

St. Lawrence County Planning Office
STAFF WORK REPORT
December 2024



ADVISORY BOARD SUPPORT

County Planning Board (CPB). The CPB met on December 12th in the Conference room on the second floor of the HSC Building. Two full review projects were discussed; a site plan review for a greenhouse facility in the Town of Massena (this project will be reviewed further at the January 9th CPB meeting following a mutually agreed-upon extension) and a site plan review for an ice cream shop in the Town of Pierrepont (conditionally approved).

Environmental Management Council (EMC). The EMC last met on November 20th and did not meet in December. Next meeting is scheduled for January 15th at 6 p.m. in the HSC Building. New regulations for NYS DEC regulated wetlands takes effect January 1, 2025. Staff investigated new regulations and potential impacts on office procedures.

Fair Housing Task Force. On the 10th, Matilda and Preston participated in the Northern Forest Center’s webinar on housing-friendly planning and zoning. Throughout the month of December, Preston coordinated with panelists to schedule a one-hour webinar on resources available to address housing complaints. Presenters include representatives from Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York; the State Attorney General’s Office; the Village of Potsdam Code Enforcement Officer; and Fair Housing CNY. The webinar is scheduled at noon on Tuesday, January 21st. The next Fair Housing Task Force meeting is scheduled for February 25th, 2025 at the 2nd floor conference room of the HSC.

BOARD OF LEGISLATORS

Countywide Broadband Assessment. Staff facilitated one committee meeting, participated in one NYS ConnectALL webinar, had one working session with DANC, and managed contract extensions for ARPA-funded projects.

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. To date, disbursements have been made totaling \$2,249,350.05. Nine municipalities have expended all their awarded funds and/or completed their project: Ogdensburg, Colton, Brasher, DeKalb, Hermon, Heuvelton, Lisbon, Louisville, and Parishville. The remaining three municipalities have drawn down a portion of their awarded funds.

County Snowmobile Grant. St. Lawrence County Planning Office is the local sponsor for the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Places Snowmobile Grant. The County was awarded \$293,840.00 in snowmobile trail maintenance for the 2024-2025 grant year. Staff processed payment from the State and paid the Trail Maintenance Entities (TMEs) the 70% award. TMEs submit monthly work reports which staff reviews. One TME, North Country Trail Maintenance Alliance, is participating in an OPRHP pilot program of GPS installed groomers, which staff will then participate in analyzing the data during phase 3 submission.

COMMUNITY / ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). Countywide Housing Rehabilitation Program #5 (CHRP 5) is underway. The Development Authority of North Country (DANC), the subrecipient, and the Planning Office have been meeting regularly to discuss progress. Phase 1 consisted of five projects for low to moderate income households, and all five projects have been completed. Phase II consists of four more projects. The pre-bid meeting occurred December 20th and bids are due January 10th. Planning staff and DANC have begun to review the waiting list to identify Phase III projects.

GRANTS

Septic Repair Program. All projects completed and funds spent under this program since “Round One” have been combined to align the County’s program benchmarks with NYS. To date, 86 systems have been repaired/replaced; \$605,040.87 has been expended; and \$994,959.13 in program funds remain available.

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.

PLANNING MATTERS

Annual Fall Land Use Training. On the 3rd, Preston and Jason delivered a two-hour fall land use training session to 26 participants in the 2nd floor conference room of the Human Services Center. Jason and Preston reviewed: Spot zoning; elements of a good site plan; and running planning and zoning board of appeals meetings.

Village of Heuvelton Comprehensive Plan. After a final public hearing on November 13th, the Village Board officially adopted its Comprehensive Plan. Staff would like to thank the Village for its dedication in making this project possible.

Town of Hammond Comprehensive Plan Update. Public input gathered since the October public meeting has been incorporated into final draft plan; staff working on document format and map updates.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

County Transit System. On the 2nd, Matilda participated in a virtual review of the County’s draft Accelerated Transit Capital (ATC) funding application, which includes funds for: The installation of a solar-powered bus shelter along the west elevation of the County Human Services Center; purchasing mobile tablets for the bus fleet; and installing an exterior surveillance camera on the passenger door side of every bus. On the 3rd, Matilda participated in a virtual review of the reimbursement request she prepared for 2023 public transportation expenses. On the 4th, Matilda and County Mobility Manager Sonja Jensen participated in a check-in meeting with supervisory staff at The Arc to discuss bus operations. On the 5th, Matilda held a year-end meeting with VTC staff to recap

Mobility Management accomplishments in 2024, and to discuss a 2025 scope of work. On the 10th and 19th, Matilda participated in a virtual meeting with Passio, The Arc, and the County's Mobility Manager to prepare for an in-person training session during the week of January 6th. On the 12th, Matilda participated in a virtual meeting with The Arc's Controller to discuss monthly calculations of bus fleet expenses. On the afternoon of the 12th, Matilda attended the DOT's 5311 funding application webinar for 2024-2025. On the 17th, Matilda participated in a virtual meeting with the Mobility Manager to discuss public notice requirements for the funding application. On the 26th, Matilda distributed the 5311 public notice to newspapers stating the County's intent to apply for operating and capital funding for bus operations, First Mile Last Mile and Mobility Management. Throughout the month, Matilda submitted reimbursement requests to the State for 2023 operating expenses, the purchase of Lot K buses, the purchase of bus fleet technology and 2023 mobility management expenses.