with Sullivan Renaissance directing their Community Development Programs. She said it's bittersweet. She will be sending an email out to the whole UDC membership as well and will get ready to help with that transition. Cilento said she was not out looking for employment; it was a very specific opportunity that was offered to her. She's loved her year-and-a-half here at UDC. Ramie said we're dismayed by that news as she's made a huge contribution in her professionalism, her personality, social media, the Litter Sweep, and with her writing skills beyond substantial conformance and project reviews, for which she has put systems in place to our benefit. Ramie said being recruited is always flattering and complimentary. We are fortunate we had her services for as long as we did. She has always considered Cilento a bright rising star.

Ramie continued that when we last had a vacancy for this position, it lasted for six months. Pete Golod left on January 10, 2020 and Cilento started on July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021. During that time, we put out the usual call for applications and extended the deadline three times to attract more candidates. It's a very unique position. In the interim we had a consulting agreement that started on 1/24 with Tom Shepstone performing project reviews and substantial conformance for UDC that lasted until the transition in July. He did four reviews during that time, charging \$150 an hour. The sum total of that consulting was \$5,775. Ramie drafted up an advertisement, she asked Cilento to take a look at the position description to make sure it accurately reflects the job and Cilento agreed that the description is fine as is along with the job title. In addition to newspaper ads (publishing the week of 10/8 with a deadline of 10/25) it will be sent out through our membership and contacting the five county planning offices. Last time we were doing this search NPS Land Use Planner Jennifer Cluster found planning departments at universities and sent the job description out to them to post. The job was also posted on indeed.com, Department of Labor for NY and PA and the American Planning Association chapter websites. The job posting will go out to those same places and any others we may have found. Ramie said Greier had suggested earlier that maybe an older or senior person would be interested in this position and interested in the benefits more than the salary. Greier said the local counties have the RSVP Programs available and it might be something to look into. Ramie will work with the Personnel Subcommittee to get the advertising going.

**Executive Director's Report and Monthly Calendar:**

**Financial Status:**

**FY 2021 Federal Funding:** Ramie analyzed Fiscal Year 21 budget status with the bookkeeper as of 9/27 to track full expenditure goal of the \$300,000 in federal funding. She requested clarification of reporting cycle deadlines from NPS on 9/27. She withdrew \$52,371.66 from ASAP on 9/22 to cover the September abstract of bills, leaving a zero balance. She received award notice on 9/13 of the Fiscal Year 2022 1<sup>st</sup> quarter funding award of \$75,000, with funding to be available after 10/1/21. She had been notified by Grant Solutions on 9/6 that the Federal Financial Report (FFR) for Cooperative Agreement P15AC01769 for \$1,507,829 (FY 2016-2020) that had been submitted on

5/4/21 was being returned by the grantor for editing. She moved figures to different boxes as directed on 9/14 and uploaded it via Grant Solutions. Ramie was notified by NPS of the need to also submit a new Performance Progress Report (PPR) in a different format that analyzes whether project goals and objectives for that five-year Cooperative Agreement period ending 9/30/20 were accomplished, difficulties encountered, resolution/corrective action plans/schedules if not, and activity anticipated in the next reporting period (handout provided). The committee recommends appealing the NPS request for preparation of a retroactive Performance Progress Report for the Fiscal Years 2016-2020 Cooperative Agreement (CA) that ended on 9/30/20 on the basis that the information was already submitted to and accepted by NPS via quarterly reports, that CA pre-dated implementation of the Grant Solutions management system, the goals and objectives narrative-based format is bureaucratically onerous and time-consuming for a five-year period that has concluded, and that it is only reasonable to request use of the new PPR format for the current CA in effect and moving forward. Ramie will arrange for final FY 21 expenditures by 9/30. Ramie will prepare the FY 2016-2020 PPR in the new format and upload. She will prepare the annual FFR and PPR for the fiscal year ending 9/30/21 and upload to Grant Solutions by the required deadline.

