

**CORRECTED**  
Upper Delaware Council  
**OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**  
**May 22, 2012**

Committee Present: Nadia Rajs, Larry Richardson, Harold Roeder, Jr., Jack Niflot, George J. Fluhr  
Committee Absent: Fred Peckham  
NPS Partner: Sean McGuinness  
Staff: Laurie Ramie, Dave Soete, Cindy Odell  
Guests: David Dean, Bernie Handler (6:57 p.m. – 7:52 p.m./8:10 p.m.), Anne Willard (7:53 p.m.)

The UDC's Operations Committee held its monthly meeting on May 22, 2012 at the Council office in Narrowsburg, NY. Chairperson Rajs called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m.

**Approval of April 24 Meeting Minutes:** A motion by Richardson seconded by Niflot to approve the April 24 meeting minutes was carried. There was no public comment on the agenda.

**Public Relations/Fundraising Specialist's Report:** Ramie referenced her written report in members' packets. She reported she spent much time preparing the FY 2013 work plans and budget and that she has almost completed the FY 2011 Annual Report. The report will be posted to the UDC website. Ramie's report listed special meetings including the NY-PA Joint Interstate Bridge Commission annual meeting held in Binghamton on May 17<sup>th</sup>. Ramie attended the meeting and produced a news release which has gotten very good exposure. It was on the front page of *The Wayne Independent* May 22nd edition. Ramie noted the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway will not meet in May due to the Memorial Day holiday conflict, but will meet June 25<sup>th</sup>. Ramie said we are waiting for a decision from Norcross Wildlife Foundation about our grant request for new computers. The application requested \$4,920 to purchase four desk-top computers.

**Acting Executive Director's Report:** Ramie reported she had two action items to be addressed. The first is the pending staff vacancy upon Soete's retirement. She suggested moving forward with seeking candidates in hopes of hiring someone by a date that will allow time for the new individual to train with Soete before his Sept. 30, 2012 retirement. A draft copy of a potential "Help Wanted" ad for a Resource Specialist was sent out in advance for member's review and provided in packets. Ramie noted that the ad refers prospective applicants to the UDC website for the position description. She said the Personnel Subcommittee is in the process of reviewing the current job description. She offered to work with that committee to pull the description together. Ramie said three tasks that Soete currently performs that were not in the original job description from 1989 are he administers the TAG program, maintains the UDC website, and coordinates a near-daily list-serv of articles in numerous subject areas. She added that she does feel maintaining the list-serv as Soete does, may be an un-real expectation on the next person to hold that position. Ramie said she also has a list of ten activities that Soete added to his job description back in 2010 when job descriptions were reviewed the last time. She said she would be happy to incorporate those into the revised overall description. Fluhr wants to be sure that Soete has the opportunity to provide a lot of input into the description. He added that no one knows more about the job than Soete. Rajs asked Soete to review the 1989 description and update it. Fluhr told Soete to feel free to come up with any suggestions he sees as useful. The draft ad was reviewed and a number of questions answered. Discussion about benefits took place. McGuinness suggested that the ad simply state "benefits included", but maybe a sentence with a better description of what the duties of the job would be. Ramie noted that a more detailed description would be available on the UDC website. Dean suggested that by including in the ad a more specific description of the job and pay scale and benefits, you may be able to eliminate some applicants. Richardson thinks it would be wise to put in the ad that the person may be expected to make public presentations from time to time. Ramie noted that Richardson expressed that he would like to see someone hired by early August. Ramie said staff would be supportive of bringing someone in then as opposed to September. Ramie said once the position description is finalized, the ad could be run. Richardson suggested taking a few minutes between meetings to discuss this matter. Dean asked where the position would be advertised.

Ramie said she has suggested a range of both New York and Pennsylvania newspapers and noted that many of the newspapers will post the ad on-line as well.

