

Upper Delaware Council
OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
July 25, 2023

Committee Members Present: Larry Richardson, Harold Roeder, Dennis Bernitt, Al Henry,
Aaron Robinson, Fred Peckham (Zoom), Ginny Dudko
Committee Members Absent: Andy Boyar, Jeff Dexter
Staff: Laurie Ramie, Kerry Engelhardt, Stephanie Driscoll
NPS Partner: Lindsey Kurnath (Zoom)
Guests: Bill Dudko

The UDC's Operations Committee held its monthly meeting at the UDC office in Narrowsburg, N.Y. on Tuesday, July 25, 2023. Robinson called the meeting to order at 7:15 pm.

Approval of the June 27, 2023 Meeting Minutes: A motion by Roeder seconded by Henry to approve the June 27, 2023 meeting minutes carried.

Executive Director's Monthly Report: Ramie had a few highlights from her written report. She said that The Federal Funding is on track; we made our monthly withdrawal on Monday to cover the July bills and are in good shape. She said the only issue that confronted her was that the system requires a new identity verification The U.S. Department of the Treasury is going through a system called ID.me and it required Ramie to come up with a new password which she has to do every 90 days anyway, but now she also has to do extra biometric measures which required her to take a photo of her drivers license, use her social security number, get a code to verify her email, her home address and work address. She said it is a requirement not an option, and now we are signed up with the new system which starts September 15th. Ramie said in the Vanguard account, which was opened to invest unrestricted funds, as of the end of the month we had made \$298.41 in interest at a rate of 5.05%. She did ask Mike Poska to include the Vanguard balance on the monthly financial statement it appears on the third line down. Ramie said she is mentioning that this one time so that everyone will know where to find it in the future to check how much interest is being earned on that account. Ramie noted there are 3 signatories on the account, herself, Mike Poska and Henry, the two of the people who have personal Vanguard accounts are receiving statements for the UDC account as well as their own, Poska did try to change, but it was not possible. Ramie sent Henry the phone number for Vanguard in case he wanted to keep trying.

Ramie said the Summer Newsletter is now in Courier Printer's hands. She said this one took 46.5 hours, which does not incorporate well into her normal 8-hour work days. She ended up being in the office both Saturday and Sunday to finish it up and had started working on it in early July, but the bulk of design and composition of the newsletter took place in the last week. She said it was sent in camera ready form to Courier Printing at around 2pm Monday afternoon and by 5pm they sent the electronic proof to be signed off on, and now it is ready to hit the printing press. The next item they need is the updated mailing list that Driscoll has learned to add addresses and information to and will be sending that. Ramie said that Driscoll had taken a lot of sign-ups for the newsletter at that weekend's Riverfest Narrowsburg she had attended. Ramie said there is no reason Courier Printing won't be able to meet our delivery date of August 7th and that we have the PDF version that we can upload to the website for people who are eager to read it. Ramie will do the usual publicity once it's released and available. The Fall/Winter issue of the newsletter isn due November 20th.

Ramie said there were 3 news releases in the past month, one was announcing Driscoll's hiring, another about RailRiders tickets, and a third about our August 3rd program hosting the Sullivan County

Commissioner of Public Safety at the full council meeting. Ramie was interviewed on July 5th for an article that is pending in Delaware Currents about the status of the Skinners Falls Bridge and the UDCs position on that, so she will share that when it's out. Ramie said there are a lot of press release topics coming up for all of the UDCs activities.

There were two requests to speak at events, and one of them is coming up Wednesday August 2nd at the Day on the Delaware at the Highland Access. Ramie forwarded everyone the email invitation from FUDR had sent. Ramie learned that the invitation may have been premature since learned the NPS stated today that they don't have a permit for the event yet. FUDR has invited Congressman Molinaro, Assemblywoman Gunther, Supervisor Jeff Haas, and people like the UDC, so hopefully that is coming through and it's just a formality. Kurnath apologized and expressed she is on vacation but had forwarded it to Tara Harbert and Debby Seaboldt to look into it. Kurnath said she understands Debby's concern but to Ramie's point she did think that the message about it being an premature invitation should have probably been send to FUDR and not the UDC, but she understands that they have been working through the permit and there is no reason that the permit won't come through. Ramie said she would assume the organizers had obtained the permit before issuing invitations. She also didn't think that a permit would be required to have an event at a public access that isn't owned by the NPS, but apparently it is because the DEC and the DOT own that site and co-manage it with the NPS. Ramie said she had already mentioned that the UDC was invited to speak at the Water, Water, everywhere conference on October 24th as well, so we will prepare remarks for both of those. Regarding the litter sweep, the last piece of the puzzle was getting the \$2,000 check from Sullivan County, which as everyone knows we did receive since there was a photo with Nadia Rajsasz presenting it posted. We now have a balance of \$2,315.00 in that account as seed money for 2024. Ramie stated there were quite a few extra meetings, and by extra she means they are not UDC or the committee meetings that happen, since last month including the June 28th Water Management Advisory Committee that Ramie is a member of on behalf of the UDC, the NPCA Community Roundtable, Senator Oberacker's visit on July 6th, The Delaware Company's history awards program on July 9th to cover for the newsletter, the PA Legislative breakfast with Robinson on July 14th, the 17th Annual Zane Grey Festival on July 15th that all three staff members worked at, and the UDSB meeting was as the UDC building on July 24th. Ramie said everyone correspondence that she had put out since last time. Ramie included in the handout's a copy of the thank you letter to Senator Oberacker for his July 6th visit. This letter was sent out mainly to indicate who was present, which she said she appreciated the excellent attendance for that.

