



# Upper Delaware Council

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## UPPER DELAWARE COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

August 20, 2019

The Upper Delaware Council held a special meeting on Tuesday, August 20<sup>th</sup>, 2019 at the Council office in Narrowsburg, NY. Chairperson Roeder called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance followed.

In attendance: Town of Delaware- Harold G. Roeder, Jr., Town of Hancock- Fred Peckham, Town of Tusten- Susan Sullivan, Damascus Township- Jeff Dexter, Town of Deerpark- Virginia Dudko, Berlin Township- Alan Henry, Shohola Township- Aaron Robinson, Town of Highland- Andy Boyar, Westfall Township- Roland Edwards Jr., National Park Service- Jennifer Claster. Staff in attendance: UDC Executive Director- Laurie Ramie, Resource Specialist- Pete Golod, Secretary- Ashley Hall-Bagdonas. Absent: Town of Fremont- Jim Greier, Lackawaxen Township- Doug Case, Town of Lumberland- Nadia Rajsz, Town of Cochection- Larry Richardson, State of NY- Bill Rudge, Comm of PA- Tim Dugan, DRBC- Steve Tambini. Guests: Town of Tusten- Evan Padua, Bill Dudko, Cheryl Korotky.

**Public comment on the Agenda:** None.

### New Business

**PA Department of Community and Economic Development Grant Opportunity:** Ramie prepared a Fact Sheet that summarizes everything she knows about this Grant Funding Opportunity. She said it was an out-of-the-blue call from the agency on 8/6 when she learned about the grant program being opened up to the UDC by the PA DCED. Once Ramie pieced together the information she confirmed with Representative Jonathan Fritz that he was responsible for this earmark.

**Electronic Application: Narrative, Budget & Government Project Audit Requirements:** This is an application process and it is not competitive. UDC does have to submit a compelling application that lays out a case for what we will do with this potentially \$100,000. Ramie said it's fairly open-ended through the Community and Economic Development Program. It is up to UDC's own creativity as to how it can be spent. It has to have measurable outcomes and we have to show that there's a need for any project we put forward. It starts with the \$100,000. One deduction is that you have to perform a Government Project Audit. Fortunately, the grant itself can fund that and can be included in the budget. Ramie was advised the going rate is about \$7,000 for that service. She contacted Eckersley and Ostrowski LLC who does UDC's audit and confirmed they do this kind of work frequently. Ramie confirmed with our contact that it would not be any conflict. Dick Eckersley said they are fully on board and will research this before UDC starts. Eckersley advised Ramie to include the high end of the \$7,000 in the budget because if UDC is utilizing subcontracts they will need to go to each individual Township and look at their books. Ramie said the questions on the agenda are big topics to be determined because UDC is able to divide up this funding as we choose. Henry asked about a timeframe. Ramie said they did not give us any. They just said submit the electronic application when you can, and it must be done specifically on a Friday between the hours of 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. The contract can extend out one to two years. We are not tied to our Fiscal Year or the State's Fiscal Year. They just need to know what to write in the contract for when we will exhaust the grant funding. They said be careful that you don't short yourself on time.



**Discussion of Potential Allocations for PA Local Governments through Subcontracts:** Ramie said the big question is how will UDC divide this money up. The options are UDC as an organization can do a project or multiple projects and/or we can distribute it to our member Townships and/or all of the Townships. The reason why we would consider Buckingham and Manchester is twofold: 1. These are Pennsylvania tax dollars and they are in the River Valley, though they may not be members of the UDC. By virtue of geography they are part of the Upper Delaware designation; and 2. Perhaps there could be some motivational impact to providing funding to those Townships. It's a question of dividing it five or seven ways. The other issue is, do we offer equal shares? Are we asking for proposals and making it merit-based? Would we accept more than one proposal if a Township has a fantastic idea and another Township doesn't have any ideas? All of these questions are ones we must resolve before we submit an application. Henry said on page three of the Summary of Upper Delaware Council Project Ideas under Finance-Oriented for clarification it says "Offer grants to member municipalities for 'bricks and mortar' projects in the river corridor." He asked if that is specifically within the boundary because then it says "This would be similar to the popular Technical Assistance Grants" which don't shut off at the river boundary. Ramie said that's how it was written back in 2001 when UDC had suggested projects. It can be as we choose to define it. Henry recommends UDC define it within the Township, not within the corridor. He thinks that should be clarified. Robinson said he thinks the awards should be scalable in proportion to the scope of the proposed project. If not, you're limiting thought process, limiting the nature of the projects. If the Township has a noble proposal it should be scaled proportionately. Ramie said when we had our NYS Funding Programs it was actually in equal shares. Senator Bonacic had secured funding for seven different rounds of Legislative Member Items back when they had the opportunity to do that. UDC would get \$25,000-\$50,000 and say to the eight NY Towns "You have \$6,250, what will you do with it?" Then UDC would administer it. In Senator Bonacic's case he would sometimes also come up with administrative funds that UDC could keep for its work. That's a bit complicated and considered "soft costs" which our contract did say we can include in our grant but to go really small on it. Another complication is how to distinguish the time we are spending administering this program versus our federally-funded dollars. From an accounting standpoint it's complex to figure out how to divvy that up. Ramie said she's not too concerned about taking money out of the grant as a fee since she considers this the price of doing business at the UDC. Ramie asked if the committee wanted to take a percentage of the \$93,000 and say that's how much to keep for a UDC project? Peckham said he'd divide it equally up to a certain amount. Henry said here's a quick formula: \$13,000 for the UDC and \$16,000 for the five participating Townships. Boyar said that's making an assumption it's not seven participating Townships. Dudko said she thinks that's a decision we make first. Boyar said if it was a question of competing either/or he thinks the five members would be given preference to the sixth or seventh Township but not knowing you would have five proposals the seven might be a good idea because of the benefit to the river corridor as the UDC's mission. If it is something that would make the corridor more wild and scenic, why not? That's unless they are competing for exactly the same dollars and it's an either/or. Boyar could see a preference going towards five Townships but not to the exclusion of the seven Townships. The question is whether that may encourage additional participation. Henry spoke with Berlin Township Supervisors and they are not in favor of the non-participating Townships taking advantage of this. Their feelings are if a non-participating Township wants to have an opportunity at this funding, join the UDC. Dexter said last night the Damascus Board of Supervisors said roughly the same thing. It was the member Townships that made the effort with legislators over the past year and that money should stay with the participating Townships. They also favored the idea of requesting individual ideas by the Townships and picking them out by merit. Robinson said he's inclined to think the Townships that are members of the UDC should have preference with the funding. He believes there was a memo from the Superintendent about including the non-participating Townships, but if the Federal Government wants to throw some money into the budget for that purpose, that's fine. He doesn't believe UDC should use this grant money as 'bait'. Henry said we don't know if this grant money is ever going to come back. He thinks the last thing we want to do is offer it up to non-participating Townships as a one-time only lure. Roeder had several concerns. It says here it could be for "bricks and mortar". If we expand it beyond just the river corridor, then they can go and do something that has nothing to do with the river on the other end of the Townships. Also, UDC has been trying for years to get these Townships in the UDC and if the only reason they come in is so they can get some money, then they have lost sight of what the purpose of the UDC is about. He's not thinking one way or another. He's just bringing some ideas out. Motion by Henry seconded by Dexter for the PA Department of Community and Economic Development Grant opportunity to include five participating PA Townships and the UDC carried, with Boyar voting no and an abstention by Peckham. Boyar said he's voting no only because he's looking down the road with the Town of Highland and they may be facing the same situation on the NY side as a potential non-participating Town.



