

Tompkins County Council of Governments
 Regular Meeting Minutes - APPROVED
Thursday, July 25, 2013 3:00 PM
 Scott Heyman Conference Room

Attendance

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
James Dennis	Alternate - Tompkins County	Present	
Irene Weiser	Member - Alternate, Town of Caroline representative	Present	3:10 PM
Richard Driscoll	Co-Chair, Town of Newfield representative	Present	
Ric Dietrich	Member, Town of Danby	Present	
Kathy Miller	Member, Town of Lansing representative	Present	
Kate Supron	Co-Chair, Village of Cayuga Heights representative	Present	
Herb Engman	Member - Town of Ithaca	Present	
Chuck Rankin	Member - Alternate, Village of Groton	Present	
Elizabeth Thomas	Member - Town of Ulysses representative	Present	3:10 PM
J.R. Clairborne	Member - Alternate, City of Ithaca representative	Present	3:16 PM
Ann Rider	Vice Chair, Town of Enfield	Present	3:22 PM
Joe Mareane	Tompkins County Administrator	Present	
Paula Younger	Deputy County Administrator	Present	
Pat Pryor	Legislator	Present	
Michael Lane	Legislator	Present	
Marcia Lynch	Public Info. Officer, County Administration	Present	

Guests: J. Conley-Holcomb, E. McAllister, City of Ithaca, G. Hart, Finger Lakes Community News; S. Shuster, County Administration Intern

Call to Order

Mr. Driscoll called the meeting to order at 3:02 p.m.

Greeting/Sign In/Review Agenda

There were no changes to the agenda.

Broadband Update

Ms. Pryor, Chair of the County's Special Committee on Broadband, reported the Committee met on July 22nd and received an update on the status of where things are going at this time. She said because of the towns that were cut out of the grant funding Mr. Bartosch has done a re-engineering of the entire project to try to see how far resources could be spread to cover the parts in the County that were left out of the grant. In order to do that it had to be approved by the State; that has happened and the project can move forward as it was re-engineered. Ms. Pryor said a large part of Enfield can be covered but there continues to be discussion of the cost of the light that needs to go on top of the tower there. It is not clear whether some of the resources for Enfield have to be diverted to pay for the light on the tower; discussions are still taking place between Mr. Bartosch and Town officials.

Ms. Pryor said at the last meeting a suggestion was made that the towns that are a part of TCCOG consider committing resources to the project. A subcommittee of the Broadband Committee is also approaching private individuals and businesses in the community to do some fundraising. They were looking for a commitment of at least \$42,000 to enable Mr. Bartosch to move forward with ordering the poles to begin the build-out. A part of that has been raised by the Town of Danby, Town of Lansing, and the Village of Cayuga Heights, with each having pledged \$6,000. In addition there have been private commitments received of slightly over \$11,000 and the Town of Caroline has passed a resolution saying they will make up the difference between what has been pledged and what is needed to put the poles up.

Ms. Pryor reported Cayuga County has received assistance from Senator Seward for the two towns in that County that were left out. She believes Mr. Barber has had communication with Senator Seward as well. She expects it to take two weeks to get the poles in place and the equipment will be placed on the poles at a rate of two poles per week (total of 70 poles).

Ms. Weiser and Ms. Thomas arrived at this time.

Ms. Pryor said Mr. Bartosch found a private investor to fund the project until other funds come in from the State.

Ms. Supron asked what the status of donations is from other municipalities and said she hopes the towns that are not directly benefiting from this will contribute to this as well.

Ms. Pryor said she would be happy to speak with other municipal boards if that would be helpful.

Mr. Rankin arrived at this time.

Ms. Pryor clarified that the \$42,000 only pays for the poles; the equipment is an additional \$36,000.

Mr. Clairborne arrived at this time.

