Upper Delaware Council
OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
November 25, 2025

Committee Members Present:	Jim Rodgers, Al Henry, Ginny Dudko, Aaron Robinson (Zoom), Harold Roeder, Larry Richardson, Jeff Dexter
Committee Members Absent:	None
Staff:	Laurie Ramie, Kerry Engelhardt, Stephanie Driscoll (Zoom)
NPS Partner:	None
Guests:	Bill Dudko, Rosie Starr (Zoom)

The UDC's Operations Committee held its monthly meeting on Tuesday, November 25, 2025. Chairperson Rodgers called the meeting to order at 7:22 pm.

Approval of the October 28, 2025 Meeting Minutes: A motion by Henry seconded by Richardson to approve the 10/28 meeting minutes carried.

Executive Director's Monthly Report: Ramie began by noting that, after a 43-day shutdown, the federal government officially reopened on November 12. She said everyone was relieved to see our National Park Service partners able to return to work, and confirmed that Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River staff were back in their offices the very next morning.

Ramie reported that on November 17, Tara Harbert, the UPDE Administrative Officer, contacted her to explain that the Park Service is currently operating under a Continuing Resolution that runs through January 30. Under this Continuing Resolution, the agency is only able to access 33.42% of last year's funding level for that period. Back in May, Harbert had initiated a no-cost extension of the UDC Cooperative Agreement through the end of 2026. That extension was necessary because the agreement had been set to expire at the end of this year. The "no-cost" piece means the period of performance has been lengthened, but it did not, in itself, add any new money.

Because the Cooperative Agreement is now active through December 31, 2026, the UDC is in a position to file for a full year's worth of federal funding in the amount of $300,000 to carry the organization through that extended period. Ramie has begun that process by preparing the SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance. She described the application package as consisting of a detailed budget, a narrative report explaining every cost category and how funds will be spent, and multiple required federal forms that must all be internally consistent.

Harbert and Community Planner Marshall will review the draft package at the UPDE level before Ramie uploads anything into the Grant Solutions system. Ramie said she "happily accepted" this suggestion because once a package is uploaded into Grant Solutions, it becomes locked and she cannot go back in to correct even small issues without creating a significant administrative tangle. To avoid that, Ramie provided Harbert and Marshall—who is now certified as our Agreement Technical Representative—a complete draft of the proposed budget, the nine-page budget narrative report, and all supporting forms on 11/24. They are now reviewing those materials and will provide feedback and any needed edits.

Once they sign off, Ramie will move ahead with the formal online submission through Grant Solutions. After that, the package goes on to a regional federal assistance review. The UDC's objective is to secure approval so the $300,000 allocation can be released by January 1, which is when UDC would otherwise be out of federal money. She noted that NPS staff had already been working toward this before the shutdown, but the 43-day closure set their timeline back more than a month. Rodgers asked about an earlier federal directive that any federal assistance exceeding $50,000 to an outside organization would be subject to review "up to and including" the Secretary of the Interior. Ramie said she has heard nothing further about that policy. She recalled that it arose during the "Department of Government Efficiency" initiative, in which Elon Musk had been cited as being influential. To her understanding, that department has since been dissolved, and she has seen no follow-up or new requirements placed on the UDC. No one has asked the UDC for additional justification or to prove its legitimacy beyond the extensive oversight that already exists. Ramie added that UPDE Superintendent Lindsey Kurnath had pledged to defend the UDC if necessary.

Ramie confirmed that she has withdrawn UDC's November expenses from the ASAP system. There is a remaining balance of just under $42,000 left in the federal account through the end of the year. For the final December drawdown, the UDC will need to take the full remaining amount, because Cooperative Agreement funds do not carry over past the end of the agreement term. Those funds will be used to reimburse the organization for any eligible expenses coming due by December 31.

Ramie shared that she has been working on the SF-424 on and off for about a week, coordinating with UDC bookkeeper Mike Poska on the budget component and then compiling all the forms and narrative sections. The budget narrative runs nine pages. The funding will cover federal Fiscal Year 2026 second, third, and fourth quarters and FY 2027 first quarter, even though the Cooperative Agreement itself is structured on a calendar year. That mismatch—UDC operating on a calendar year while the federal government operates on an October 1–September 30 fiscal year—makes the accounting and reporting confusing for herself and our accountants.

