

St. Lawrence County Planning Office
STAFF WORK REPORT
May 2023



NEW STAFF WELCOME!

The Office is very excited to welcome two new planners to the staff. Preston Santimaw (Planner 1) and Samuel Joseph (Planner 2) both began their employment with the County on Tuesday, May 30th. Welcome Preston and Sam!

ADVISORY BROAD SUPPORT

Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board. On the 8th, Jason presented a resolution to the Board of Legislators to accept the Ag and Farmland Protection Board's recommended additions to Ag Districts 1 and 2 as requested by property owners. On the 12th, Matilda facilitated a discussion for Cornell Cooperative Extension to discuss future programming ideas and capital projects. During the week of the 15th, Matilda updated statistics for a Board resolution to proclaim June as Dairy Month.

County Planning Board (CPB). The CPB met on May 11th in the second floor conference room of the Public Safety Building. Seven full review projects were discussed: a 25 lot subdivision in Brasher (denied); a subdivision in Macomb (conditionally approved); Village of Potsdam Cannabis Law (returned for local action); a Site plan for a Cannabis shop at 25 Market Street, Potsdam (returned for local action); a cell tower in the Town of Rossie (conditionally approved); a use variance for a manufacturing facility (denied); zoning code revision for the Village of Waddington (conditionally approved).

Environmental Management Council (EMC). The EMC met on May 17th. The speaker was Bill Dashnaw. Bill spoke about the ongoing work in the Black Lake area to study water quality issues, improve the fishery, and encourage economic development.

Staff have created a Facebook page for the EMC. Please check it out at <https://www.facebook.com/St-Lawrence-County-Environmental-Management-Council-105829918672342>

Fair Housing Task Force. The Fair Housing Task Force met on May 23rd. The major item for discussion was a review of the draft "Fair Housing Matters NY: An Assessment of Fair Housing in New York". Comments on this draft Assessment will be received until June 8th.

See <https://hcr.ny.gov/fairhousingmattersny> for the draft Assessment, and to submit comments.

BOARD OF LEGISLATORS

Countywide Broadband Assessment. In May, the 16 contracts awarding a total of \$2,955,145 were signed by the Chair and forwarded to the ISPs for their review and signature. A special BOL meeting was held to consider a resolution supporting an application to the Northern Border Regional Commission and committing matching funds up to \$250,000. The resolution passed. The NBRC application will be submitted by June 2, 2023.

OCF Repurpose Committee. Staff have been assigned to the County's Ogdensburg Correctional Facility Repurpose Committee. The group met last on February 17th and took a tour of the facility. Multiple local, County and State representatives were in attendance.

Raquette River Advisory Council / West Branch St. Regis River Advisory Council. These Councils were formed as part of the relicensing process for hydroelectric facilities on the Raquette and West Branch of the St. Regis Rivers, respectively. Both Councils met on May 25th.

Another River Advisory Council was proposed for the Oswegatchie River in 2011. This Council has never been activated. Annual contributions made by Brookfield Power currently total almost \$20,000.

SLC Water/Waste Water Infrastructure American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding Initiative. The BOL allocated \$3 million for municipal water and waste water projects. Twelve municipalities have been awarded a total of \$2,969,563. All contracts have been fully executed. Staff coordinated with the Treasurer's Office to develop a reimbursement/reporting process for these funds; this form has been distributed to all municipalities awarded funds.

County Snowmobile Grant. The Planning Office has been asked to take over preparation and management of the County Snowmobile Trail grant. The application is broken into three phases, the first of which is due on June 30th. The project was formerly housed at the Soil and Water Conservation District. This is a major undertaking and will consume several staffers time throughout the year.

COMMUNITY / ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). The Planning Office currently operates one CDBG award that addresses housing rehabilitation needs: the fourth round of the Countywide Housing Rehabilitation program (CHRP 4). During May, the County's Subrecipient reported that 4 projects have been completed; 2 projects are under construction; 3 projects are ready to start, and 4 additional projects are ready to be bid out.

The Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) has been released for the next round of CDBG funding. The deadline for submission is August 7, 2023. The County is eligible to apply for as much as \$1,000,000. for a next round of housing rehabilitation activity.

Lead Hazard Abatement Program. This \$1 million award from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is providing lead-based paint stabilization, or abatement assistance, to low- and moderate-income households throughout the county. By the end of May, the Planning Office reports that 19 units have been completed, 1 unit is under construction, and 14 clients are in an application phase. In addition, staff attended HUD's required Program Manager's School/Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes annual conference.

GRANTS

CDC National Center for Injury Prevention and Control: Overdose Data to Action: Limiting Overdose Through Collaborative Actions in Localities (OD2A: LOCAL). Staff worked with Public Health and Community Services to develop and submit this proposal requesting \$4,589,582 over a five-year period.

Grants Notice Distribution. The Grants Notice is distributed to County Department Heads, Legislators, Superintendents of Schools, local municipal officials and approximately 350 additional individuals representing organizations throughout the North Country.

Septic Repair Program. The County has funds from the NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation (EFC) to repair or replace deficient septic tanks within 250 feet of the St. Lawrence River in communities west of Ogdensburg, and along the lower portion of the Raquette River (from Norfolk through Massena) and the Little River (Towns of Clifton and Fine). To date, 28 projects have been completed.

PLANNING MATTERS

Homeless Housing Working Group. There is an ad-hoc group working to address issues of homelessness in St. Lawrence County. No updates in May.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

County Transit System. On the 3rd, Matilda virtually met with Department of Transportation representatives to review the RFP process to purchase and install technology into the Public Transit bus fleet. On the 4th, Matilda and Public Transit partners virtually met with vendors to finalize quotes for service and project timelines for installation. On the 15th, Matilda and Mobility Manager Sonja Jensen met with St. Regis Mohawk Tribe representatives to consider their request to operate a summer route on weekends in July. On the 18th, Matilda attended the Public Transit Task Force Meeting at the Fairfield Inn. On the 19th, Matilda and Sonja held a daylong work session to update route maps and schedules. During the week of the 22nd, Matilda consulted with Purchasing and Treasurer's Office staff to draft a resolution for the Board's consideration to purchase bus technology. Also that week, Matilda prepared and submitted an agreement for the Chair's signature to provide public transportation service to and from SUNY Potsdam. On the 24th, Matilda participated in a virtual meeting with The Arc and SUNY Potsdam staff. During the month, Matilda prepared two bus advertising agreements with the Community Health Center of the North Country.