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RESULT:	ACCEPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Ric Dietrich, Member, Town of Danby
SECONDER:	Kate Supron, Co-Chair, Village of Cayuga Heights representative
AYES:	Dennis, Weiser, Driscoll, Dietrich, Miller, Supron, Engman, Rankin, Thomas, Clairborne, Rider

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RESULT:	ACCEPTED [10 TO 0]
MOVER:	Ric Dietrich, Member, Town of Danby
SECONDER:	Kate Supron, Co-Chair, Village of Cayuga Heights representative
AYES:	Dennis, Weiser, Driscoll, Dietrich, Miller, Supron, Engman, Rankin, Thomas, Rider
ABSTAIN:	J.R. Clairborne

Effectively Facilitating Meetings: "Training for Elected Officials"

Mr. Driscoll said Jeff Shepardson of the Community Dispute Resolution Center attended a previous meeting to present an idea and see if there was any interest on the part of TCCOG in putting together a seminar series for appointed and elected officials in Tompkins County. There was general agreement to proceed and since that time Mr. Driscoll has met with Mr. Shepardson on four occasions to tailor activities specific to elected and appointed municipal officials. They have a mockup of a meeting that would act as a pilot for TCCOG members to attend and to see if it would be useful. There would be no cost to TCCOG members to attend. He asked members to review the draft agenda for the sessions that are scheduled at 9 a.m. on September 25th and October 2nd.

Reports/Discussion Items

Tompkins County Grants Development and Management Center Preview (ID # 4278)

Ms. Younger, Deputy County Administrator, spoke of the vast number of grant opportunities that are available at the State, Federal, local, and private foundation levels. She introduced a long-time vision she had that has now come to fruition in the form of the Grant Development and Management Center that is now available as a service of the Department of County Administration. The Center offers information and resources that are specifically designed to meet the grant seeking needs of County departments and programming affiliates. This unique central resource provides the ability to search by funding entity or search by a particular subject area to find the grant opportunity that meets one's program needs. There are also additional resources to assist with grant preparation and links to training guides.

Ms. Younger introduced Saul Shuster, Intern, who assisted in the development of the website which is available through <http://www.tompkins-co.org/ctyadmin/Grants>. Mr. Shuster provided members with a demonstration of the website.

At the request of Ms. Weiser, Mr. Shuster will explore ways to send out notification when a new grant becomes available.

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Taxi Regulations

Ms. Conley-Holcomb said the issue of taxi regulations is not just a City issue and said the purpose of attending today's meeting is to discuss this and to see if there are opportunities for a partnership. At the present time the City has a comprehensive taxi ordinance with most of the focus being on rates but doesn't go as far as regulating the taxi companies or drivers such as doing background checks as well as safety inspections for the taxi cabs. She said the City's resources are dwindling and there is a need on both the public and taxicab side for some reform of how this business operates. The City receives complaints from the companies saying it takes too long for the City to issue licenses. When this happens companies are switching to livery services and this is causing problems. In addition there are a number of different rate structures between various municipalities and stories of people being charged very unreasonable rates. Ms. Conley-Holcomb said not only is that bad for residents, it is bad for students and tourism at a time when mass transportation is being promoted.

She reported on a meeting that was held with the County Administrator and County Legislators and said one of the ideas suggested was exploring Countywide taxi regulations that was a comprehensive ordinance and rate structure. One question that was raised was whether the County could be considered a municipality. Upon consultation with the City Attorney they were advised the way New York Vehicle and Traffic Law is written it gives the authority to cities, towns, and villages to regulate taxicabs and

liveries but only specifically mentions three counties; therefore, they believe State enabling legislation is needed in order for Tompkins County to become a regulator of taxicabs.

She asked whether TCCOG members would be interested in developing a comprehensive ordinance and rate structure and join together on this if State legislation cannot be approved. She said the City is not looking for financial resources for this they are asking for individuals to come together to explore what is the best use of collective resources. Mr. Engman said the Town of Ithaca would be pleased to work on a collaborative effort with the City. There was discussion of the length of time that it would take to have State enabling legislation. It was suggested that a workgroup meet and try to get consistency among municipalities in the County while requesting State enabling legislation.