After the UDC receives its FY 2025 Financial Review report from accountant Dick Eckersley on December 16, staff will review the draft documents he prepares, identify any needed corrections or changes, and work with him to finalize the report.

Ramie she has registered for a Grant Solutions virtual training session scheduled for January 21. The topic is "grant and application messages." Ramie said she is not yet sure whether there will be any new requirements, but it is a 45-minute webinar with a live presenter. Looking ahead, she reminded the committee that, the UDC will need to submit its annual 2025 Federal Financial Report (FFR) and Performance Progress Report (PPR) to the NPS through Grant Solutions. While the deadline for those reports is April 30, Ramie said she does not plan to wait that long because the annual reporting package is time-intensive and requires significant narrative detail.

Ramie mentioned that UDC's brokerage account is performing well and referred members to the $164,104.29 balance as of October 31.

On state funding, Ramie reported that UDC transmitted the final version of its letter regarding Pennsylvania's support of the UDC to Governor Josh Shapiro on October 28. That letter followed an in-person visit in Harrisburg on October 8, when she, Robinson, and Tim Dugan met with officials and legislators and received specific recommendations on what to include. Ramie noted that the same day the federal government reopened, Pennsylvania finally passed its own budget after a 134-day impasse. The Commonwealth now has a $50 billion budget in place. UDC has not yet received any response to the October 28 letter, but she said they remain hopeful while recognizing that state budget processes move very slowly and that any new support would not show up until at least 2027 because of how far in advance those decisions are made.

Ramie said UDC is continuing to work with New York State Assembly Member Paula Kay's office on her advocacy for a state budget line item. Most recently, she spoke with Kay at the Upper Delaware River Rendezvous, where they discussed scheduling a meeting with Blake Washington, the New York State Budget Director. Ramie mentioned that he has strong connections to Sullivan County, having grown up in Monticello, and that his sister, Kathleen Lara, was recently elected county treasurer. The intent of that meeting would be to pursue joint funding for UDC and Friends of the Upper Delaware River (FUDR), while we also continue a separate track to secure a dedicated UDC funding line.

Ramie updated the committee that after learning that Rodgers could not serve on the Nominating Committee by a bylaws provision, Roeder stepped in as the third member. The committee—now consisting of Henry, Martin, and Roeder—will be presenting a slate of candidates for UDC's three officer positions at the December 4 meeting, with the election to be held at the January 8th meeting.

Ramie said the UDC staff had to call in HVAC contractor Bill James from Narrowsburg, because no heat was coming out of the registers, making the bathrooms in particular very cold. When the boiler was installed, an energy efficiency unit had been added, and that component turned out to be the source of the problem; it was faulty or not operating correctly. James and his crew bypassed the unit, and the heat returned immediately. At this point, we are using the heat with the unit bypassed rather than investing in a replacement that could fail again in the same way.

James responded promptly to the call and resolved the heating issue on a Friday, then returned on Monday to address a second request: to better understand the building's heating zones. The building has two zones and three thermostats, and the wiring is complex. James traced the lines and clarified which thermostats control which areas, giving us much better control over the system.

Richardson suggested that UDC request an estimate for replacing the energy efficiency unit, arguing that part of the goal of such systems is to allow the boiler to run at lower temperatures and save money over time; without it, the organization may end up paying more. Ramie responded that James told them the unit might only save around 5% over the lifetime of the furnace, which he did not consider worthwhile given the cost and the risk of future failure. Driscoll said James would not recommend installing another one, though Driscoll agreed she could still request an estimate.

Ramie then reported on health insurance, noting that the UDC had been waiting for the updated premium rate for its one Pennsylvania health plan. She said the Highmark Blue Cross/Blue Sheild program was up 20.85% effective January 1. Last year's increase on that plan had been 14.16%.

On administrative policies, Ramie reported that UDC now has a formal Whistleblower Protection Policy. She briefly recapped how it was developed and noted that, since it was approved by the full council on November 6, she has distributed it to all of the stakeholders listed in the policy. Everyone has been formally informed that the policy is effective immediately, and it is now incorporated into UDC's organizational handbook. The policy was a requirement under the Cooperative Agreement, so UDC is now in compliance.

