

**Stormwater Coalition of Albany County
Board of Directors**

**Friday January 18, 2013
Village of Green Island
19 George Street
8:30-10:00am**

MINUTES

Board of Directors Attending:

Sean Ward, Village of Green Island, Chairman
Erik Deyoe, Town of Bethlehem
Carl Fleshman, Village of Colonie
George Primeau, City of Cohoes
Ken D'Arpino, Town of Guilderland
Thomas Dolin, Town of New Scotland
Glenn Hebert, Village of Voorheesville
Dave Dressel, City of Watervliet

Board of Directors Absent:

Dennis Feeney, Albany County
Doug Melnick, City of Albany
Paul Reuss, Village of Menands

Also Present:

Nancy Heinzen, Stormwater Coalition Coordinator
Melissa Ashline-Heil, City of Cohoes (meeting minutes)
Bill Neeley, Town of Colonie
Frank Fazio, SUNY Albany
Garry Nathan, City of Cohoes
Scott Seigel, Albany County

I. Approval of September 21, 2012 Minutes

Glenn Hebert moved to approve the minutes. Mayor Primeau seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

II. Reports

A. Coalition Administration –

1. 2012 Budget and NYSDEC Grant

In this budget, revenue is listed on the top three lines. It includes membership dues, grant money and the amount transferred in from the reserve account. By year end 2012, various budget lines have either been spent down, or are running either a negative or positive balance. Some budget lines represent grant money, while others Coalition membership fees.

Focusing just on membership funded budget lines; the health insurance buyout line is negative because the County paid out a portion of the buy-out for 2011 in 2012. Consequently, rather than two payments in 2012, there were three. This will be adjusted when the 2012 books are closed out in the spring.

There is still money available in the temporary help line (Patty's salary line). This is because Patty didn't always work the 35 hours a week allotted. Other budget lines with unspent money include computer equipment, office supplies, postage, travel, books, printing, equipment repair/rental, and miscellaneous equipment. All of these balances should be rolled into the reserve.

Of these, the miscellaneous contractual line has a balance of \$5,618.00, which Nancy couldn't explain, but something she will research. [Note: Nancy looked into this. It is a portion of the \$10,000 Town of Guilderland membership fee, which first needed to be parked in a current year budget line (misc contractual) to be moved to the reserve once the books are closed.]

The miscellaneous equipment line represents grant money, of which \$1,853 is encumbered. Similarly, \$48,338.25 of the fees for services line, also grant money is encumbered.

The unspent \$18,959.08 state retirement which covers the retirement cost of all Coalition employees is both a grant and membership fee expense. An actual cost is determined when the books are closed and that amount is charged back to the Coalition account.

[NH note: How the actual State Retirement cost is calculated and in turn charged back to the Coalition account is based on a formula developed by the County, standardized for all Departments. It is currently unclear if the amount reflects retirement costs of actual Stormwater Coalition employees.

Regardless of method, the charge back does not distinguish between the source of funds, as in what portion of the charge back is paid for using grant funds (grant funded GIS Tech) and what portion is paid for using Coalition membership fees (Nancy and Patty). For the purpose of clarifying how much money is in the Coalition reserve, identifying the actual cost of retirement for each Coalition staff person matched to the source of funds could be very helpful.]

The grant funded hospital and medical line, which covers the cost of health insurance for one employee (Christina) is currently a negative balance. The amount budgeted was \$6,912 and the year-to-date total is \$15,400.58, resulting in a negative balance of -\$8,488. While this may represent an increase in health care costs for one person; it's exceptionally high, with implications regarding grant reimbursement.

In particular, if the actual cost of health insurance and other related fringe is significantly over the estimated amount written into the NYSDEC contract (45% of base salary), NYSDEC may choose to not reimburse the Coalition for the full amount of the health insurance expense. The difference (\$8,488) would then need to be picked up by Coalition membership fees; an amount not included in the 2013 Coalition budget. Sean will discuss this issue with the County.

Nancy described the difficulty of managing a budget which includes revenues from grant and membership dues, all tracked differently within different budget lines. This same co-mingling of grant and membership money has also impacted our ability to understand how much money is in the reserve account, to be discussed later in the meeting.

Frank asked about the grant amount. Nancy explained that the Coalition receives grant money from NYSDEC which totals \$220,000, of which \$165,000 is State Funds and \$55,000 Local Funds, in particular in-kind services from the participating municipalities. These services are reflected in the time sheets each municipality submitted to the Coalition. How that \$165,000 is spent is tracked in various Coalition account budget lines (other unclassified revenues; miscellaneous equipment, fees for services; state retirement, social security, and health insurance).

