Upper Delaware Council
OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
October 27, 2026

Committee Members Present:	Larry Richardson, Cathleen Breen, Ginny Dudko, Christine Martin (Zoom), Harold Roeder, Alan Henry, Aaron Robinson
Committee Members Absent:	Jeff Dexter
Staff:	Laurie Ramie, Julie Pais, Sara-Jo Fegley
NPS Partner:	Lindsey Kurnath (Zoom)
Guests	Bill Dudko

Call to Order: Committee Vice Chairperson Roeder called the Operations Committee meeting to order on Tuesday, October 27, 2026 at 7:44 p.m.

Approval of Minutes: A motion called by Breen and seconded by Henry to approve the September 22 meeting minutes carried. There was no public comment on the agenda.

Executive Director's Monthly Report:
The committee reviewed the October 27, 2026 Executive Director's Monthly Report. Ramie's summary included:

Financial Status:
Federal funding and cash flow: Ramie reported that September expenses were drawn down on October 1 when the ASAP accounts reopened following the federal fiscal year reconciliation and October expenses were drawn down the day before the meeting. The balance through December 31 is $80,033.98. Submission of the 2027 federal work plan and SF-424 budget documents are being held while staff work out how to reflect the state funding.

Pennsylvania funding: PA Representative Tim Dugan was still seeking clarification about whether a UDC operational funding request had been submitted and whether follow-up was needed.

Vanguard account: The Treasurer described changing the account display settings so the UDC account would not appear alongside his personal account. The discussion clarified that this did not create a separate account.

Certificate of Deposit: A previously approved motion to consider a higher-yield Certificate of Deposit had not yet been acted on. Ramie said liquidity would need to be maintained because state funds are reimbursement-based and the organization will need access to approximately $100,000 to cover expenses pending reimbursement.

Administration:
Fegley joined the staff on October 26 as Administrative Assistant and is completing orientation. Ramie reported that the necessary employment documentation was largely complete and that email access had been established at Sara-Jo@upperdelawarecouncil.org.

Public Relations:
Six news releases had been issued since the previous report. Staff is working with Mallory Lance at WOLVESTUDIO on newsletter design templates and Adobe InDesign training, with a target completion date of November 30. A quote for 2027 newsletter printing and mailing will be presented under New Business.

UDC Grants:
The 2026 Tusten TAG payment of $3,000 remain on hold pending completion of the substantial conformance process for its zoning revision project. A news release would follow once the grant outcome was finalized.

New Business:

a) Procedures for New York State $100,000 UDC Contract Administration; 2027 Request

Ramie summarized an October 26 call she had with three members of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) contract staff. UDC's legacy vendor registration was tied to an obsolete email address, preventing access to the Statewide Financial System (SFS). A primary-contact change request was submitted to the Office of the State Comptroller on October 14: She was advised that it would take a minimum of two weeks to process and DEC contacts would assist if the request was delayed.

She began gathering required insurance certificates, including workers' compensation, disability, and general liability documentation, adding the state of NY and DEC as an additional insureds. DEC staff explained that eligible expenses must fall within the contract period of October 1, 2026 to September 30, 2027, allowable users are fairly broad for operations reimbursement claims would need to be submitted with supporting records, and payments would be made electronically. A one-time advance of up to 25% was described as potentially available after contract execution, subject to applicable requirements.

The work plan and budget would be entered in SFS and would include a summary, objectives, tasks, performance measures, and budget categories. DEC staff offered to review a draft work plan with UDC before submission. The expected review period was described as approximately six to eight weeks, and potentially two to three months overall. Ramie also plans to review state requirements relating to procurement, contracting, and MWBE/SDVOB compliance, including whether waivers might be appropriate.

