

Minutes
Tompkins County Council of Governments
Thursday, November 18, 2010
Scott Heyman Conference Room

Approved

Members Present: (12 municipalities)

T/Caroline – D. Barber	C/Ithaca – M. Coles
T/Danby – R. Dietrich, L. Shawley	Co./Tompkins – M. Robertson
T/Enfield – R. Barriere	T/Newfield – R. Driscoll
T/Ulysses – E. Thomas	V/Groton – B. Conger
T/Dryden – M. Sumner	V/Trumansburg – D. Nottke
T/Ithaca – H. Engman	V/Cayuga Heights – K. Supron

Municipalities Not in Attendance: (5 municipalities) V/Dryden, V/Lansing, V/Freeville, T/Lansing, T/Groton

Guests: J. Johnson, A. Hendrix, Youth Services Department; L. Shurtleff, B. Harrington, Department of Emergency Response

County staff: M. Lynch, J. Mareane, County Administration; D. Kiley, Planning Department; M. Pottorff, Legislature Office

Call to Order

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

Changes to the Agenda

There were no changes made to the agenda.

Approval of Minutes of October 13, 2010

It was MOVED by Ms. Conger (Village of Groton), seconded by Ms. Supron (Village of Cayuga Heights), and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members present, to approve the minutes of the Special meeting held October 13, 2010. MINUTES APPROVED.

Approval of Minutes of October 28, 2010

It was MOVED by Ms. Robertson (Tompkins County), seconded by Mr. Driscoll (Town of Newfield), and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members present, to approve the minutes of the meeting held October 28, 2010. MINUTES APPROVED.

Appointment of Nominating Committee

The following individuals volunteered to serve on the 2011 Leadership Nominating Committee:

Kate Supron
Richard Driscoll
Debbie Nottke

December Meeting

It was the consensus of those present to meet as scheduled in December but to have a light agenda to include a report back from the Nominating Committee and possible brainstorming for 2011. Ms. Robertson offered to bring refreshments to this end of the year meeting and it was suggested members be asked to RSVP.

Report from TCCOG Resources Subcommittee

Mr. Mareane reviewed the following proposal:

- Goal
 - Modest amount of money available to relatively-rapidly fund special projects/initiatives that may arise during the course of the year
- Sensitivities
 - The larger the budget, the greater the tendency toward bureaucracy and rigidity, and the risk of loss of a sense of volunteerism and mutual interest that has been important to TCCOG
 - Some municipalities have a greater capacity to contribute to costs than others
 - The county contributes a significant amount of in-kind services, particularly the support provided by Michelle Pottorff
- Proposal
 - Voluntary approach
 - Suggested annual contribution is \$250 per member
 - County's contribution is in-kind
 - (If full participation, TCCOG will have an annual budget of \$4,000)
 - Proposals to appropriate funds must be received by TCCOG Board at least one week prior to the Board meeting
 - Funding proposals should be oriented toward projects that serve the broadest interests of all TCCOG members rather than the unique interests of minority members, and that are one-time rather than reoccurring in nature
 - Appropriation of funds requires 2/3 vote of those present

Resolution No. 003-2010: Establishing a TCCOG Funding Reserve

Moved by Ms. Robertson, seconded by Mr. Driscoll.

Ms. Sumner said she is conflicted in trying to raise revenue before having expenses; however, she agreed that the public hearing held last year on gas drilling was a good example of where funds could have been well used. She suggested looking ahead at some point to consider what funding needs may exist.

Ms. Nottke noted this is not mandatory and a municipality that does not contribute could still make a request for funding. Mr. Barber stressed the intent of this is to fund items that would benefit all local governments.

Ms. Sumner said members should be aware that some municipalities may wish to contribute in-kind services rather than a set dollar amount. Mr. Barber said if a municipality does not want to contribute maybe they will eventually see the value and contribute in subsequent years.

Ms. Pottorff was asked to distribute a copy of the resolution to all municipalities.

A voice vote resulted as follows on the resolution: Ayes – 12, Noes – 0. RESOLUTION ADOPTED.

Whereas, on occasion, the Tompkins County Council of Governments (TCCOG) needs a modest source of funding for projects that are of mutual benefit to the majority of municipalities within TCCOG and,

Whereas, a quick funding response to projects that arise unplanned is not currently possible because of the nature of TCCOG that requires each member to return to each of their municipal boards with funding requests, a process that can take months, and results in uneven and unpredictable funding amounts, and

Whereas, the continued sense of volunteerism and mutual interest that has been important to TCCOG is still encouraged and highly valued, and

Whereas, funding proposals should be oriented toward projects that serve the broadest interests of all TCCOG members rather than the unique interests of a minority of members, and

Whereas, projects are of a one-time nature rather than recurring, now therefore be it

Resolved, That each municipality contributes a \$250 fee annually on a voluntary basis. The need for additional funds will be reevaluated annually.