As the second action item, Ramie reported the UDC's Five-Year Operating Plan expires on September 30<sup>th</sup>. She would like to hold a workshop in late June in order to provide sufficient time to compile the FY 2013-2017 Operating Program for approval by the full council at the August 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting, with the fall-back of September 6<sup>th</sup> to accommodate any further revisions. Included in members' packets was a report from the last workshop held on Aug. 11, 2007. The workshop was held on a Saturday morning at the Council office from 8:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. Planning consultant Alan Sorensen was brought in to facilitate the workshop. In attendance were six UDC Board members, Sandy Schultz of the NPS and four staff members. Ramie hopes that a date and format can be determined that would work for the majority of the people to get a fuller representation of the Council. She noted there is funding available for the workshop in the educational programs line of the budget. After a brief discussion, it was decided to poll members to see how many would be available for a June 23<sup>rd</sup> half-day workshop beginning at 8:30 a.m.

Ramie referenced the Administrative Issues from her written report and noted they mainly pertain to the schedule for getting the federal funding package together to the Park Service by June 11<sup>th</sup>. The June calendar which lists upcoming events and deadlines was provided for review.

Ramie reported she will continue to track the FY 2012 Budget and make recommendations to obligate any unexpended funds anticipated by the end of September. She noted the May funding from the Park Service was received on May 1<sup>st</sup> and reported on UDC legal fees.

### **New Business**

**FY 2013 Work Plan and Budget:** Ramie noted the work plans were sent out in advance on May 8<sup>th</sup> for members to review. Ramie said she changed the order of tasks in this work plan so that it is presented chronologically starting in October. The functional budget figures will be inserted by our bookkeeper prior to the submission of the final work plan. Fluhr questioned if a regular inventory of brochures is being done in order to be sure that not too many are being printed. Ramie said the only brochure the UDC publishes is the map and guide and that we are essentially out of them. She added that technically, the brochure is to be printed every two years but we had gotten away from that due to the funding situation. Rajsz questioned what is being planned to recognize the UDC's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary as addressed in item 3 under Public Affairs in the work plan. Ramie noted that in any news release that she issues, she will note the milestone and added that stickers or some other item could be ordered to mark the anniversary. Rajsz asked if an event is being planned to mark the occasion. Ramie noted that February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2013 would be the actual 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the incorporation date. She added that something could be planned, but has not been yet. Rajsz feels that something should be planned. Ramie agrees it is a milestone that should be marked in some way. Fluhr suggested thinking about who will be taking the lead on each of the listed tasks as the staff is down to three employees from the four that were in place for the last 20 plus years. Ramie noted the list is actually the functions assigned to this committee. McGuinness stated the work plan documents the functions that the Council performs for their funding. It is similar to a contract. Ramie noted the tasks are not directed to the staff specifically; they are our obligations as an organization. McGuinness added the board members are supposed to make some of these tasks happen as that is how boards are supposed to function. Rajsz noted that although sometimes we are remiss, some tasks such as updating the bylaws and updating the job descriptions are being undertaken by board members. A motion to approve the draft work plan and recommend it to the full Council for approval on June 7<sup>th</sup> was made by Richardson, seconded by Fluhr and carried.

Ramie reported the draft budget was prepared in cooperation with the Council's bookkeeper Mike Poska and sent out for review on May 15<sup>th</sup>. Rajsz asked if staff had heard from Council's health insurance broker Nancy Yoder about any increases to health insurance benefits. Ramie said she had and the budget reflects those anticipated changes. After a brief discussion about benefit days, Dean suggested establishing an updated policy concerning such days. Richardson read the paragraph concerning this subject from Soete's employment agreement. Ramie noted that she was not given a contract when she started 15 years ago. Many budget lines were reviewed. Ramie proposed increasing the amount allotted for the Technical Assistance Grants (TAG). She noted this program is one of the biggest benefits to our member municipalities. Roeder asked about the schedule for the TAG program. Ramie said the applications will be due by August 31<sup>st</sup>. She said that Soete has all the information updated and that he will be posting it on the website in the near future. The special Project Review Committee meeting for reviewing the applications is