Ramie said the UDC issued three news releases over the past month. In addition to covering recent presentations, one of the releases was intentionally timed to the holiday "giving" season and promoted UDC t-shirts and the Big Eddy Narrows map posters as gift options. The t-shirts are offered for a requested $15 donation, and the map posters—featuring the original design donated by Lisa Glover, with UDC covering reproduction costs—are offered for a $20 donation. Orders began coming in immediately. Driscoll has been tracking the sales and will provide a tally at the end of December. In the meantime, Ramie shared that the very next day after the press release, one person ordered seven shirts, resulting in a $105 check.

Ramie reminded the committee that the Fall–Winter issue of the UDC newsletter is due to the printer by December 8. She just finished pulling the content list together that day. Since the last issue in July, UDC has held its awards banquet, dedicated the McHugh plaque, attended numerous conferences and meetings, and overseen a variety of project review activities. Ramie said there is never a shortage of material for the newsletter, and that she would be working feverishly to meet the December 8 deadline, with the issue scheduled for release on or before December 22. She said that Driscoll has developed a preliminary concept for a new cover layout design. However, given how quickly this issue's deadline has come up and the impact of holidays and staff leave, she does not expect that the we will have the time to enact any major design changes for the current issue. Instead, the goal is to consider layout updates for the Spring issue, which would allow staff more time to plan and "freshen up" the publication.

Ramie then updated the committee on the status of the McHugh plaque discretionary funding. She said that on Monday she followed up on the outstanding $2,000 payment from Sullivan County under the contract approved on July 24, as funded through Legislator Nadia Rajsz's District 2 allocation. County budget officer Mike D'Auria said that he had forwarded UDC's voucher and supporting documentation to the audit department on October 2 and that it is still under audit. He said he would follow up and let the UDC know where things stand in the payment process. Ramie said she would very much like to close out the project formally. The plaque was installed on September 26. She prefers to send her official thank-you letter after the payment is received so the correspondence and the date of the check are aligned in the UDC's records. The UDC fronted that portion of the project and can reimburse itself.

The UDC Funding Task Force had advised that UDC eventually retain a consultant to develop a comprehensive fundraising and communications plan. We do not currently have the resources to hire a consultant. Staff have instead been discussing the possibility of seeking a grant to cover those costs and are watching for opportunities that might fit. In the meantime, Marshall had been going through old files and recently uncovered a 1993 UDC Communications Plan. The plan, dated October 26, 1993, was authored by Chuck Hoffman. She has not yet had time to read it closely, but she believes it was part of setting up the early operations of the UDC—particularly how

the Council would interact with the media and shape its messaging and brand. She acknowledged that much of it is likely dated, especially references to logos and image standards, but said it provides a starting point and reminder that UDC is not beginning entirely from scratch when it comes to communications planning. Any major new initiative in that area will still need to wait until UDC has the resources to pursue it.

The UDC is still holding the Town of Tusten's 2025 Technical Assistance Grant (TAG) payment, pending completion of the substantial conformance review for their Open Space and Recreation Plan. That money has been allocated, and it is in Tusten's best interest to move that review forward so UDC can formally issue the payment and close the loop. She also said the UDC has not heard anything further regarding its proposal for the Skinners Falls Bridge Mitigation Project under the Historic Preservation and Interpretation Grants program. An MOU was being drafted, and the initial response seemed promising, so the UDC is effectively on standby awaiting next steps.

Ramie noted that UDC received a $50 PayPal donation in honor of Star Hesse, a previous UDC award recipient recognized for her beautification work in Narrowsburg and the Town of Tusten. After processing fees, the net amount was $48.50. The donation came from BKBF Productions of Narrowsburg, and Ramie identified Erin Fairbanks as the individual who made the gift. She sent a thank-you letter and transferred the funds. On November 3, a representative from Morgan Stanley contacted us to request Ramie's contact information, explaining that they were preparing a letter regarding a donation to the UDC. No further details followed until November 17, when UDC received a letter explaining that an account holder had directed a donation to the UDC and describing the reasons. Because the donor wishes to be anonymous, Ramie said she could not share the specific narrative in the letter without revealing identities. When the check arrived on November 24, it was in the amount of $25,000. Ramie and committee members reacted with gratitude and some amazement, noting that this is the largest single benefactor gift UDC has ever received. She recommended that a portion of this gift be used to cover the recent computer purchases that the UDC urgently needed but did not have budgeted funding for to address the security and software update issues they have been facing since mid-October.