Ramie said lastly, she had put together the timeline for this year's awards banquet. She commented that the venue was already booked, we know the price, and the keynote speaker is lined up, but now we need to solicit for the awards. Ramie encouraged everybody to think up ideas, she said there are certain categories but to be creative and we can fit it into something. Ramie said this process is being started later than usual since the newsletter took a lot of time. Ramie already sent the notice for the public to submit the nominations by August 18th which is also the deadline for all the TAG projects and that will be right ahead of the Operations meeting for next month as well. September 1st will be the reservation deadline that is right before Labor Day, which is a Monday holiday. The guest count doesn't need to be sent to Central House that day but we need to get people signing up so we know what kind of numbers to expect. Once the announcements are made of the award recipients, they'll have about 2 weeks at that point to tell us whether they are able to attend. Ramie encouraged everyone to think of worthy nominations.

New Business

Purchase of Tablets for UDC Representative Use:

Driscoll reported that she had explored TechSoup initially, since that is a program that we've used in the past to purchase discounted technology for the non-profit. Currently they only have Apple iPads which are not compatible with the software we use. Driscoll went to Amazon.com to search and found a couple of comparable price tablet options. One was Microsoft and the other was Windows. She said that both of

them would be compatible with the software we use, and that one came with stylus to “markup” documents with notes. Driscoll said each tablet should be able to download email and upload the documents and packets needed for meetings uploaded. Driscoll did offer to help with the transition into tablets as well. Robinson asked if the tablet that takes the notes could be saved with the notes, Driscoll answered yes, that she believes you are able to save it as a PDF and they could be sent through email etc. Richardson said that the option 4 on the handout sounded like more of a computer. Driscoll replied that it does come with the stylus and the detachable keyboard, but you don’t have to use it. Henry recommended that the UDC buy one of whatever tablet seems to be the best fit. He commented that some people don’t use computers, so they will never use the tablets. Henry said that maybe having one for people to look at and see if people wanted to use them and if they’d be effective might be more beneficial than purchasing each member a tablet. Richardson showed his Apple iPad, and said if he had a preference it would be Windows operating system. B. Dudko commented that everyone there probably has laptops, and he doesn’t know why everyone doesn’t bring their own. Robinson said that he used to bring a tablet but to use it you have to enlarge things etc. and it isn’t like a traditional PC. Everyone commented that the size of Richardson’s iPad was large enough. Robinson said that the ability to make notes would be beneficial with the tablet. Driscoll said that in her opinion, the tablet that comes with the stylus and the keyboard is probably the best option. Henry asked if we could figure out how long the tablet would last, too. Richardson said that the tablets a lot of people use aren’t even equipped with Windows 10 and beyond because they prefer earlier operation systems. Richardson also said that once you get comfortable with the tablet and start loading things on to it, that you’ll learn to search and use it to its full potential. He believes its progress and we should make an attempt. G. Dudko said we should do what Henry had suggested and order one to see how it goes. She asked which one we should order. Ramie said number 3 is the one with stylus and asked what the screen size was for that one. Henry liked the size of the tablet Richardson had, he mentioned that he saw the size Robinson had and thought that to be too small of a screen. Driscoll said that she could look up a few more options now that she had a better understanding of what everyone is looking for. The price was set at under \$300 per tablet since not everyone would opt for one. Driscoll said that they do come refurbished so she can compare what is available. Robinson said he had gotten a Chromebook for his wife, and they are simple to use with a nice size screen, a keyboard and he thought you could use a stylus with the touchscreen. He recalled that they were very affordable. B. Dudko asked if there could be another with in-detail options and pricing report on the tablets for the full UDC council meeting coming up. Henry would also like to have a survey done for who on the council would actually use these. Driscoll agreed and will have that ready for the full council meeting.