scheduled for September 11<sup>th</sup> and the grants will be awarded at the October full Council meeting. Dean questioned for what purpose are the TAG grants awarded. Ramie told him for any projects implementing the River Management Plan, but not construction. Ramie added the counties are eligible to submit projects as well. Fluhr commented that the UDC, as a result of the TAG program, has amassed a tremendous library. He said there have been a lot of good projects completed and they could be a tremendous resource to many towns and townships. Rajsz suggested putting additional money in the educational program line to do something to acknowledge the UDC's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Richardson agreed something should be done to commemorate the milestone. Ramie noted we are allowed a 10% variable on all the budget line items before we need to go back to the Park Service for adjustments. Ramie reported that she was informed that the threshold for an audit being required is one million dollars. While we are therefore not obligated to conduct one, it is her opinion that it is money well spent to continue this practice of checks and balances for our fiscal accountability. Members agreed, but wondered if maybe a different type of audit could be conducted for less money. Fluhr noted the UDC is spending taxpayers' money and he feels the audit should continue. Discussion about building maintenance issues took place and Richardson suggested increasing that budget line so that some of the issues could be addressed in the next year. Dean asked if the UDC owns the building. He was told they do. After more discussion, it was agreed to increase both the salaries and TAG budget lines. Richardson questioned if letters are still going to be sent out to town supervisors informing them that the TAGs are available. Soete said he would be sending those out by mail. Discussion about the TAG deadlines took place. Soete asked McGuinness if he agreed that the TAG money had to be obligated and spent within the same fiscal year or if it could be just obligated. Richardson noted the UDC has been "burned" in the past where projects were funded and never completed. McGuinness said he would get clarification on paying out obligated funds in the next fiscal year for the TAG program. Fluhr suggested looking into projects being done in stages. He added the administration of local zoning laws is one of the priorities of the Council and he feels that anything we can do to facilitate a project that has to do with zoning for the towns and townships is ideal. Ramie said the current schedule is the grants are awarded in October and the projects have to be completed by the end of July in order to have time to process the payments. McGuinness reiterated that he will look into holding obligated funds until the next fiscal year. A motion to refer the draft budget as amended to the full Council for approval was made by Roeder, seconded by Richardson and carried.

**August 5<sup>th</sup> UDC Raft Trip Quote:** Ramie noted the UDC Raft Trip will take place on Sunday, August 5<sup>th</sup>. Lander's River Trips will be the host livery this year. A quote was requested from them and provided in members' packets. Ramie said Odell will be taking the lead on managing the raft trip this year. The cost is passed on exactly as it is charged to us, Ramie said. The river section will be Callicoon to Skinners Falls. A motion to accept Lander's quote of \$24 adults and \$14 children ages 5-12 for the August 5<sup>th</sup> raft trip was made by Roeder, seconded by Niflot and carried.

**Summary of Pending Bills 5-22-12/Financial Statements:** A motion to approve the bills as listed on the abstract was made by Roeder, seconded by Fluhr and carried unanimously. Financial statements as of April 30, 2012 were provided for individual review.

**UDC Calendar:** The UDC calendar for June was provided in members' packets for their review.

**Other:** None

### **Old Business**

**Proposed UDC Bylaws Changes:** In the interest of time, Rajsz suggested tabling discussion of Bylaws until the next meeting. All were in agreement.

**Other:** None

**Public Comment:** None

A motion to go into executive session for personnel issues at 8:11 p.m. was made by Richardson and seconded by Roeder.

A motion to come out of executive session at 8:52 p.m. was made by Roeder and seconded by Niflot, with no action taken.

**Adjournment:** A motion by Roeder, seconded by Niflot to adjourn the meeting at 8:52 p.m. was carried unanimously.

*Minutes submitted by Cindy Odell, 5/30/12*