

Salmon Rivers Council of Governments
Minutes of Meeting – Tuesday, August 27, 2024
2:00 p.m
Albion-Altmar Municipal Building
15 Bridge Street, Altmar, New York

Present:

Amboy – Larry Rayder, town board member
Orwell – William Potter, supervisor
Parish (village) – Jackie Murphy, mayor
NYS Tug Hill Commission – Katie Malinowski, executive director;
Matt Johnson, planning director
Salmon Rivers circuit rider – Paul Baxter
Salmon Rivers associate circuit rider – Heidi Tompkins

Excused:

Albion – Mike Faulkner, supervisor
Parish (town) – Jim Bernys, supervisor
Pulaski – Jan Tighe, mayor

Meeting was called to order at 2:10 p.m., and attendees were introduced.

Wildlife Management Areas – Katie reviewed the background and history of the issue, and updated the group that further action would likely require introduction of the legislation in the next session of the legislative.

Little Salmon River dams and salmon reintroduction – there will be a meeting tomorrow in Mexico regarding the status of dams on the Little Salmon River and efforts underway to remove dams and restore the river to its natural condition.

Oswego County housing study – Katie noted that the county industrial development agency (IDA) Operation Oswego County is currently conducting a countywide housing study, being done by the MRB Group, the same group which did the economic development study for the North Shore Council of Governments. There was interest in having IDA executive director Austin Wheelock at a future Salmon Rivers meeting.

Wetlands – In local towns, problems have resulted from changes in wetlands regulations as they are currently being enforced and as they have been proposed to be amended. There was an article concerning this in the August 23, 2024 issue of the *Tug Hill Times*. Further amendments would take effect January 1, 2024. The state Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is currently seeking comments on the proposed changes; details about this are in the *Tug Hill Times* article.

Fire brigades – There are also changes pending in the standards pertaining to operation of fire brigades, and rural fire departments and companies would suffer disproportionately should they go into effect. Some of the results are expected to be increased equipment costs, increased recordingkeeping, and standards which would result in a smaller pool of available personnel. A

sample letter is currently in development for concerned communities and citizens to be able to offer comments on the proposals.

Tug Hill Commission staffing – Salmon Rivers chair William Potter served on the committee to evaluation and make recommendations on the successor to North Shore and Salmon Rivers circuit rider Paul Baxter, who is scheduled to enter retirement in the first quarter of 2025. Heidi Tompkins has been selected as that successor, and paperwork is currently being processed. If everything goes well, Heidi will be a Tug Hill employee before the end of 2024, allowing for several months of overlap before Paul’s retirement, and resulting in a smooth transition.

Local Government Conference 2025 – Planning is currently underway for next year’s conference. Tentative date is Monday, March 31 and Tuesday, April 1.

Planning – Matt Johnson reported on planning activities in the area. Albion has a planning board and is interested in updating the town comprehensive plan as a needed first step before working on zoning for the town. Amboy’s projects have included zoning revision and subdivision regulations, Orwell is interested in comprehensive plan work and is seeking funding for that purpose, and Parish has a joint comprehensive plan update in process being reviewed by the county.

Other projects – Orwell water – Orwell supervisor William Potter reported that finances have been the most difficult part of the project. Interest rates have increase as the project transpired. They hope to have the project completed by Halloween.

Parish is also interested in water, and the village has a water project underway. They have changed engineers to C2AE, and have conducted an income survey. USDA Rural Development has money available.

Next meeting – The group discussed potential dates for the next meeting. Dates identified were:

- Wednesday, November 13
- Monday, November 18
- Wednesday, November 20
- Monday, November 25

Meeting would be at 2:00 p.m. in Albion.

Meeting was adjourned at 3:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted



Paul M. Baxter
Municipal Management Consultant