Tuition Request for 2nd GIS Course Through Penn State World Campus:

Engelhardt said the first Penn State GIS course concluded the week before on July 19th and she had turned in her final project. She has not yet received her final grade, but expects it to be a high B, depending on how her final project is graded. The first course was a lot of subject overviews of geospatial technologies, with readings and mandatory discussion posts, usually about 3 posts per week for the first 7 weeks which she commented was a lot. She spoke with the instructor who is also the advisor for the GIS program and she stated that the course was that way since it is an intro course and the next course is putting that knowledge to use, making maps, and using the software. The next course would be technically focused. Engelhardt requested tuition reimbursement for the next course Geography 483: Problem Solving with GIS. The fall semester starts August 16th and runs through late October. There is a second fall semester that runs through mid-December and she commented she wouldn’t like to do the course over the holidays. Engelhardt provided the course description that is available online. She said that the course was very interesting and because so much of it was discussion it was interesting to see the perspectives of all the different students from all ages and all over the world. Richardson asked if there is a 3rd course or an end to the program. Engelhardt answered that there are 4 courses in the program. Richardson asked if Engelhardt would need to take all 4 courses before it would benefit the UDC. Engelhardt responded that she wasn’t sure. To some degree there was benefit with just the first course. She had a better

understanding in other GIS maps that are available. She said there are GIS maps for everything, and referenced the maps from the wildfires and COVID maps since they are all GIS technology. Engelhardt added that she will be sharing her final project for this course, which is a map that goes through the establishment of the 19 reservoirs in the New York City systems. She is hoping with the next course that she will be able to make maps and in theory although she doesn't have access to the parcel data and doubts the counties will share that data. Ramie said from what she read, if Engelhardt took all 4 courses she would be eligible to earn a post baccalaureate certificate in the program. You don't have to do it all, but you can. Ramie mentioned this since Bookkeeper Mike Poska had done a budget analysis to see where we stand currently in Fiscal Year 2023 and projecting ahead with typical expenses, the UDC would have \$23,319 surplus. Therefore, the UDC does have the funding for the program and she personally supports it and gave Engelhardt kudos for having the ambition and fitting it into her time, that her work at for the UDC is not suffering and that it is admirable that she is advancing her skillset. She said that it will have good applications for the UDC and recommended in favor. G. Dudko commented that she is an educator and behind it. B. Dudko said any kind of education would help. Robinson said in a way the UDC is a service organization to the townships and he would encourage the UDC to train the local planning boards on how to use the tool. He said that having a better background in the technology is a good idea. G. Dudko added to also make the towns aware that Engelhardt will have those skills. Motion by Richardson seconded by Roeder to approve tuition reimbursement for Engelhardt to take the 2nd GIS Course through Penn State carried.

Summary of Pending Bills 7/25/2023:

Motion by Henry seconded by G. Dudko to approve the bills and pay them in the normal fashion carried.

Financial Statement 7/31/2023 and Vanguard Fund Report:

Robinson stated that the financial statement report is offered for individual review.

Other: None.

Old Business**State and Federal Funding Follow-ups:**

Ramie started saying she had three items on this subject. The first is the meeting with New York State Senator Oberacker. She said the only downside was the time she had spent preparing a presentation that she only got one slide into and it was never spoken of again. The good news was that Senator Oberacker didn't need convincing; he was on board from the start that the UDC should have been funded by NYS. He appears to be engaged with assisting us on making that happen. Since that meeting the thank you letter referenced earlier had been sent and Ramie plans to follow up. Ramie recalled Senator Oberacker saying he'd like to come back and sit down with a couple members and staff to get into the details, Ramie feels confident that will happen. She will let everyone know when it's planned. Roeder said he was impressed with Senator Oberacker's ability to size up what the problem was and had already started a plan on what he needed to do to assist the UDC. B. Dudko said that was the difference between a business man and a politician. Ramie commented that he had a strategy. The second item Raime has is the Pennsylvania Legislative Breakfast on July 14th at the Wayne Conservation District in Honesdale, PA sponsored by the Pike/Wayne Conservation Partnership. She pointed to the poster that she and Robinson had stood next to during the event. She explained it was a poster put together to explain the "ask" of the UDC, which is of course funding from Pennsylvania. Robinson and she visited with Senator Lisa Baker at the state level, and other federal representatives and county commissioners. She said April Niver who is the Economic Development Director for Congressmen Cartwright had arrived and Robinson's first words to her were, "Your boss has really let us down" to which Ramie was surprised but subsequently Niver has followed up via email responded to and got Senator Fetterman's office and Senator Casey involved and Ramie read off the email sent on July 17th with a copy of the original letter that was sent out in March to Senator

Casey, Congressman Cartwright and Senator Fetterman describing the UDCs funding crisis and attached 2 fact sheets on the specifics of the requests. One was for the federal level, and one for the Pennsylvania operational support. Ramie included Kurnath in the conversation as well since they wanted to approach the NPS about the funding mechanism. Ramie also added Robinson to the emails, saying we would be happy to provide any additional information. Ramie said if the committee recalled the March letter was the one in which the problem was described and Robinson had a potential remedy which was, take the UDC out of the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational budget as a line item and just be directly funded through the Department of the Interior. That way we wouldn't be a competing interest with the NPS. Ramie said that is what they are looking at, if that is feasible. Ramie expressed appreciation of their interest. Robinson commented that at least we are getting action on it and thanked Ramie.