Resolved, further, That the County has and will continue to contribute a significant amount of in-kind services, particularly the support provided by the County (currently the Legislature Office), therefore no fee shall be requested from Tompkins County,

Resolved, further, that proposals to appropriate funds must be received by TCCOG at least one week prior to the Board meeting,

Resolved, further, That the decision to spend TCCOG reserves on a submitted proposal will be made based by a 2/3 majority vote of those attending the TCCOG meeting where the proposal is being presented and discussed.

Resolved, further, That Tompkins County will administer the TCCOG Reserves.

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Discussion: Youth Services

Mr. Barber said TCCOG had a special meeting on October 23 to try to deal with the loss of County funding for youth services. Municipalities also approached individual youth commissions to discuss this funding and develop a plan for the upcoming year. The purpose of today's discussion is to hear about how those discussions went and to develop a plan to move forward.

Mr. Barber said this is very tough for the Town of Caroline to make up the difference in funding. The Town decided to fund the personnel side but provided very little funding on the program side. They have left it to the youth commission to find other sources of funding and to examine collaboration with other municipalities.

Mr. Driscoll referred to the October 13 minutes and referenced the question "what service is each municipality buying or funding"? He spoke of density of arrangements with regard to recreation committees and funding streams. Mr. Driscoll said the Town has decided to support youth services but would like to know what the services are that are being purchased and how those services are being evaluated. He said if there is no solution brought forward by the time the Town enters its budget cycle it is possible that funding will not be approved.

Ms. Sumner agreed and said the structure is "awkward at best". The Town of Dryden's Youth Commission is independent of the Town Board. She said the Town has frequently raised the question of whether this is how it wants to spend its money and noted the contribution last year was greater than a match. The same amount was budgeted this year but the Town will be looking at whether it can provide the service in the Town without the County's support but won't be looking at it until January.

Ms. Thomas questioned how many municipalities have a town board member serving on a youth commission board. Ms. Conger said she and Mr. Morey each serve as members on the Town and Village youth commission in Groton; other members stated that serve as liaisons and do not hold voting seats.

Mr. Engman said Ms. Zahler, former Director of Youth Services, and Ken Shlather, Executive Director of Cooperative Extension, attended a Town Board meeting and discussed youth services extensively. Ms. Zahler and Mr. Schalther were very helpful in explaining the programs but there are still unanswered questions in terms of what programming would be lost due to the County's lesser allocation. There is also a need for clarification of the services the Town receives. Mr. Engman said it gets complicated because there are different phrases or titles used for different programs under different circumstances. He said often times when one service is often referred differently at the various different levels and this leads to confusion. He stressed the importance of consistency in language and hopes this is one area that can be worked on in the coming year.

Mr. Engman reported the Town of Ithaca declined by a 4 to 3 vote, to allocate the additional \$15,000 that is needed for the youth programming in the Town. Part of that was a split reasoning because some wanted to find out what the County was going to do with its allocation; others didn't support the funding because they were unsure about what they were paying for. He expects this will come back for another vote in the beginning of December.

Mr. Engman stated the Town will also have to do a careful analysis in the coming years to decide how its wants to proceed with youth programming. The Town's Recreation Coordinator will also be retiring soon. The Town will not be filling that vacancy immediately as they will be examining that along with the all the Town's youth services programming.

Mr. Dietrich suggested this be a topic TCCOG undertakes next year. In addition to exploring partnerships that might be possible there are questions that need to be answered. They include: what are our needs, what are the services, and are they being met?

Mr. Barber said there is a need for programmers to get together and talk about how collaboration could work in addition to looking at what the cost would be to implement those programs. He said Ms. Hendrix will be reaching out to all youth commissions and will be asked to report back to TCCOG on a regular basis.

Ms. Hendrix said it is the Youth Services Board's charge to look at the allocation process and to work with the different partners in the community. They meet next week and they will be discussing the entire Municipal Youth Services Program. She said they will be discussing how to include all of the stakeholders to make sure everyone's voice is being heard and to make sure all programs are meeting the needs in a cost effective way. She provided assurance that the Youth Services Board will continue to collaborate and communicate with all members as well as with youth commissions. Ms. Hendrix said she hopes they will have a recommendation by Spring on how to move forward.

There was a brief discussion of the structure of youth commissions. Ms. Johnson said things have changed over time and it may be a good idea for town boards to look at the structure of youth commissions to see if the current structure is the best for each municipality. She suggested looking at what an ideal structure might look like and providing that information to municipalities.

Mr. Driscoll expressed concern about having a mechanism going forward because he doesn't want to be in the same place of having things up in the air when the next budget process starts.

Report from the Task Force on Gas Drilling (TANG)

Ms. Thomas reported the next meeting will be on December 7th at 3 p.m. A Pennsylvania full-day tour will take place on December 15th and is being organized by Sharon Anderson and anyone interested in going should contact her. She also said a webinar will take place on December 8th from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. to prep individuals going on the tour. Ms. Thomas announced on December 8th there will

be a presentation and discussion session at Trumansburg High School; she will forward information to members.

