

**River Area Council of Governments
June 19, 2018**

Members present: B. Ferguson, W. McIlroy, R. Schell, P. Smith,
S. Storms, R. Vary, and J. Zando

Absent: M. Bigness, S. Burto, R. Laribee, A. Peck, and T. Stewart

Others: M. Dietrich, S. Lapp, K. Malinowski, and P. Street

Chairman McIlroy called the meeting to order at 6:00pm at the V/Carthage Municipal Building, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Motion by P. Smith, seconded by R. Vary to approve the minutes of May 15, 2018 as presented. Ayes-7, Nays-0. Motion carried.

Mickey Dietrich, Circuit Rider, reported on the following: updating the Black River navigation hazards map. The hazards include woody debris, gravel shoals, boulders/piles, and shallow depths; NY Alerts has gone live. The Board agreed that it would hold a summer meeting if training became available during that time; M. Dietrich and B. Phelps continue to update the website; S. Lapp has completed work in the T/Wilna and the V/Deferiet and assisted with the resource map, mapping river hazards, and mapping a portion of Carthage Park. Next he will map water lines for the Villages of Carthage and West Carthage to the reservoir. W. McIlroy discussed user issues related to selecting sites on the Community Resource map.

Presentation

Ron Trottier presented information regarding repurposing the rail lines between Lowville, Castorland, Croghan and Carthage. Mr. Trottier, through his company Rail Star LLC, is interested in operating tourist trains, trolleys, and rail bikes on the tracks as a tourist attraction and destination. He has purchased the former rail yard/station in Lowville and Carthage. Mr. Trottier also discussed expanding and promoting the tourist opportunities to include kayaks, boat rentals, and bicycles.

W. McIlroy discussed plans for repurposing the Abbass Building as a restaurant and suggested that Mr. Trottier contact the new owner.

F. Skvorak expressed concerns for limiting use of the rail lines and trestle between the Villages to rail bikes.

H. Watkins questioned the condition of the rail lines. Mr. Trottier responded that brush and trees may need to be pushed back from certain sections of the tracks but that the tracks are in a condition to accommodate the weight and speed of the rail bikes and small trains.

R. Schell suggested that operation of a train during Lewis County Fair week or other major community events would promote attendance.

C. Vargulick reported that the Carthage YMCA will be offering swimming lessons at the Carthage High School pool this year. Motion by P. Smith, seconded by S. Storms to pay for one session of lessons per student living within the boundaries of the RACOG communities participating in the swim program. Ayes-7, Nays-0. Motion carried.

Motion by R. Schell, seconded by B. Ferguson to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 7:16pm.

Christina Vargulick
Christina Vargulick
RACOG Secretary