Status of 8/1 RailRiders Game Tickets and 8/6 Raft Trip Registration:

Engelhardt said there are 21 tickets reserved. The UDC purchased 25 and get 2 complimentary. She said she knew Kurnath planned on coming but thought there were going to be more Park Service people as well. Ramie mentioned that there is a 12 passenger van available courtesy of Robinson's arranging with 6 seats still available. Ramie said next, we need to get our information back to the RailRiders organization for what promotion we want them to do for us that included specifying the names for the first pitch and who is doing the pre-game interviews. That needs to be done 48 hours ahead. Evan Padua had offered to do the first pitch but had a scheduling conflict and isn't sure if he'd be there in time. Henry had volunteered to do the first pitch, and they can be each other's back up. The UDC invited the NPS to offer water safety messaging at the event, which is more relatable to the public. She said Susie Kaspar with NPS is the person coordinating that and they will have 3 people, but they hadn't signed up yet to be sure. Ramie said that the UDC and NPS are allowed 1 table on the concourse and we will combine exhibits. Ramie asked if anyone felt strongly about doing the pre-game interview. Henry answered that the committee nominates Ramie. Henry asked if the stadium had a jumbotron, and if they did could Kurnath look into the NPS airing the shorter version water safety video that has Kaspar in it. Kurnath said she would ask Kaspar and look into it. Henry joked that could be aired while he threw out the first pitch to distract the crowd. Driscoll said on the raft trip registration, there hadn't been much change, 6 groups and 27 people at WU/RM and 7 additional people added over the weekend. She commented that there has been quite a few calls coming in on the raft trip and she's sure people will continue to sign up. Robinson asked how many people typically join yearly and Ramie responded that it's all over the place every year and there is no average. The weather plays a large role in attendance.

Administrative Hours during 5/31-7/10 Secretary Vacancy:

Ramie gave a report on how great Driscoll has been as an addition. She mentioned she is a quick learner and pleasant to be around. Ramie mentioned a few tasks she had taken on since starting on July 10th: all the bound minutes are up to date that hadn't been done since 2021; organizing all the file cabinets and front desk; taking over the newsletter list; the raft trip reservation; researching for the tablets; and taken over Instagram and X (Twitter). Ramie reminded the committee the UDC bowed out of the Narrowsburg Riverfest this due to excessive staff hours for Engelhardt and Ramie, and after hearing that Driscoll volunteered to staff the event on her own for the day. Driscoll said Riverfest was great. A lot of people stopped to sign up for the newsletter, flyers, brochures, and just to chat. Ramie said Driscoll would be taking a training on the website with Dorene Warner the following day. Driscoll mentioned that Engelhardt had been helping her a lot with the website thus far. Ramie said that the committee asked her and Engelhardt to keep track of the time spent doing administrative tasks during the secretary vacancy, which doesn't represent overtime. Over the course of 25 business days Ramie put in 54.5 hours and Engelhardt 28 hours. Ramie showed how she kept track and the reason hers were higher was that there were 6 sets of minutes she had done in that time frame. Ramie mentioned that typically the staff is good about making up comp time but the last pay period she was still about 10 hours over uncompensated with the newsletter. Richardson asked if the Operations Committee heard the proposal on compensation for the

secretary vacancy hours or if only the Personnel Committee heard it. The proposal was \$15 per hour for hours worked during the vacancy. Motion by Richardson seconded by G. Dudko to approve compensation to Ramie and Engelhardt for their time during the secretary vacancy carried. Richardson added to make sure it's labeled properly and Henry said to relate that message to Mike Poska. Henry and the committee thanked both Ramie and Engelhardt for stepping in. Henry thanked Driscoll for getting a better handle on the records and other things.

Other:

Henry said Robinson is fixing the front outdoor lights on the building that aren't coming on. He wanted to make everyone aware. Ramie said it turned out to be bad fixtures not bad bulbs. Robinson said they will replace the current fixtures with LED which are mounted the same way. Ramie told Robinson to please submit that as an expense for reimbursement.

There was no Public Comment.

Adjournment: A motion by Roeder seconded by Henry to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 p.m. carried.