

**Tompkins County Council of Governments**  
Regular Meeting Minutes – APPROVED 12-20-2012  
**Thursday, November 15, 2012 3:00 PM**  
Scott Heyman Conference Room

**Call to Order**

Mr. Driscoll called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

Members Present: (11 municipalities)

T/Danby – R. Dietrich	Co./Tompkins – M. Robertson (excused at 3:20 p.m.)
T/Enfield – R. Barriere, A. Rider	T/Ithaca - B. Goodman
C/Ithaca – J. Clairborne, S. Myrick	V/Groton – E. Conger
T/Ulysses – E. Thomas	T/Caroline – I. Weiser
V/Cayuga Heights – K. Supron	T/Newfield – R. Driscoll
T/Groton – G. Morey (arrived at 3:48 p.m.)	

Municipalities Not in Attendance: (6 municipalities: Town of Dryden, Village of Freeville, Village of Lansing, Town of Lansing, Village of Trumansburg, Village of Dryden)

Guests: Lee Shurtleff, Beth Harrington, Department of Emergency Response; L. Danks Burke, Gay Nicholson; Finger Lakes Community News

**Greeting/Sign In/Review Agenda**

A report on "Climate Smart and Climate Ready - Preparing for the New Normal" was added to the agenda. A report from the Nominating Committee and a follow-up on the hydrilla letter were withdrawn from the agenda.

**Minutes Approval - October 25, 2012**

It was MOVED by Ms. Conger, seconded by Mr. Barriere, and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members present, to approve the minutes of October 25, 2012 as submitted.

**Report on Gas Drilling**

Ms. Robertson reported on her recent trip to Albany and said 542 elected officials from across the State have signed on to the letter to Governor Cuomo and now every county in the State is represented on the list. The letter urges Govenor Cuomo to maintain the moratorium on high-volume hydraulic fracturing until independent assessments have been completed. She said one of the meetings she attended was with Joe Martens, Director of the Department of Environmental Conservation, and said at that meeting they learned their philosophy is to prevent human exposure, but they remain skeptical that there will be enough regulators to ensure that doesn't happen. Ms. Robertson spoke of the regulations and said they have to be finalized and released for public comment by November 29th. At the conclusion of the meeting the State representatives were informed that local officials believe the SGEIS should go out for public comment because OF the substantial changes that were made to the document. She said the State knows that for drilling to happen in New York it will require substantial actions by the Governor and the State Legislature, such as establishing taxes and fees to cover the costs as everyone is in agreement the taxpayers shouldn't pay for this. They would also have to staff the Department of Environmental Conservation with an adequate number of regulators.

**Report on Storm Preparedness and Response**

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Mr. Shurtleff provided an overview of the actions that took place in Tompkins County in preparedness and response to Hurricane Sandy. He said the County and the general public were advised in the days leading up to the storm of several changing weather conditions and through a series of conference calls with the National Weather Service and the State Emergency Management Office the predictions were getting increasingly worse and appeared that central New York was going to take a direct hit from the Storm. He said Tompkins County was once again fortunate as it did not receive significant damage as expected.

He said in anticipation of the Storm a series of alerts to the various bodies including public safety agencies, public works, departments, and municipalities was begun and staff began to put together a public information dissemination campaign through the County's Public Information Office and Julie Holcomb who is on the City's Public Information Team, to prepare the public for what was to occur.

Ms. Robertson was excused at this time.

Mr. Shurtleff said as the predictions became more serious the Critical Incident Management Team was convened. Those who were involved in the discussions included himself and Brian Wilbur of the Department of Emergency Response, along with the County Highway Manager, Public Health Director, and Sheriff. This group was part of the discussions and evaluating the risk of the storm. Additionally engaged in this were the executive level people who included the County Administrator and his staff. He noted that the City was on a parallel track and preparing similarly. A decision was made to open the Emergency Operations Center in anticipation of the storm and involved representatives from NYSEG (New York State Electric and Gas), TCAT (Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit), NYSDOT (New York State Department of Transportation), and the Safety Director from BOCES who was the liaison to all six school districts. Throughout the evening the course of the storm was monitored and by midnight the storm had gone in a different direction and did not impact Tompkins County.

He said once the Critical Incident Management Team is in place and a point comes when a storm has occurred there are a number of resources that are needed by responders (fire, EMS, law enforcement, and public works) and it becomes incumbent upon all of the organizations to be able to provide to them and coordinate resources. They try to do this at the local level before calling for additional help; however, as needs expand the organization expands out. Once this happens a planning component is created and this is where working with municipalities is very important in determining what the level of damages is, what the exposure is, and what needs may exist for responders who are trying to mitigate the circumstances. Once the planning component is in place a logistics component is created to determine where the resources are that are needed and how to provide them to where they are needed. Lastly, a finance component is created to determine how resources will be paid for and/or reimbursed.

