



September 15, 2011 Minutes

CALL TO ORDER – Chair Joseph Hauryski called the meeting to order at 4:35 PM in the STC Conference Room.

ATTENDANCE:

Chemung County: Ted Bennett; Thomas Santulli

Schuyler County: Dennis Fagan; Thomas Gifford; Danielle Hautaniemi; Timothy O’Hearn

Steuben County: Mark Alger; Amy Dlugos; Joseph Hauryski; Robert Nichols; Scott Van Etten

STC Staff: Marcia Weber; Susan Cratsley; Victoria Ehlen; Chelsea Robertson; Janet Thigpen; Dan Wilhelm

WELCOME and INTRODUCTIONS – Chair Joe Hauryski welcomed everyone to the meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – On a motion duly made (Mark Alger/Scott VanEtten) and carried, the minutes of the July 21, 2011 meeting were approved.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. **Audit Committee**

- a) **Abstract of Claims** – Scott VanEtten reported on behalf of the Audit Committee. Five abstracts were approved by the Committee and totaled \$50,732.55. On a motion duly made (Scott VanEtten/Mark Alger) and carried, the abstracts were approved.

2. **Budget and Personnel Committee** – Joe reported that funding for STC is coming through. Dan Wilhelm, STC Accountant discussed check writing issues.

- a) **STC 2012 Budget Process** – Joe noted that the 2012 budget process has begun and the Committee will be meeting on November 3, 2011.

3. **Physical Resources Advisory Committee (PRAC)** –

Amy Dlugos reported that PRAC members reported on the following: the three county Bus Route brochure has been completed; water sampling has been completed in the Town of Erin, and results should be back from the lab in the near future; Seneca Lake Pure Water Association is holding a public meeting on 9/22/11 at the Finger Lakes Institute on the new DEC regulations and Marcellus Shale; and the NYS tax cap legislation is very complex; there are several existing loopholes. All matter relating to

property taxes are very important to farmers.

Jack Benjamin gave a presentation to the group on his views on development in Upstate New York for the next five years. He also identified major trends that are shaping the workforce and tax base in the region.

Brett Chedzoy gave a presentation on the use of Silvopasturing to increase the number of livestock in the region and to improve land management practices. Silvopasturing is an excellent way to remove invasive species and improve forest productivity. Amy noted that there will be a Northeastern Silvopasture Conference sponsored by Cornell University Cooperative Extension to be held on November 7 and 8, 2011 in Watkins Glen and encouraged board members to attend.

Amy reported that the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is complete, and an outreach letter is being sent out to local government to promote the importance of CEDS.

REGIONAL PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

1. **Flooding Issues**

FEMA Risk MAP Project - Janet Thigpen reported that the Discovery products for FEMA's Risk MAP project should be released soon. This will include some information about the planned work for developing new flood hazard maps for the Chemung and Cohocton watersheds. There will not be a formal public review for the Scope of Work. Janet plans to review the Discovery information carefully and advocate for any changes if warranted.

Janet noted that FEMA, the Corp of Engineers, and DEC have agreed to a meeting to discuss levee certification issues with local officials. FEMA wanted to wait until the public review period for their new policies about how to map levee-protected areas. The proposed policy is currently being reviewed by the regions, and Janet doesn't know how soon it will be released for public review. She has requested two separate meetings: (1) the presentation of FEMA's proposed policy changes that will also be of interest to people from Nichols, Binghamton, Mansfield, etc.; and (2) a meeting focused on certification of the levees in the Chemung watershed. These meetings may occur sometime in October.

Tropical Storm Lee Flood - Janet reported that the day before Tropical Storm Lee, the NWS forecast was for the heaviest rains to be centered on the STC region. Instead it occurred to the east with higher rainfall amounts than anticipated. Most of our area dodged the bullet again.

Janet noted that there were a lot of wet basements, some building damage in Catlin and Chemung, and extensive road damage in Chemung. The hardest hit community in our region was Wellsburg. Bentley Creek broke the gravel berm and wreaked havoc in the Village. The Code Enforcement Officer said that 90 buildings had some water and 40-50 had significant flooding. At this time, the federal disaster declaration does not include Chemung County. The Emergency Management Office has been assembling damage data and is optimistic that the county will qualify for Individual Assistance. Janet noted that it is likely that many of the buildings have been substantially damaged. NFIP floodplain development standards require that if a building in the regulated floodplain sustains damage that exceeds 50% of the market value of the structure, it must be treated as new construction and brought into compliance with current floodplain development standards. This means that the buildings would need to be elevated or removed.

Janet stated that there will be a public workshop in Wellsburg about floodproofing. This workshop will explain the NFIP requirements so that people with buildings that may have been substantially damaged can delay rebuilding until that determination has been made. The workshop will provide information about various floodproofing techniques for reducing future damages. In addition to elevating or removing the entire building, this includes things like: elevating utilities, elevating electrical components, using flood damage resistant building materials, and installing flood vents so that water can enter and leave without causing structural damage.