Ramie said the next question to debate is equal shares or proposals based on merit and single or multiple proposals. A Motion by Henry was to support merit or proposal based applications. UDC will contact the Townships about the grant so they may come up with ideas and also give them a deadline. Henry also suggests leaving an appropriate amount of money for the UDC. Sullivan said she thinks UDC has a really good model in the Technical Assistance Grant Program and to do it in a similar way. Send out a proposal which gives guidelines and the Project Review Committee will review it. Henry asked if there should be a maximum? Ramie said she thinks it would be difficult as a Township Supervisor to know what kind of project you are going to submit when you have no clue how much is available. You need an average amount that may be awarded. Sullivan said in the Technical Assistance Grant process you put down everyone's requests and some have been outrageous. She suggests a cap. Ramie asked would UDC accept multiple proposals from the same Township? Henry said his recommendation is one. Robinson said it would be too complicated to manage multiple projects. Dexter said the project mass could be considered if UDC received a couple of good requests but they are small projects. Henry said why don't we say a max of \$15,000 and if they want one project or five projects together, that's fine. He said we need to send strict guidance out so the Townships know what they can and cannot do.

**Discussion of Potential Upper Delaware Council Project(s):** Sullivan asked if the remaining balance goes to UDC? Ramie said potentially. She provided a handout called "Summary of Upper Delaware Council Project Ideas" that UDC could pursue with its share of this funding. Some of them are quite scalable such as the biggest one, doing Substantial Conformance Reviews. Golod estimates that \$10,000 per Township would be a reasonable consulting cost for an outside consulting agency to come in. We know how involved a Substantial Conformance Review is and UDC has not comprehensively looked at them since about 1990 in most cases. Robinson said personally, he would prefer to stay clear and focus on things that the Federal Funding source is reluctant to fund because this is an opportunity for Townships. Ramie said that's a good point too because Substantial Conformance Reviews are almost number one in terms of Federal Funding. Ramie said on the Summary of Upper Delaware Council Project Ideas the first three listed are what we are actively considering under our current budget. We have the Records Management Project with bids being put together by 9/3. We have a few projects on standby to see how much funding we have left and if we will want to pursue these projects. Everything else listed is from past years' sessions. Ramie tried to collect everything UDC has wanted to do at some point but have not been able to. This list is meant to generate ideas. Henry recommends that the committee review the Summary and come back to the Operations meeting or full Council meeting next month for further discussion. Robinson said another discussion was a revitalization of an excursion train up the Valley. NPS wasn't really interested in pursuing it when we had the discussion but some of these funds might. It would be a tremendous economic development project to bring people in and would be multi-seasonal. Robinson said that's such a broad project the funds could be well used. Ramie said if only those railroad tracks ran along only the PA side. We do have to consider this is Pennsylvania funding. We need to be cognizant of that. Ramie said if that's the way you'd like to handle it in terms of taking this list and also thinking of anything else because it is wide open; if you are looking at approximately \$18,000 and how it could be most optimally spent in the spirit which this grant intends, then we can come back on the 8/27 and talk about it then. A Motion by Henry that the participating PA Townships have as many projects requests as they like but a limit of \$15,000 was seconded by Robinson and carried with one abstention by Peckham.

**Other:** None.

**Public Comment:** None.

**Adjournment:** A motion by Dudko, seconded by Henry, to adjourn the meeting at 7:00 p.m. was carried.