Ramie further explained that, before she deposits the check, she would like to wait until the committee completes its discussion later in the agenda on computer purchases so they can formally affirm using part of this donation for that purpose. Using the gift in this way would avoid an unnecessary cycle of depositing it into the Vanguard account only to withdraw funds back out and then re-deposit any remainder. She emphasized that this is truly unallocated, flexible support that UDC did not expect, which makes it particularly appropriate for addressing urgent infrastructure needs.

Upon receiving the November 17 letter, she was able to send a written thank-you to the charitable trust and a personal phone call was also made to express UDC's deep appreciation. She added that the benefactor is connected to one of UDC's board members, which played an influential role in the gift being directed to UDC. This same benefactor has now donated a total of $60,000 to UDC since 2022, including funding that established and has since bolstered the organization's Vanguard account. Ramie remarked appreciatively on this extraordinary level of support.

At the same time, she acknowledged the irony that, while UDC has this generous private support on one hand, it still faces chronic constraints on the other because the core federal funding level has remained flat for decades. She said that reality forces UDC to "scrimp and save" in its operating budget even as its Cooperative Agreement responsibilities grow and basic costs increase. Ramie concluded by saying that she would speak more about these structural funding challenges and their implications under the upcoming agenda item on the 2026 budget and SF-424 application.

New Business

2026 UDC Budget and SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance: Ramie directed members to the 2025 and 2026 budget document included in their packets. The first shows three columns: actuals through September 30, 2025, projected figures through December 31, 2025, and a 15-month roll-up that the bookkeeper prepared. Ramie focused on the first two columns and explained that she wanted the committee to see where the organization ended the year in terms of the deficit. Depending on the column, the shortfall ranged from approximately $4,400 to just under $5,000, confirming that the UDC ended the period in the red, which we had anticipated and discussed throughout the year. When she and the bookkeeper began drafting the 2026 budget to submit with the SF-424, they started with what she considered a bare-bones baseline. Even that version came in $6,678 over the allowed federal

funding level of $300,000. The NPS will not accept a budget request that exceeds $300,000 for the Cooperative Agreement; that meant she had to go back through the budget and make additional cuts. Committee members have asked her, over the years, to point out “red flags” in the budget. She said the biggest red flags today are personnel-related. Running a business office requires people, and the costs of providing salaries, health insurance, retirement contributions, and other benefits have been rising steadily, while UDC’s federal revenue has stayed flat. She acknowledged that the Personnel Subcommittee has been working in good faith to adjust staff compensation to align more closely with job responsibilities and comparable positions in the region. Over the last two years, two of the three salaries have increased by 23.6%, and by 25% over four years, to move them toward commensurate value. The third salary has been flat for five years. She is not arguing against those adjustments and agrees they are justified. The problem is that the revenue side of the ledger has not kept pace. Many of UDC’s benefit costs are tied directly to wages. When the cap was lifted on the SEP retirement contribution, that change alone added about $3,300 to the budget. The dramatic increase in Pennsylvania health insurance rates also forced her to add roughly $4,000 to the medical line. Meanwhile, the UDC’s small size, multi-state staff, and classification make it hard for their broker to find more favorable group options. She also reminded the committee that the Cooperative Agreement now requires a line item for employee awards. UDC does not have to issue bonuses, but if the line is not present, it cannot issue them at all. For that reason, she inserted a modest amount in that line for the first time. She described the reductions she made to get the total down to exactly $300,000. She zeroed out river clean-up grants, staff training, printing and copying, copier repairs, furniture purchases, legal services, and outside consulting. She said that in some years those lines are already set to zero, but that in an ideal world, UDC would have resources in place for each of them. She also reduced several other categories from the bookkeeper’s original draft, including office supplies, the small employee awards fund, fuel oil, member fees and mileage, staff travel, conferences and education, telephone and internet, postage, and the UDC awards budget.