Mr. Driscoll, Ms. Supron will meet with Ms. Conley-Holcomb and other representatives from the City to establish a workgroup and move this forward.

Cayuga Power Plant

Ms. Thomas said at the last meeting she put forth a resolution that stated rather than repowering with natural gas that it suggest that the upgrade of transmission lines at the Cayuga Power Plant be recommended. She said there are many options being discussed by many people and many different opinions. Ms. Supron said she was not comfortable at the last meeting saying TCCOG was in opposition to an option and suggested the resolution include language in favor of repowering the Plant without going as far opposing an option. She asked Ms. Miller to speak on behalf of the Town of Lansing.

Ms. Miller said Governor Cuomo's initiative is to eliminate coal-fired plants and have gas-fired plants in New York State and has charged the Public Service Commission with this. She said if the Plant closes it would have a devastating impact on the Town of Lansing (7.36% of budget) and a much greater impact on the Lansing School District. The School is predicting it would mean the elimination of 15 teaching positions, elimination of athletics, the music program, increasing class size, and eliminating program. She said one of her goals upon being elected was to go after renewable and sustainable sources of energy for the Town but it costs money; even grant money is not enough. She said she understands all of the concerns that have been raised but as the Town Supervisor she needs to work to keep both the Town and School District healthy. She said they do not know what the Public Service Commission will end up doing but noted the Governor's charge to the Commission was to look at the economic effects on the communities if these plants were to shut down and will take that into consideration when choices are made.

It was suggested that municipalities consider the resolution that was presented at the last meeting or other versions and make decisions individually; TCCOG as whole will not take action.

Report from Cable Committee

Mr. Engman reported on activities that have taken place since the last TCCOG meeting. On behalf of the Committee he sent a letter to Time Warner Cable protesting their arbitrary switch from analog to digital for local government programming. The letter stated that although they understand Time Warner Cable's motivation to reallocate bandwidth for commercial purposes this is seen as a taking of public property without due process or compensation. He said they wanted to get a protest in before this took place on or about July 23rd. A copy of the letter was sent to all the participating members of the group. Mr. Engman said they also had Mike Caton, consultant who many have worked with, look at the draft proposal for negotiation for a draft contract with Time Warner Cable. He has sent back his comments and the Committee will redo the agreement and will need to decide if additional technical

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assistance is needed. A revised draft will then go back out to the membership. Once final, a meeting will be set up in the Fall to meet with Time Warner Cable. The next meeting will be August 14th.

Supreme Court Ruling on Land Use Law

Ms. Weiser said the Supreme Court issued a ruling that affects land use in municipalities and how governments are able to deal with a contractor in terms of negotiating. She asked if members are interested in hearing from an attorney about this or deal with it on an individual municipality basis as issues arise. Mr. Engman said Susan Brock, Town of Ithaca Attorney, has been looking at this and could be asked to speak to this body. Mr. Engman will follow up with making arrangements to attend a meeting to speak about this.

Adoption of Laws to Ban Radioactive Fracking Waste

Ms. Thomas suggested Carol Chock would be the appropriate person to invite to speak on the topic of banning radioactive fracking waste. She provided an update on the amicus brief and stated it looks like there will be over 60 municipalities that will join.

Next Meeting Agenda Items

The following items were suggested for future agenda topics:

Smart Work Presentation (Joe Mareane)
Emergency Preparedness training for newly elected officials (Ms. Weiser will follow-up with
Beth Harrington for a November training)
Banning of radioactive fracking waste
Universal New York State building codes - potential requirement for residential sprinklers in
single family homes (Kate Supron)
Tompkins County Area Development annual update
Training for elected officials
Appointment to Emergency Planning Committee

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.