Ramie reported that UDC and Friends of the Upper Delaware River have submitted a joint request for New York State funding for 2027–2028. The request was sent to Assembly Member Paula Kay on October 16. The UDC share is $100,000 and FUDR also kept the same level of $450,000 to administer the Upper Delaware River Network. Henry said the UDC should request a larger amount, including possible use for utilities and salary increases. Ramie noted that the work plan had not yet been developed for the year and we need to prove ourselves. Ongoing expenses should not be committed against funding that might not continue in future years. Additionally, Kay advised FUDR and UDC to submit the same funding for her to sponsor as a budget bill. A copy of the letter was provided in the packet.

b) Newsletter Mailing and Printing Services 2027 Contract Quote

Ramie presented a quote from Courier Printing for three newsletter issues in 2027, scheduled with the dates for spring, summer, and fall/winter. The proposed cost represents an increase of $168 per issue, or $504 annually, compared with the current cost. She explained that the print quantity had been reduced from 8,500 to 7,500 this year to better match the mailing list and avoid excess inventory.

> A motion by Robinson, seconded by Henry, to forward a resolution to the full Council to approve the 2027 newsletter printing and mailing services quote from Courier Printing carried.

c) UDC Health Care Plans for NY and PA

Ramie reported that the current MVP health plan renewal carried a 14.48% increase. Ramie asked our broker to research an alternative plan. MVP Gold EPO 14 would have 7.88% increase over the current plan and a different deductible and benefit structure. Members asked whether affected employees had an opportunity to review the proposed changes. The plan currently applies to one New York state resident employee; and Fegley would become eligible after 90 days.

> A motion by Robinson, seconded by Richardson, to approve enrollment in the proposed MVP Gold EPO 14 plan for eligible New York employees at the quoted rate by the December 1, 2026 renewal date carried.

Ramie explained that Pennsylvania coverage is obtained through individual plans on the state health exchange rather than through a group plan. A comparable plan to a previous PA Highmark policy had been identified, but the open-enrollment window is November 1 through December 7, with coverage effective January 1. Because

Pais was eligible for coverage before that effective date, staff recommend reimbursing her for her existing private insurance at $269 per month for the interim two-month period.

> A motion by Richardson, seconded by Henry to reimburse Pais for her existing private health insurance for the interim period before the new plan becomes effective January 1 and to proceed with the PA Highmark Priority Blue Flex FPO Premier Gold 0 plan enrollment carried.

d) Proposed Change of Audit Schedule; UDC Fiscal Consultant

Ramie proposed shifting the organization's audit/review schedule from the federal fiscal year (October 1–September 30) to the calendar year to align with the UDC-NPS Cooperative Agreement. Our NPS contacts had indicated the change was reasonable, but the accounting firm has not yet responded. The upcoming engagement was described as a financial review rather than a full audit.

Ramie also asked members to suggest a scope of work and compensation range for a possible independent fiscal consultant to help with financial administration, funding strategy, separation and tracking of federal and state funds, and accounting practices. This would be subsidized through the NYS funds. Members were asked to send suggestions by email. She warned that, based on current projections, unrestricted funds might need to cover a shortfall before year-end while new funding remains unavailable.

e) Summary of Pending Bills 10/27/26

A motion by Henry, seconded by Robinson, to pay the bills as presented caried.

f) Financial Statement 10/31/26

The bookkeeper's monthly report was provided for review with no action required.

Old Business

a) 10/15 NPS Letter and 10/16 Shohola Township Letter: River Management Plan Amendment

The Committee discussed a requested amendment to the River Management Plan by Shohola Township and related correspondence from the National Park Service. Members considered whether an amendment focused on federal funding language would achieve a meaningful result or receive unanimous support. Discussion has included the possibility of preparing an explanatory white paper and the need to distinguish the Council's role from the process of seeking additional funding which would raise potential lobbying concerns.

Members discussed the organization's history, the development of the Conference of Upper Delaware Townships (COUP), the creation of the River Management Plan and UDC, and current funding needs. Several members supported engaging funding partners and elected officials in a meeting at the UDC office; others cautioned that the timing and framing of outreach could draw scrutiny to the current Cooperative Agreement. Breen expressed that a more productive avenue would be securing funding from PA to match what NY has now done. Kurnath explained that the National Park Service's existing budget process was the established pathway for seeking operational increases and offered to share the information previously provided. She also noted that additional funds from a park's unspent operating budget were unlikely and would require a defined purpose and compliance with agreement deadlines. There would be no different answer by asking the new NPS regional director, though she would welcome his visit.