Rodgers asked if she believed the resulting budget was realistic, to which Ramie said it is not. She described it as an “austerity” budget, pared down to the point of affecting some of the UDC’s ability to fulfill its responsibilities under the River Management Plan (RMP). She said, however, the budget is an estimated spending plan, and that if the UDC where to secure funding in the form of additional federal, state, or private funding, they could revisit and revise it at that time. There was some discussion of the projected net loss shown on the financial statement report, including a figure of approximately $3,090 on a profit and loss comparison. She clarified that this number reflected the year-to-date result as of the end of November and that the final deficit for 2025 would likely land in the range shown in Poska’s year-end projection—around $4,400—once all outstanding invoices and expenses are accounted for. Earlier in the year the projection had been closer to a $6,000 deficit; by cutting discretionary spending wherever possible, they were able to reduce that gap slightly.

Henry asked whether Ramie had had to cut or zero out any lines that she considered absolutely necessary for operations. Ramie said she tried to eliminate items that would not cripple the Council’s basic functioning, but she admitted that it was painful to zero out river clean-up grants, which have been a long-standing program and are also one of the front-facing benefits that townships see from the UDC’s work. She emphasized that newsletters, grants, and other outreach programming are important, but they have to follow basic organizational survival. Robinson recommended that the UDC formally notify the NPS and the Department of the Interior that, for the second consecutive year, UDC expects its expenses to exceed its federal revenue, and that the council is further cutting back programs and responsibilities described in the River Management Plan. He argued that this is no longer a theoretical or hypothetical concern; the UDC is now actually operating in the red. He suggested that UDC ask the NPS how they expect the council to meet its obligations under the current funding cap and request a clear response. He’s observed that over the last 20 years the council has gradually trimmed programs, grants, and services in order to live within the static federal allocation, and that this “boiling frog” process has now reached the point where legacy programs are at risk of elimination. Relying on private donations to backfill basic operations is far removed from the original intent of the Cooperative Agreement, which was to fund UDC adequately to carry out the federally mandated management framework.

It was suggested to copy federal and state legislators on the letter. Ramie said she generally includes them on such correspondence. Robinson said he preferred to frame the primary message directly to the NPS and the Department of the Interior, asking how UDC is expected to fulfill its responsibilities under the River Management Plan given the financial situation, and then let the agencies respond. The committee agreed that Ramie would draft the letter after review and approved by the full council. Ramie pointed out that external parties might notice that UDC often describes itself as a “volunteer organization,” yet the budget includes approximately $18,000 in member

remuneration through fees and mileage reimbursements. This line may raise questions and could be a point of scrutiny. This is another area the Council might eventually need to discuss more explicitly if pressed.

SCVA Tourism Grant Applications Due by 12/16: Ramie reported that the SCVA has launched a new tourism grants program funded by lodging tax revenue, with a total of $300,000 available. There are four main categories: projects that extend overnight visitation in the county; arts and culture enhancement; Hamlet and micro-brand marketing initiatives; and events and festivals. Phase 1 applications are due December 16, awards are to be announced January 15, and funds disbursed in March. Phase 2 will open in March with an April 14 deadline and June disbursement. She has registered for an informational session on December 3 and has been talking with the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway Program Manager David Krantz, who also plans to apply. She explained that any proposal must clearly advance Sullivan County's tourism objectives and tie back to the county's comprehensive plan, particularly with regard to supporting overnight stays, enhancing visitors' experience, and elevating the county's brand. Because of the short turnaround time, she wants to focus on a project that has a known, fixed cost and builds on existing UDC programming rather than inventing something entirely new. Two ideas she is considering are: funding beautification-related activities such as the litter sweep and river clean-up grants, on the theory that a clean, attractive river valley helps visitors feel welcome and encourages them to return and stay longer; and/or, funding one issue of the UDC newsletter, likely the summer edition, with a strong tourism and visitor-experience emphasis. She said that a newsletter-based proposal could make a case around promoting the river's environment, local events, and community assets that draw visitors and overnight stays. A third idea she had, but does not feel is realistic in the short term, is updating UDC's Map and Guide brochure. The existing brochure is from 2017 and many of the business listings are outdated due to turnover. Revising the entire map and all business descriptions would be extremely time-consuming and would also leave them with boxes of outdated brochures they would rather not discard since the map is still useful. For those reasons, she does not recommend that option for this round, even though it is clearly tourism-related. The proposal must show a clear benefit to the five Sullivan County river towns on the New York side and cannot appear to fund activities strictly in Pennsylvania or other counties. Matching funds are not strictly required, but the program encourages applicants to show that they have "skin in the game." The UDC can easily demonstrate financial responsibility, but this opportunity is limited geographically, so the narrative has to be carefully framed.