Janet stated that the Natural Resources Conservation Service has developed the draft plan for a levee along Bentley Creek to protect the Village of Wellsburg. It would require removal of 5-6 houses. There needs to be local interest and local funding to move forward with this project.

STC Flood Assistance Program - Janet noted that recent flooding is a very graphic demonstration of how seriously flooding could impact our region, and asked if the Board had suggestions about what STC can and should be doing. Janet said that she is having trouble finding funding that lets her focus a lot of time on efforts to prevent future flood damage and asked the Board for ideas about funding sources. In the aftermath of this flood, she is hopeful that it will become somewhat easier to find grant funding for things such as: technical assistance, training, public education, drafting local regulations, writing education materials, promoting improved national policy, expanding CRS programs, etc.

National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) - Janet reported that the US Congress passed legislation to reauthorize the National Flood Insurance Program and make some changes. The Senate is working on its version of this. Janet believes that this flooding event emphasizes the need for major reform. Most standard homeowner policies do not cover flood damage, and flood insurance is very expensive. Buildings without mortgages and those outside of the mapped floodplain often do not carry it. The program isn't financially sustainable because the policy base includes only the highest risk buildings, and continually increasing the cost of those policies won't solve the problem. Buildings far from the floodplain can have drainage issues that cause water damage not covered by insurance that also may not meet the NFIP definition of a flood. Janet thinks that flood insurance needs to be affordable, particularly for buildings that pre-date floodplain construction requirements, and that some sort of "outside water" coverage should be a standard part of most insurance policies. For buildings outside of the mapped floodplain and with no prior flood damages, the cost of that water coverage could be very low. Janet would like to write a letter to our Senators and Member of Congress stating that flood insurance should be affordable and the policy base expanded. On a motion duly made (Dennis Fagan/Scott VanEtten) and carried, Janet will prepare a letter and send it to STC's representatives.

2. **Regional Economic Development Councils** - Victoria Ehlen reported that Governor Cuomo created 10 Regional Economic Development Councils across NY State. STC is well represented on the Council due to the appointment of several STC board members to the new organization. As many of the board members know, the council activities have also included ongoing work-group meetings. STC's Planner and Economic Development Coordinator along with several STC board members have been attending meetings in Binghamton for the past few weeks. These work groups have provided assistance identifying important projects for inclusion in the Final Economic Development Strategy. Rail and shovel ready projects were a top priority of the infrastructure work group, followed by the regional broadband project for the middle mile and final mile. Public input is included in the final strategy, and meetings are being held throughout the region.

A combined funding application has been prepared. All applications for NYS funding must utilize the Combined Funding Application (CFA) process. Applications must be submitted by November 14, and funding announcements will be made by spring 2012.

3. **2012 ARC Applications** – Victoria reported that STC received 10 pre-applications for Fiscal Year 2012. The applications were ranked by the STC Regional Human Services and Economic Development Policy Committees. Out of the 10 projects, one project moved forward and was funded with 2011 funds (it was also submitted last year), 2 applications were not recommended to move forward, one project was asked to submit a full application but withdrew. Completed full applications were requested for six (6) projects. Several of STC's project sponsors moved quickly and submitted applications early. There is a possibility that those projects can be funded with unexpended funds from FY 2011. If not, the projects will go through the normal fiscal year 2012 process. The projects submitted to NYS DOS for FY 2011 consideration are: The Unified Telecommunication System Project at Schuyler County, submitted by Schuyler Hospital; Seneca Lake/Seneca Canal Waterfront Development Plan, submitted by SCOPED; Village Square Wastewater Planning Project, submitted by Village of Hammondsport; B&H Railroad Bridge Timber Deck Replacement, submitted by Steuben County IDA; and Route 21 Sewer Extension, submitted by City of Hornell. The Digital W/S Infrastructure and Mapping Accessibility Project: Phase I (submitted by STC) as well as all the above projects also were sent to the NYS DOS for consideration under the regular FY2012 process.

Marcia reported that the Schuyler Child Care Coordinating Council Day Care Center is moving forward. ARC has asked for additional information, and Marcia is working with the sponsor to provide that information. It is hoped that this project will be funded in FY2011.

4. **Telecommunications** – Marcia received a request from Senator Gillibrand's office to write a letter of support for legislation that the Senator is supporting to provide more funding for telecommunications through the NTIA. Marcia wrote a letter of support and provided information regarding better ways of determining which areas are underserved.

Marcia Weber reported that the Southern Tier Network is moving forward. The organization is in the process of getting pole agreements in place (to hang the fiber on existing utility poles), and the first fiber has been ordered.

OTHER BUSINESS

1. **New Business/Old Business** – there was no other business.
2. **Next Board Meeting** – the next board meeting will be October 20, 2011.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:35.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Cratsley
Recording Secretary