> A motion by Henry, seconded by Robinson, to arrange a meeting with funding partners and relevant representatives to discuss funding options and/or the organization's financial stability and the possible role of a River Management Plan amendment invited further discussion, with Richardson suggesting it was premature. Others questioned the timing, pre-elections. Richardson called the question, with approval given to bring this to the November 5 UDC meeting. Richardson added that a different strategy to pursue would be approaching New York City to emphasize that their clean drinking water is a product of UDC work.

b) Upper Delaware Council Draft White Paper(s)

The Committee discussed competing drafts of an educational paper intended to help elected officials and new board members understand the UDC's history, purpose, and funding needs. One draft by Robinson emphasized the historical struggle that led to COUP, the River Management Plan, and the UDC; another sought to explain the UDC's current role and needs more concisely. Members differed strongly over the balance between historical narrative, current purpose, tone, factual framing, and the risk that a document could be interpreted as advocacy.

Kurnath stated that, from the National Park Service perspective, the revised draft advanced by Breen addressed some earlier concerns but still included framing that the awards officer would not want funded or distributed using federal funds. Members discussed using unrestricted funds if work proceeded and whether the two drafts should be combined, retained separately, published, or discontinued all together if no consensus can be reached.

c) Grants Status: Sullivan County Litter Sweep, Barryville Gage, and Jeff Bank SBRG
Ramie reported that the $2,000 contribution for the 2026 Upper Delaware Litter Sweep from the Sullivan County Legislature through an allocation of Legislator Nadia Rajsz's District 2 discretionary funds was received on October 13. After reimbursing the UDC for a final supplies expense, the balance of the dedicated Litter Sweep account is $2,015.20 as seed money for the 2027 event. She is working to finalize two contracts with Sullivan County for the $8,700 funding and with USGS for the October 1, 2026-September 30, 2027 collection and publication of discharge data for the Delaware River Barryville Gage. The Legislature needed to revise its original resolution of approval for the funding based on its extension into the next calendar year. That has occurred and Ramie returned the contract to the Office of Management and Budget, requesting an advance payment. The USGS contract is under legal review, which expected to take around 30 days to complete, but there was no disruption with the discharge data because the agreement was actively underway. Ramie reported further good news with the October 21st deposit of $5,000 from the Jeff Bank Small Business Recovery Grant that had been originally announced on June 5. It had been delayed due to the bank using an incorrect account number for direct deposit of the funds. This funding is being used to pay for the UDC's approximately $4,400 Graphic Redesign contract. She will issue a news release to announce that grant, since the bank vice-president said there were no plans for Jeff Bank to issue one for the approximately 10 grants it bestowed through this program.

d) Final Report: 2026 UDC River and Shoreline Clean-up Grants
A copy of the close-out report summarizing the Town of Deerpark's project in which they expended $2,010.22 (compared to the estimated budget of $4,318.43) for three clean-ups of the Hawks Nest area after Memorial Day, Independence Day, and Labor Day was provided. Ramie noted that, since beginning this grants program in 2014, the UDC has awarded $58,449.83 to its member municipalities.

e) 10/15 Termination of Interim Substantial Conformance Services Consulting Agreement
Ramie sent a letter to consultant Kerry Engelhardt on October 15 to formally end the Interim Substantial Conformance Services Agreement since it required written notice of termination. Engelhardt had completed two reviews for Berlin Township ordinances during the vacancy of the Resources and Land Use Specialist position.

There was no Other Business or public comment.

Adjourn (Recess):
A motion by Roeder seconded by G.Dudko to adjourn the meeting at 9:35 p.m. was carried.

Minutes prepared by Sara-Jo Fegley, 11/3/2026