In order to submit a State Aid voucher for reimbursement, all grant expenses need to be documented and that information is tracked separately using a spreadsheet which itemizes budget lines developed by NYSDEC as part of their grant application and final contract with the lead agency (Albany County/Stormwater Coalition). Using this spreadsheet, Nancy explained how the \$165,000 has been spent to date and how much remains within each grant budget line: \$60,000 to salary, of which, \$15,586 remains, etc. To date, two vouchers have been submitted to NYSDEC, and once the health insurance cost issue is settled, a third voucher will be submitted.

Erik asked where the cost of the grant funded GIS Tech salary is reflected in the Coalition budget. Nancy referred him to the base salary budget line titled, Tech/Adm; the hospital/medical insurance line; and the state retirement and social security lines, of which Christina's salary represents a fraction of those totals. The GIS Tech is the only Coalition staff person receiving health insurance, therefore all of those expenses can be assigned to the grant. As this is a "spend first, then get reimbursed" grant, essentially the County has lent the Coalition \$165,000, to be paid back as vouchers are submitted and reimbursement checks are received.

So far, of the \$165,000 of grant, there remains \$53,367 to spend down before the grant contract ends (12/31/2014). The remaining work includes the Barton and Loguidice Green Infrastructure Local Law contract; Christina's GIS Tech salary plus fringe; GIS consultancy fees; and green infrastructure training workshop expenses.

Erik asked how the contract with B and L was proceeding, if there were any surprises. Nancy explained that, so far, we all seem to be on track with that project. Given concerns about

health insurance costs related to the NYSDEC grant, George asked how soon the Coalition could resolve the issue with the County. Nancy didn't have an exact timeframe, but added that she would like the County to document their response in writing. She again explained that parallel accounting of the grant budget and Coalition budget is time consuming.

Nancy referenced a spreadsheet titled, Self-Certification Form, a document to be submitted to NYSDEC with the third voucher. The spreadsheet explains that, if the health insurance charge remains as \$15,400, then the cost of fringe is 86% of the base salary, well over the typical estimate of 45% of base. This spreadsheet will be helpful when discussing the health insurance issue with the County.

Nancy submitted NYSDEC Quarterly Report #8. Quarterly reports document that grant work has been completed and are necessary for reimbursement.

2. 2013 Budget; Membership Invoices; and Staff

So far, the Coalition budget has yet to reflect membership checks received on time, in early January. These will be posted shortly. Of the 2013 line items, only salary lines and related fringe lines (social security) have any activity.

Nancy mentioned that the \$15,000 currently budgeted for the Tech/Adm position represents the remaining six months of the grant funded position and that Christina's departure on July 1, 2013 is imminent. In the Temp Help line, there is \$17,000 budgeted for the student intern position (Patty). Currently, Patty intends to leave once her Master's thesis is finished, tentatively planned for June, although the exact dates unclear.

Usually the DGS Share budget line is \$8000 (County In-Kind Membership Fee), however for this year, it's \$5,461. This was a last minute adjustment to correct for better health insurance and pension estimates as determined by the County Management and Budget late in the budget process. Sean explained that DGS represents the County rental space for custodial services, IT, heat and other maintenance.

B. Work Plan

1. Activities

The Stormwater Coalition will purchase the 2013 Center for Watershed Protection webcast series and the Albany Pine Bush Discovery Center has agreed to host the series. There is enough money in the conference budget line to cover this expense. In order to reach a broader audience of developers, contractors, and municipal staff, Nancy plans to reach out to the organizations that serve those populations. Organizations such as Center for Economic Growth could be helpful. Erik also offered to send out the flyer with his municipality's newsletter to developers and contractors.

Finally, Nancy and John Dzialo ran stormwater programs at the Blue Creek Elementary school, and Nancy, Patty, and John Dzialo participated in a Future Cities program in Malta, at the HVCC campus. Both programs involved using Project Wet Kit materials and elements of the Getting To Know The Stream Next Door program.

Based on the Village of Menands audit, DEC seems to be interested in each municipality developing their own educational program and tracking individual activity in the Annual Report. Sean countered that most of the municipalities are members of the Coalition because of the Annual Report. He questioned whether the Joint Annual Report is still a good idea. Nancy explained that it isn't clear as DEC seems to want municipalities to be more independent, but they also want us to do things as a Coalition.

2. Grant

Storm System Mapping

Christina prepared a list of each municipality's watersheds, with notes regarding mapping progress to date. Various municipal employees from a variety of municipalities have received GPS training and some have loaded this field data into a GIS they manage; most rely on Christina to process the GPS data points, and integrate this field data into maps developed using GIS. Using map handouts, Nancy explained how the Town of Colonie is included in all of the priority watersheds mapped to date and that because of this, using the Town of Colonie's data model as the foundation of the Coalition data model made sense.

Nancy explained some of the emerging mapping issues to resolve; one of which is deciding who owns which infrastructure and developing standardized procedures for delineating storm sewer watershed boundaries.

