

St. Lawrence County Planning Office
STAFF WORK REPORT
FEBRUARY 2025



New Staff Member in the County Planning Office!

Ellen Mathews joined the Planning Office on February 18th as the Office's new Fiscal Officer. We are thrilled to have Ellen who will be working to support all fiscal functions in the Office, but the majority of her focus will be on transit.

ADVISORY BOARD SUPPORT

Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board (AFPB). The AFPB met on February 6th at 6 p.m. in the Conference room on the second floor of the HSC Building. The board discussed the Ag Census 2022, NYS Comptroller Profile of Agriculture 2024, status of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza, 2025 County Ag Tour, report on the consolidation of Ag Districts, and updates on solar development in the County. Staff submitted legal notice and press release about the 30 day window to accept requests for additions to the Agricultural District during the month of March.

County Planning Board (CPB). The CPB met on February 13th in the Conference room on the second floor of the HSC Building. Two full review projects were discussed; a local law to prohibit crypto and data mining in the Town of Brasher (conditionally approved); and a local law to regulate battery energy storage systems in the Town of Oswegatchie (conditionally approved).

Environmental Management Council (EMC). The EMC met on February 19th at 6 p.m. in the HSC Building. Council discussed status of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza and the DEC reporting form for wild birds; Public Health's mosquito monitoring plan; walleye stocking program; black fly control; upcoming events; and Earth Day resolution. Next meeting will be on March 19, 2025.

Fair Housing Task Force. On the 18th, Preston and Matilda attended a Northern Forest Center community housing resilience discussion. Attendees highlighted priorities to achieve greater housing resilience. The Fair Housing Task Force will assist with a training session hosted by CNY Fair Housing on Tuesday, March 18th. There will be two training sessions; a landlord session in the morning and a tenant and service provider session in the afternoon. Additional information will be distributed as the date gets closer. The next meeting will be February 25th in the 2nd floor conference room at the HSC.

BOARD OF LEGISLATORS

Countywide Broadband Assessment. Staff prepared a project update and new mapping for the BOL; participated in a Distance Learning and Telemedicine grant discussion with BOCES; and continue to manage ARPA-funded infrastructure projects. To date, \$758,520.54 of \$2,955,145 has been expended.

OCF Repurpose Committee. Staff have been assigned to the County's Ogdensburg Correctional Facility Repurpose Committee. The group last met in February.

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 \$2,301,366.18. 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 70% award of funds to the Trail Maintenance Entities. Staff is preparing for Phase 3 by reviewing monthly work reports, and Phase 1 by reviewing trails that need gps updates.

County Budget Preparation. Staff is again assisting with the annual preparation of the County Budget.

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 sub recipient, 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. Work has begun on one project and the other three should begin by mid-March and early April. Staff and DANC reviewed the waiting list and identified four potential Phase III projects. All four candidates were income qualified and inspections completed with a scope of work in development. Staff is beginning to assess an application for another countywide rehab program.

Updated FEMA Flood Zone Maps. On the 26th, Matilda and Jason participated in a virtual update by FEMA on their efforts to update and digitize flood zone hazard maps for Northern New York.

Ag Plastics Recycling Presentation. On the 26th, Matilda delivered a 15-minute overview of lessons learned from the County's Ag Plastics Recycling Project which was funded by Northeast SARE in 2009.

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, 89 systems have been repaired/replaced; \$630,790.87 has been expended; and \$969,209.13 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

GIS. The Overdose Dashboard a collaboration with Public Health launched to the public in mid-November. Staff updates the OD Dashboard as new data comes in. Maps of broadband buildout were made for the BOL.

Town of Hammond Comprehensive Plan Update. Draft plan narrative is complete; staff working on document format and map updates.

Town of Colton Comprehensive Plan. The Planning Office signed an MOU with the Town of Colton to participate on the Plan's Oversight Committee. Work will commence in the spring.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

County Transit System. During the first week of the month, Matilda worked with the County Attorney and the Deputy Clerks in the Board of Legislators Office to secure the Chair's signature for the 2024-2025 5311 funding application, which was submitted to the Department of Transportation on the 4th. On the 5th and 6th, Matilda met with the Mobility Manager and staff supervisors at The Arc to discuss revisions to schedules and routes, and issues related to bus operations. During the week of the 10th, Matilda drafted and submitted a revised 2024 Accelerated Transit Capital (ATC) application to fund five projects: Installation of a bus shelter at the Human Services Complex; purchase preventative maintenance tablets for the bus fleet; purchase technology for the bus fleet; purchase a second set of column lifts to service diesel buses; and secure additional funds to cover the 10% local match for the next order of Lot G buses. On the 13th, Matilda, Jason and Lisa held a work session for rollover calculations for the Treasurer's Office. From the 14th to the 18th, the Office worked with Purchasing, the County Administrator's Office and the Treasurer's Office to issue purchase orders for eight Lot G buses for Public Transit. On the 24th, Matilda participated in an interview with WWNY to discuss increases in public transit ridership.