Henry asked whether personnel time could be funded. Ramie said she had not seen an explicit prohibition and intends to ask about that during the information session. A suggestion was made to explore whether any of the Resource Specialist's project review time for Sullivan County river towns could be framed as advancing tourism, by helping ensure that development in the corridor supports the scenic and recreational character that draws visitors. Ramie said she was unsure how receptive SCVA would be to that argument, given their emphasis on tourism-branded initiatives, but agreed to explore it. Rodgers asked whether the website or other communications could be considered. Ramie said the website, at this point, mostly involves modest domain and hosting costs since we maintain it in-house. She said that "you have to be in it to win it," and that, given the risk that the entire $300,000 pool might be used up in Phase 1, she would like UDC to submit something by December 16 rather than waiting for the spring round. The committee agreed that she should proceed. A motion by Henry authorizing UDC to submit an SCVA tourism grant application by the deadline, seconded by Richardson, carried.

Summary of Pending Bills 11/25/25: A motion by Henry to pay the monthly bills in a normal fashion, seconded by Roeder, carried.

Financial Statement 11/30/25: Included in the packet for review.

Other: None.

Old Business

Local Government Contributions to the UDC: Ramie reminded the group that Robinson had previously proposed sending a letter to the 13 member towns and townships, requesting a one-time $1,000 "stopgap" contribution from each as a way to help address the UDC's structural deficit. They had delayed action on that letter to avoid sending mixed signals at the same meeting where they knew they would be announcing a major private donation. In hindsight, she said waiting did not change the underlying budget problem; the federal shortfall remains, and the $25,000 gift does not alter the long-term budget picture. She updated the letter's date and brought it back for discussion. She acknowledged that there is a risk of mixed perception: on one hand, UDC can say it has received a record private donation, while on the other hand it is telling local governments that it faces a financial hardship. She

said that, despite that awkward juxtaposition, the core reality is that the federal allocation has not kept up with operating costs.

Richardson reported that he had raised the idea informally with his town board during a recent presentation. He framed it as a possibility that UDC might send a formal letter asking for a $1,000 contribution and noted that they would revisit the budget picture around April to see how deep the deficit might be. He said his board's response was essentially silence—neither supportive nor opposed, just noncommittal. He also recounted that someone mentioned the town budget hearing had already taken place and the $1,000 was not currently in the draft budget, which would make it harder to accommodate without a separate resolution. He commented that some board members are young enough that they may not even remember the UDC's founding and the early regional battles that led to its creation. Robinson reiterated that his original intention for the letter had been twofold. First, the obvious goal was to raise a modest amount of additional revenue: if all 13 members contributed $1,000, that would provide $13,000 in stopgap funding. Second, the letter would remind local officials that their townships are part of the UDC, that they voluntarily joined the compact, and that they still depend on UDC's project review and advocacy role as a buffer between local governments and direct federal regulation. He stressed that many current board members may not fully understand the consequences of withdrawal or non-participation. Henry said that the non-member townships have relatively little corridor exposure. Robinson noted that these townships have had minimal direct interaction with the NPS over almost 40 years and therefore may not feel a need for the UDC in their day-to-day operations. In contrast, towns like Highland, Lumberland, Cochecton, Tusten, and Delaware have extensive frontage in the corridor and depend heavily on the UDC's project review role. He argued that those communities would face substantial costs if the council could no longer provide that service and had to hire their own planners or engineers to interpret the River Management Plan and supervise development proposals. From that perspective, he said, a $1,000 voluntary contribution is a very small ask compared to the value provided. Richardson also acknowledged that in the past they have often justified UDC membership by pointing to tangible benefits such as Technical Assistance Grants and other small grants. With those programs being cut back or zeroed out because of the budget crisis, it is more difficult to make a straightforward benefits argument. G. Dudko recalled the strong resistance to the NPS in the early days of the Upper Delaware designation, when local residents rallied around private property rights and feared that the federal government would condemn land along the corridor. She drew comparisons to the Tocks Island Dam experience farther south on the Delaware, where entire communities were displaced, land was condemned, and, in the end, the dam was never built and the area was left with vacant fields and empty building sites. She cautioned that when people say "it could never happen here," they are forgetting exactly why the UDC was created: to provide a locally controlled alternative to a federally managed park with broad condemnation powers. B. Dudko said that "if nothing else, the UDC is fighting for all of us to keep our homes and our property," and urged fellow board members to keep telling that story, especially to newer local officials.

