



Trails & Open Space Committee

Wednesday, September 4, 2024 4PM

40 McMaster Street, Ballston Spa, NY

Minutes

Present: Chairman Joe Grasso; Committee Members Eric Connolly, Michele Madigan, Matthew Veitch.

Absent: Ed Kinowski

Chairman of the Board, Phil Barrett; Steve Bulger, Ridge Harris, Audra Hedden, Stephanie Hodgson, Renee Law, Christine Rush, County Administrator; Ann Flower Stitt, County Attorney; Jason Kemper; Planning.

Chairman Grasso called the meeting to order and welcomed all in attendance.

On a motion made by Mr. Veitch, seconded by Ms. Madigan, the minutes of the August 7, 2024 meeting were approved unanimously.

A motion was made by Ms. Madigan, seconded by Mr. Connolly, to authorize the transfer of funds from the Trails Reserve Fund and amending the 2024 County Budget in relation thereto. Unanimous.

The transfer amount is \$10,000 and will allow for the reimbursement of a 2022 Blodgett project in the City of Saratoga Springs.

Other business

A letter was received from the Town of Moreau requesting to amend their trails grant project approved this year. The request is to switch the project from a handicap accessible boat launch on the big bend preserve, to the purchase of grooming equipment for trails. Mr. Kemper gave an overview of the general criteria for the use of grant funding. In the past the County has not allowed operational costs such as maintenance of trails to be funded through the program. Discussion ensued. It was decided that Mr. Kemper reply to the town that the proposed project change does not fit squarely into the trails grant program and suggest economic development program funds would be a better fit.

Discussion took place regarding the 2025 budget process which is currently underway. 2024 budget is currently funded at \$400K for Open Space and Farmland Protection programs, and \$150K for Trails program. Mr. Grasso is advocating an increase from \$400K to \$500K and holding the Trails grant program to \$150K. If increase could not be approved, Mr. Grasso would

support a transfer of \$50K from Trails to Open Space, keeping the total funding amount the same. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Grasso requested a summary on Zim Smith funding for the next committee meeting. Discussion ensued.

Ag district inclusionary period begins October 1, 2024 and runs through October 31, 2024.

On a motion made by Ms. Madigan, seconded by Mr. Veitch, the meeting was adjourned unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Therese M. Connolly, Clerk of the Board