Ms. Kiley provided a brief update on the mapping group. She said the group is looking at what a map would look like if there is a full build out of gas drilling in the area. She said discussions are taking place about how to make some of the determinations and assumptions that will go into this; but there is a lot of excitement after the first rough cut of a map was produced. Mr. Barber said the group has a number of GIS professionals working with them to provide technical support. He said the purpose of these maps is to provide a planning tool for the public and local officials that will help communities work on a number of issues that relate to gas drilling.

Mr. Dietrich said he downloaded some maps following a presentation by Tony Ingraffea and will make these maps available. Ms. Thomas spoke of the presentation by Mr. Ingraffea and said it was extremely informative and recommended others try to attend one of his presentations.

Ms. Robertson reported the City of Pittsburg has adopted a resolution banning gas drilling within the City's limits. Broome County will be considering another version of a resolution authoring the leasing of county land.

HIC Update

Mr. Barber said the Municipal Health Insurance Consortium will meet after this meeting. Information sessions are currently being held for employees and the process is moving forward. He said there is a Joint Committee on Plan Structure and Design that is made up of both labor and management to work on health benefits. He reminded members of the Consortium to appoint representatives to this Committee if they have not already done so.

Report on Emergency Services as it relates to Gas Drilling

Lee Shurtleff, Director of Emergency Response, said Mr. Dietrich has been working on the public safety aspects of gas drilling and this has broadened into a larger topic being brought forward today. He said they began brainstorming about some of the potential risks that emergency responders will face that relates to gas drilling activities and presented the following information to members.

COUNTY ROLE IN MUNICIPAL EMERGENCY PLANNING

The County recognizes its role and interest in addressing emergency management concerns associated with hydrofracking methods of gas drilling and also to the more general matter of the status of emergency management planning within municipal government.

While recognizing that it cannot mandate or impose a plan on a municipality, nor does it have the resources to undertake planning on behalf of a municipality, the County can serve an important role in facilitating and assisting the development of municipal emergency management plans.

Accordingly, the County is prepared to provide or undertake the following:

1. With respect to concerns associated with gas drilling, the County will sponsor and organize a seminar for first responders and municipal officials that will increase awareness of public safety risks associated with hydrofracking drilling, thereby providing the foundation for a local discussion about emergency planning elements specific to this activity. Speakers at the event would be public safety and/or emergency planning officials from areas in Pennsylvania where gas drilling is already occurring.

2. With respect to the more general matter of municipal emergency management plans, the County will undertake a series of actions intended to assist municipalities to develop plans that, in turn, could be brought together into an overall County planning system. The County would serve as a facilitator and easily accessible-source of expertise and assistance to municipalities. The specific steps in this process would be:

- A member of the County's Emergency Response team (Beth Harrington and/or Jessica Verfuss) would visit each municipality to discuss the status of their planning. Where appropriate, the County will offer its assistance to help the municipality develop or expand a plan;
- As a part of the County's assistance, it will prepare a "toolkit" to guide officials as they prepare their own plan. This basic "how to" booklet would include tips on things like:
 - How to prepare a Continuity of Operations Plan
 - How to identify Core Services, along with examples of how governments often approach the question of how to maintain or restore those services in an emergency situation;
 - The elements of an emergency response that are handled by other levels of government and that DO NOT have to be addressed;
 - Considerations in designating a Public Information Officer, and other key positions in an emergency response;
 - Generally, the booklet would help to "de-mystify" the planning process, providing step-by-step guidance wherever possible, templates, and (where appropriate) tips such as how other municipalities commonly address a planning challenge, such as steps to be followed in restoring a core service.
- The County will offer its expertise and assistance to municipalities as they develop their plans. (However, the County cannot assume responsibility for the development of the plan.)
- As municipal plans are developed, the County will attempt to develop internal systems that will allow the information developed by the municipalities to be centrally maintained and available to help facilitate a countywide response to emergencies.
- The County will visit each municipality on a regular basis (every year or two years) to review the plan, help to ensure that the plan remains up-to-date.
- The County's approach will be hands-on and one-on-one.

Members expressed appreciation and support for Mr. Shurtleff and Ms. Harrington's suggestions and to provide a fuller understanding of the infrastructure that exists. Mr. Shurtleff said this will also help the County's Department of Emergency Response get a better understanding of the critical infrastructure of facilities that exists.

Announcement(s)

Ms. Kiley announced a webinar will be held on March 17th on emergency preparedness with a speaker from Lycoming County in Pennsylvania. She will send Ms. Harrington information on this.

Mr. Barber announced the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) is sponsoring a workshop on Emerald Ash Borer on December 10th in Cortland at the DEC Office.

Next Agenda

A report from Nominating Committee will be included on the next agenda.

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Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Michelle Pottorff, TC Legislature Office