***Administration:***

**Insurance:** Ramie received Notice of Renewal and 2021 Premium Rates on 9/27 from MVP Health Care for the UDC's EPO Gold 1 policy (\$850 annual deductible). Effective 12/1/21, the monthly rate will increase 3.37% from \$1,026.55 to \$1,061.14 per employee. She will submit one termination adjustment and return the Recertification for Small Groups form. There was the option under the COBRA regulations for up to 36 months of continued coverage but Cilento has made her own arrangements for insurance. Our payments for her will stop as of 10/15 as well as the dental and vision plan.

**NY Area Code Alert:** Ramie reported: "Effective October 24, 2021, mandatory 10-digit local dialing is required for all customers in the NY 845, 607, 516, 716 and 914 area codes. This is due to a recent FCC ruling that designated the three-digit hotline 988 as the National Suicide Prevention Hotline. This means you will no longer be able to dial "local" 7-digit numbers; all calls will need to include the area code as well." – Sullivan County Chamber of Commerce newsletter article.

***Public Relations:***

**Publicity:** Five news releases were issued: "Senator Martucci to Speak at UDC Sept. 12 Awards Banquet", 8/26; "UDC Funds Town of Delaware Recreational Access Study", 8/30; "UDC PA Grant Helps Berlin Township Pave Community Center Parking Lot", 9/14; "UDC Pays Tribute to Double Honorees at 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual River Valley Awards", 9/16; and "UDC Funds Hancock Joint Comprehensive Master Plan", 9/23. Ramie responded to informational requests on 8/24 from Sullivan County Democrat (NYS purchase of Ten Mile River property?); 8/27 from the River Reporter (Skinners Falls Bridge public comment process?); and 9/15 from Tri-County Independent, (Lake Wallenpaupack dam releases post-hurricane?). Ongoing publicity occurs through Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube and Vimeo outlets. UDC also posts all NPS UPDE news releases at upperdelawarecouncil.org.

**UDC 9/12 Awards Ceremony:** Ramie requested Senator Martucci's formal photo for news release announcing his keynote speaker status that was issued on 8/26. She continued research, photo requests and selections, quote solicitations, interviews, and composition of profiles for souvenir awards program which was turned over to successful bidder Curcio Printing of Vestal on 8/30 after 14.5 hours of weekend work. The proof was received and approved for printing on 9/2 (due to a US Postal Service delivery delay, the order of 100 booklets was not shipped until 9/14, which required the printer to produce another 100 copies at their expense and drive them to Narrowsburg on 9/10 for the 9/12 event.) Ramie ordered the hardware for 16 plaques on 8/25 and provided engraving inscriptions to J&C Awards of Tyler Hill on 9/2. She contacted absent winners from guest list on 9/7 to check on their attendance plans. She arranged COVID protocols with Central House Family Resort and issued a memo to guests. She wrote a script with welcoming remarks by the chairperson, introductions, and abbreviated award presentations. She framed the keynote speaker photo gift, sorted plaques for 2020 and 2021, assembled exhibit and registration materials, and rehearsed presentations. On 9/12, she assisted with check-in of 140 guests, oversaw the program, and paid the bill. After the banquet, she sent several appreciation letters, obtained caption identifications as needed for group photos, reviewed Scott Rando's submitted photos, issued publicity, arranged to send or deliver plaques and booklets with a cover memo to absentees, sent PA Senator Baker certificates that were received on 9/16, requested a copy of Senator Martucci's speech (not available due to spontaneous nature of the remarks, but received a recording from Sullivan County Democrat freelance reporter Mike Vreeland which was shared with the senator's aide Camille O'Brien at her request), and updated directories of past award recipients and banquets from 1988 to present.

Non-UDC meetings or events as well as documents produced are listed on the Executive Director's Report included in the meeting packet, along with October's monthly calendar. Peckham and Ramie will be attending the Friends of the Upper Delaware River's Water, Water Everywhere virtual conference on 10/12 and 10/14. Cilento will be participating in the Delaware River Watershed Forum this week.

