

St. Lawrence County Planning Office
STAFF WORK REPORT
JUNE 2025



ADVISORY BOARD SUPPORT

Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board (AFPB). The BOL passed a resolution accepting the additions to the Agricultural District. Staff is preparing a report for submission to NYS Ag and Markets. Planning for the Agricultural tour scheduled for August 15, 2025 is underway. Staff met with SWCD and CCE to discuss logistics. The planned tour included Greenwood Dairy, Canton Apples, Bourdeau Brothers, and CCE.

County Planning Board (CPB). The CPB met on June 12th in the Conference room on the second floor of the HSC Building. Three full review projects were discussed; a special use permit for a small commercial business in the Town of Potsdam (conditionally approved); a special use permit for a roofing supply business in the Town of Stockholm (conditionally approved); and a subdivision in the Town of Macomb (returned for local action). Board members also received training on the DANC IMA and the County's EFC Septic System Replacement Program.

Environmental Management Council (EMC). The EMC met June 18th in the One Stop Career Center Classroom A on the first floor of the HSC Building. At the meeting the council discussed logistics for the Wanakena meeting at the Ranger School for the July meeting, including a motion to change the time to 1 pm. The DEC gave an update on the status of the Deer River Situation. Regarding a question from BOL about the Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD) levels dropping dramatically in May, the BOD levels fluctuate over time connected to temperature and season. Additionally North Country Dairy (NCD) plant removed the whey from the waste stream and that should contribute to the drop in the BOD level. NCD submitted their engineering report to DEC June 12th and is under review by the Division of Water. DEC sampled the water at nine locations spanning upstream of the outfall to the confluence with the St. Regis River, this happened the week of June 2nd and 9th and will be sampled again later this year. The Notice of Complete Application for the draft SPDES permit was published in the Environmental News Bulletin. The DEC will continue to monitor the River. Additional DEC updates include trail closure to Goodman Mountain because of a moose, a consent order sent to North Lawrence waste water treatment plant due to high levels of BOD and suspended solids, and there is a new wildlife manager for Region 6. The council discussed new wetland regulations public service announcement, proposed NYS anticoagulant rodenticide legislation, green storm water management, and dark sky lighting. The next meeting will be July 16th at 1 p.m. at the Ranger School in Wanakena.

BOARD OF LEGISLATORS

Countywide Broadband Assessment. One committee meeting was held in June. Staff continue to manage ARPA-funded infrastructure projects. To date, \$1,406,758.20 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 March.

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 were awarded a total of \$2,969,563. To date, disbursements have been made totaling \$2,722,800.14. Ten municipalities have expended all their awarded funds and/or completed their project: Madrid, Ogdensburg, Colton, Brasher, DeKalb, Hermon, Heuvelton, Lisbon, Louisville, and Parishville. The remaining two municipalities have drawn down a portion of their awarded funds and expect completion by the end of 2025.

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 submitted phase 3 for the final 30% for the 2024-2025 grant year. Staff also submitted Phase 1 application for the 2025-2026 grant year.

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 which have been completed. Staff and DANC reviewed the waiting list and identified three Phase III projects that have been bid on and contracts signed at the end of April. The planned start date for construction is in June. Two more projects have been identified, income qualified, and are currently working on scope of work. Staff have been reviewing documentation and attending webinars in preparation for a CHRP 6 application.

GRANTS

Other Projects. The Grants Manager is reviewing potential federal funding opportunities with the District Attorney's Office and the Highway Department.

U.S. EPA Brownfields Program Community-Wide Assessment Grant. Staff, and the County's Environmental Counsel, had a debriefing with the EPA on the unsuccessful FY2025 application to this program, prepared for the County Attorney's office by a consultant.

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, 93 systems have been repaired/replaced; \$670,790.87 has been expended; and \$929,209.13 in program funds remain available. Staff from Planning and Public Health are working together to manage program delivery and administration. To increase awareness and promote participation in the program, staff delivered brief overviews of funding availability at town board meetings in: Brasher, Clifton, Edwards, Piercefield, Norfolk, Oswegatchie, Russell, Clare, Massena, Colton, Parishville, Pierrepont and Dekalb. Additional presentations to municipal boards are scheduled for July.

NY SWIMS Lifeguard Grant Program. Subrecipient agreements with the nine participating municipalities are fully executed; the County awaits receipt of the fully executed NYS contract. Once the NYS contract is received, participating municipalities may request reimbursement for eligible expenses for the 2024 and 2025 summer seasons.

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. NY State and County funded, 2024 Orthographic Aerial Photography at 6 inch resolution was received. Staff created a geodatabase that housed the imagery as well as created pyramids, tiles, and calculated statistics that allows fast and efficient loading and viewing of the imagery. Because the resulting file was so large (1.65 TB), staff worked with IT and placed it on a special server where it will be available to multiple departments.

On the 12th, Matilda, Sam and Jason attended a virtual presentation of online mapping tools available through the New York State Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Services (DHSES).

Town of Colton Comprehensive Plan. The Planning Office signed an MOU with the Town of Colton to participate on the Plan's Oversight Committee. Staff will meet with Colton again in June.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

County Transit System. Throughout the month, Matilda arranged visits of school district bus garages. The team plans to visit: Canton, Madrid-Waddington, Norwood-Norfolk and Salmon River in July. A visit of facilities elsewhere in the state is scheduled to occur in late September. During the week of the 9th, Matilda, Ellen and Jason prepared a draft 2026 operating budget for public transit programs. On the 10th, Matilda and Mobility Manager Sonja Jensen delivered a presentation of the County's public transit services in Malta NY, and met with DOT representatives in Albany that afternoon. On the 17th, Matilda, Transportation Supervisor Mark Ladison and Mobility Manager Sonja Jensen virtually met with Passio staff to arrange equipment troubleshooting and installation dates in July. On the 18th, The Arc hosted an open house of its existing bus garage and dispatch office to give DOT representatives, elected officials and Public Transit Task Force members an opportunity to understand the need for a new transportation facility. On the 20th, Matilda virtually met with DOT staff to review draft RFPs for bus operations, and for mobility management services. On the 25th, Matilda and Sonja attended the County Public Health's Extreme Weather Workshop at SUNY Potsdam's Knowles Hall.