Mr. Shurtleff said THEY are looking to municipalities to provide them with a key executive point of contact and someone who can transmit information concerning extent of damage and what the local needs are. Additionally, they are looking for ways to disseminate information out to the public, especially because the methods have changed with so many people using cell phones.

Ms. Harrington thanked TCCOG members for responding quickly to the request for information sent through the TCCOG list serve. She said as they went through this process it became apparent there are a couple of things that need to be updated such as a database for all highway and public works departments that all municipalities have access to. She will be sending a request out for this and also asked members to consider what their respective municipality would need to operate in a disaster in terms of facilities and what is considered to be critical infrastructures. She said they will also provide guidelines on this. They will also be asking for lines of succession.

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Mr. Dietrich said he felt the Department of Emergency Response did a superb job and is very appreciative. He said it was the first time the Town of Danby's Crisis and Emergency Management Team met as a group and had a very productive meeting. Other members also expressed their appreciation. Additional comments or concerns can be sent to [Ishurtleff@tompkins-co.org](mailto:Ishurtleff@tompkins-co.org) or [bharington@tompkins-co.org](mailto:bharington@tompkins-co.org)

**Report from Cable Committee**

Mr. Dietrich said a good public meeting was held and although there was low attendance there were approximately 50 comments submitted that evening as well as by e-mail. He said they are currently looking at templates and hope to produce a model franchise agreement template that could be used by municipalities. One of the next steps will also be to sit down with Time Warner Cable and discuss some of the comments that have been submitted. Mr. Dietrich noted this is a long-term project and expects Mr. Engman will make a full report at a later date.

Ms. Supron said the next meeting will be November 28th. A subcommittee is also meeting to develop a draft agreement to bring back to the full Committee before a meeting is scheduled with Time Warner Cable.

**Climate Smart and Climate Ready - Preparing for the New Normal**

Ms. Nicholson said Assemblywoman Lifton who has always been a strong leader on the fracking front, contacted Sustainable Tompkins approximately two months ago to discuss climate issues. Ms. Lifton had read a book entitled "Hot" by Mark Hertsgaard and became a lot more attune to the issues of climate change and the threat it poses. She would like to pull several people together for a regional conversation around mitigation and climate adaptation. Ms. Nicholson said the Coalition includes Cornell, Ithaca College, SUNY Cortland, Tompkins Community College, Tompkins County and City of Ithaca government, Sustainable Tompkins, Sustainable Cortland, and several energy firms and there have been several conversations that have taken place and an event is planned for April 19-21, 2013 and is geared towards two major audiences: local government and the local business community. Ms. Danks Burke is one of the members of the subcommittee that is working on the local government tract and they would like to work with TCCOG members to design the content of the workshops. Ms. Nicholson said they will circulate a survey to members looking for topic areas that members think are most important to design workshops around in Tompkins and Cortland counties.

Ms. Thomas thinks there would be some local boards that would be willing to examine options if there was some information that already exists from other communities that have already taken more progressive steps with energy. An example would be model legislation to enable community energy systems or model legislation for wind generation. Other suggestions included renewable energy, community-owned energy, funding sources, economic impacts and the costs on local governments, and setting baselines for why this is the business of government.

Mr. Stein said the work that is being done is very important but he is bothered that the problem seems hopeless in a sense. He said in telling people the truth that the energy usage per person needs to be reduced by two and also what is done locally will not make a difference if efforts are not being made in other places of the world. Ms. Danks and Ms. Nicholson said this has been discussed and why education is so important. Ms. Nicholson will provide information as it develops.

**Gas Drilling Update**

Ms. Thomas reported Anchutz and Chesapeake companies are now declining to renew expired leases. Ms. Weiser said what is now different is that they are finding that they are not renewing as

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opposed to letting them just go away. Ms. Thomas also reported Carol Chock, Greg May, and Dusty Horowitz have an appointment in Washington, D.C. with Richard Corday, the Director of the new Consumer Protection and Financial Services Agency in December to talk about land values and mortgages and the work that has been done relative to gas drilling. She said a request may be put forward to approve funds for travel.

**Next Meeting Agenda Items**

The following item will be included on the next agenda: Environmental Management Council State of the Environment Subcommittee Report and an announcement from Carolyn Peterson regarding the Environmental Management Council.

**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 4:10 p.m.