### **Old Business**

**Status of Fiscal Year 2021 Budget Close-out by 9-30-21:** Ramie has worked with UDC Bookkeeper Mike Poska on this and he provided a spreadsheet where he projected the anticipated expenses through Thursday (\$299,647.00); that would put us \$353 off. Ramie found an error and ran it by Poska and he said there was an extra \$651 available to be spent for a total of \$1,004. Ramie said under New Business we are going to be approving River Cleanup Grants and the Town of Deerpark exceeded the grant that was awarded them by \$665.47. The estimate they provided us for three different cleanups along the Hawk's Nest area after Memorial Day, Independence Day, and Labor Day was \$3,308.43 and in years past UDC has paid the difference for final, actual costs. Other options are to prepay for fuel, replenish UDC's postage meter, and purchase office supplies. A Motion by Robinson seconded by Henry to pay the difference in the Town of Deerpark River Cleanup Grant carried.

**Long-Term Fiscal Sustainability Plan Progress:** Ramie said Michael Crane is digging deep. She said he is looking at every conceivable angle to see how we can sustain UDC into the future. He met with UDC members, NPS and will be meeting with UDC's auditor and bookkeeper. Crane's latest questions had to do with NPS's Commercial Use Authorization Program. He's going to make a correlation to the visitation and how the economy is bolstered by the river and how that should somehow support both the UDC's and NPS operations. Ramie looks forward to the report and says he's been very conscientious in the information he's been gathering.

**PA Grant Account and Township Projects Update:** Ramie has a handout providing the current balance. She provided a news release about Berlin Township's paving project of its community center. We still have Damascus Township to complete their project and UDC's Fiscal Plan, plus \$7,000 earmarked for the government audit. That will leave us with \$250 interest that has accumulated. All projects have to be closed out by 12/31/2021. We have asked for the Fiscal Plan to be completed by 12/1 so a presentation can be made at the 12/2 UDC meeting.

**Social Media Analytics:** Cilento reported updates from Instagram (last 30 days): 136 posts, 1,123 followers (+6) 1,900 accounts reached, 3,500 impressions (post views), 89 profile visits, 3 website clicks in profile, 238 content interactions, 211 likes, 9 comments, 2 saves, 16 shares. For Facebook (last 30 days) we have: 695 followers, (+43) 565 likes, over 12.4k people reached with posts. There have been 1.8k post engagements. The Northern Snakehead post featuring Natural Resources Chief Don Hamilton had 94 shares and 11.1k reached. Our UDC LinkedIn has 81 followers. Cilento said Hall-Bagdonas has access to the social media accounts and she just made Ramie an administrator as well. Cilento said at the Catskill Partnership meeting DEC said that snakehead caught from Doug Case's eel weir was the biggest one caught on the Upper Delaware thus far.

**Other:** Henry recommends contacting Tom Shepstone regarding interim consulting services.

### **New Business**

**River Cleanup Grant Approval: Town of Lumberland, \$1,100.00:** A Motion by Henry seconded by Robinson to approve payment for Fiscal Year 2021 Town of Lumberland River Cleanup Grant, \$1,100 and Town of Deerpark River Cleanup Grant, at the revised figure of \$3,973.90 carried unanimously.

**River Cleanup Grant Approval: Town of Deerpark, \$3,308.43:** Discussed above.

**10/4 Meeting with Thomas Caffrey, Regional Director for PA Gov. Wolf:** A 10/4 11:30 a.m. meeting has been arranged with PA Governor Tom Wolf's Northeast Regional Director Thomas Caffrey to discuss the UDC's activities and funding based on his expressed interest. Anyone is welcome to join. Ramie will be presenting a PowerPoint presentation. The introductory letter to Gov. Kathy Hochul regarding Fiscal Year 2022 Executive Budget Considerations was sent in its abridged form on 9/13 and acknowledged by Regional Representative Pavan Naidu on 9/14, who noted, in part, "I will review it and move the documents up the chain." The National Parks Conservation Association will meet with Ramie on 10/5 to discuss how that organization may be helpful in supporting UDC state funding requests.

**Summary of Pending Bills 9/27/2021:** A Motion by Henry seconded by Robinson to approve bills was carried.

**Financial Statement 9/30/2021:** Dexter said the financial statement is offered for individual review.

**Other:** None.

**Public Comment:** None.

**Adjournment:** A motion by Henry seconded by Dean to adjourn the meeting at 7:40 p.m. was carried.