We seem to be well on our way to meeting various grant deliverables, in particular creating inter-municipal storm system maps and sewer watershed boundaries of three watersheds (Salt Kill; Krumkill; and Dry River). There's a strong likelihood that the Vly Creek watershed will also be completed, along with a significant portion of Patroon Creek. Patroon Creek watershed is particularly complicated because several large roadways, owned by other MS4s (I-90; I-787) reside within the watershed. Consequently, the field mapping gets complicated. It's unlikely that any of the Krumkill will get mapped.

Nancy mentioned that it would be nice to complete the Patroon Creek and Krumkill watersheds. They are both listed on the Priority Waterbody List as impaired and there are ongoing issues in both watersheds. Sean suggested asking DEC for additional funding to complete the work. Although no RFPs are currently out, Nancy will ask Mary Barry from NYSDEC Region 4 if there's any money available to complete the mapping project. Given data collected as part of the CSO Long Term Control Plan, NYSDEC might be interested in a watershed-wide storm system map, as the map might help to track down sources of pollution.

Green Infrastructure Local Law and Workshops

For the green infrastructure local law portion of the grant, the municipalities have to state their intentions regarding the model local law. For example, will the municipality enact the law or use it as a guideline?

Two workshops for Planning/Zoning Board members need to be scheduled. One is a tour of green infrastructure practices; the other is an evening presentation about stream daylighting and storm system infrastructure. GILLAC Committee members proposed scheduling the meetings around existing planning board meetings or consolidating workshops between several adjacent municipalities. Erik questioned whether the training would grant DOS credits. Nancy explained that the Capital District Regional Planning Commission has agreed to co-sponsor these events. This would make it possible for Planning/Zoning Board members to receive their DOS mandated training credits. Sean pointed out that each municipality can authorize the training as meeting the need for credits.

III. Discussion

- A. University at Albany SUNY/Stormwater Coalition Contract has been executed.
- B. Stormwater Management Program (SWMP). Completed. This document explicitly frames up what the Coalition and members intend to do to implement the MS4 Permit.
- C. Coalition Reserve Meeting w/ Management and Budget

Nancy reached out to her colleague Todd Stevenson from the Stormwater Coalition of Monroe County to discuss accounting practices and their budgeting structure. The ongoing issues associated with the reserve account and the co-mingling of grant funds with Coalition money is increasingly problematic and since their Coalition is similarly embedded in County operations, she thought they might have suggestions. Their approach differs from that of Albany County and the details are included in the Board packet. Albany County is willing to consider other approaches and if interested, Todd can arrange to have Monroe County staff talk with Albany County staff.

Erik Deyoe questioned the current discrepancy between the Coalition's bookkeeping and the County's. Nancy confirmed that the County reflects the Coalition budget as over \$60,000 whereas in reality the Coalition might have \$65,000 in excess funds. To figure out the exact amount would take some effort. Basically, the County spreadsheet does not reflect anticipated funds, such as those from grant reimbursements, along with some other items which confound the current accounting.

Tom Dolan felt frustrated that the County budgeting restricts the Coalition and creates extra work. Sean Ward explained that the Coalition agreed to the County oversight in exchange for work space and use of facilities. Bill Neeley provided context in that Nancy started as a County employee. Tom would like the Coalition to perform its own budgeting; as he

believes that would be less complicated. It's unclear how that might affect the \$8,000 in-kind contribution from the County. Bill added that any municipality agreeing to provide Coalition office space and related services would expect a reduction in its membership dues.

D. Inter-municipal Agreement (Section 4.0 Functions of the Coalition)

Nancy presented the IMA which itemizes the core functions of the Coalition. She offered that the Coalition can expand those core functions. For example, Christina has been performing storm sewer mapping and can map sanitary systems simultaneously. In order to do so, interested municipalities could chip in to pay Christina's salary once the Coalition depletes the grant funding. Sean would prefer to focus on MS4 work.

Nancy stated that the watershed based storm system maps, all work related directly to Christina's efforts; provide for members the ability to use GIS to manage stormwater at the watershed level across municipal boundaries. Down the road this could open up opportunities to use stormwater trading, a market based approach useful when trying to design stormwater practices in "tight" urban settings.

E. Regional Sustainability Plan – Adaptation Committee Highlights

The Stormwater Coalition of Albany County is listed in the State effort to create stormwater utility districts, which may result in a grant opportunity. Such a grant could resolve current funding and institutional structure issues. Erik suggested asking Assemblyman McDonald to push the effort, as he had when President of NYCOM. Mayor George Primeau works closely with Assemblyman McDonald who is aware of the need.

IV. Close of Meeting

Glenn moved to adjourn at 10:17am. Carl seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Next Board Meeting

Friday March 15, 2013, Village of Green Island, 19 George Street 8:30am to 10:00am

These minutes were approved at the March 15, 2013 Coalition Board Meeting.