A motion by Henry seconded by Dexter to send the request for $1,000 from local government to the UDC, carried. The intention is to mail individually addressed letters to the 13 member towns and townships once the full Council authorizes it.

Computer Purchase Status: Driscoll reported that, following Richardson's recommendation, she obtained a quote from Kristt Kelly Office Systems (Kristt) in Monticello, which already services the UDC's copier, postage meter, and provides supplies. They compared that quote to an earlier one from Marshall Consulting LLC, their current IT provider. She said that Ryan Kelly of Kristt went through his proposal in detail over the phone, reviewing each component and clarifying exactly what would be installed. Kristt offers custom-built desktop PCs with three-year warranties, and the firm has three full-time technicians available to respond to service requests. Based on those factors and the pricing, staff recommended going with Kristt Company.

Ramie reminded the committee that members had previously empowered staff to select the vendor. On November 17 Driscoll, Engelhardt, and she held a staff meeting to compare the two comparable quotes. Marshall's quote was $5,643.19, while Kristt's was $5,125.98. In addition to the lower price, Kristt's quote included stronger local support and custom builds. Kristt also offered optional managed services and a server solution, but staff decided to defer those add-ons for now and focus on getting the essential hardware replaced and secured. Ramie reported that the UDC has formally ended its relationship with the prior IT consultant, Marshall Consulting LLC. The firm has turned over all relevant passwords and credentials for the UDC's systems and subscriptions. Kristt has now ordered the new desktop PCs and laptops, and the next step will be for their technicians to configure the machines, to migrate data, and complete the setups. In the meantime, UDC remains exposed due to outdated security updates on the existing hardware, which is one reason this project has been treated as urgent.

Ramie asked the committee to confirm the funding mechanism. The previous understanding was that the cost would be paid from the Vanguard investment account, and that the account would then effectively be reimbursed by applying a portion of the newly received $25,000 donation to this purpose. With the donation now in hand, she wanted the committee's formal agreement to proceed on that basis. The committee endorsed that approach, acknowledging that the anonymous gift is unrestricted and that using some of it to close the gap created by the unbudgeted computer replacement was sensible.

NPS Records Training Update: Driscoll said that she had emailed Harbert and Marshall to schedule a follow-up meeting regarding NPS records expectations and that they replied earlier that day. The meeting is now set for December 8 at 11:00 a.m. In preparation, she is developing an internal key that will help all staff to identify which documents need to be saved separately as permanent or long-term records, and how those records should be labeled and organized. The goal is to make sure that by the end of each year, UDC can easily export and transfer the required set of documents to the NPS to meet records and archival obligations. She also shared that, as part of the computer upgrade conversation with Kristt, she and Kelly discussed whether the UDC should invest in a dedicated on-site server or move toward a cloud-based shared file system, such as Microsoft SharePoint. Given the cost of purchasing and maintaining a physical server and the limited size of the organization, she recommended trying SharePoint. The subscription would cost approximately five dollars per month per user, and it would allow UDC to maintain shared folders in one central, cloud-based location instead of each staff person saving key files to their individual desktops. She is continuing to research configuration and best practices, but the plan is to move forward with SharePoint rather than investing in another physical machine.

Next Meeting and FY 2025 Financial Review Report: 12/16 at 6:30pm: Ramie said the FY 2025 financial review report from Dick Eckersley is scheduled to be presented at the December 16 Operations Committee meeting. Because that same evening will include Project Review and WU/RM Committee meetings, the Operations Committee will be held first at 6:30pm to accommodate Eckersley's presentation.

Other: None.

There was no Public Comment.

Adjournment: A motion by Roeder seconded by Dexter to adjourn the meeting at 8:47 p.m. carried.

Minutes prepared by Stephanie Driscoll 12/3/25