



LAKE CHAMPLAIN-LAKE GEORGE

REGIONAL PLANNING

BETH GILLES
DIRECTOR

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LCLGRPB Board of Directors

Regular Meeting

July 8, 2025 at 1:00 PM

Clinton County Legislative Conference Room, 137 Margaret Street #208, Plattsburgh NY 12901

Hamilton Co Bd of Supervisors Conference Room, 102 County View Drive, Lake Pleasant NY 12108

Warren County Committee Room, 1340 US 9, Lake George NY 12845

AGENDA

1. Pledge of Allegiance
2. Roll Call
3. Approval of April 8, 2025 Annual Meeting minutes (Board Action)
4. Treasurer's Report (Board Action)
 - April and May 2025 Abstracts (Board Action)
5. Approval of 2024 Audit (Board Action)
6. 2026 Salary Schedule (Board Action)
7. 2026 Budget and County Allocation Requests (Board Action)
8. Adoption of Adirondack Gateway Safety Action Plan and North Country Safety Action Plan (Board Action)
9. Strategic Plan Update
 - August 6, 2025 Board Retreat
10. EPA Brownfield Assessment Coalition Grant Award
11. Cellular Availability Mapping Project
12. Loan Committee Report
13. Principal Planner Report
14. Economic Development Coordinator Report
15. Executive Director's Report
 - Update on Federal Funding
16. Other



17. Next Meeting Date – **NEW DATE PROPOSED:** October 7, 2025 at 1:00
18. Adjourn

Mr. O'Brien called the meeting to order at 1:06 and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Shannon Thayer-Voting (Plattsburgh)
Joshua Kretser-Voting (Plattsburgh)
Ken Hughes-Voting (Plattsburgh)
Meg Wood-Voting (Lake George)
Ike Tyler-Voting (Plattsburgh)
Beth Hunt-Voting (Lake Pleasant)
Christy Wilt-Voting (Lake Pleasant)
John Taflan-Voting (Lake George)
John Strough-Voting (Lake George)
Frank Thomas-Voting (Lake George)
Dave O'Brien-Voting (Lake George)
Christine Norton
Al Nolette

MEMBERS ABSENT

Kevin Randall
Mark Henry
Rebecca Murphy
Karl Weiss
Shaun Gilliland
Michael Diskin
Jim Dougan
Anthony Fernandez
Clay Arsenault
Jodie Small
Tracy Eldridge
Kevin Geraghty
Kevin Hajos
Sue Clary
Charles Tall
Bob Henke
Deb Donohue

ALSO PRESENT

Beth Gilles
Allison Gaddy
Sam Blake
Cassandra VanCott
Jessica Leerkes
Colleen Nelson
Kiersten McCane

Ms. Gilles took roll call and established a quorum.

Approval of April 8, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Chairman O'Brien asked for a motion to approve the meeting minutes from April 8, 2025.

Motion made by Mr. Strough
Seconded by Mr. Tyler



Hearing no additions or corrections, and no opposed, motion carried.

Treasurer's Report

Mr. Nolette noted that the financial standing for 2025 is going as planned. As of today's date, the RPB has about \$744,000, and \$743,000 is invested in the ICS account. The team has been aggressive with maintaining as much cash as possible in the investment account. In the first 6 months of the year from the operating fund, there are already \$10,000 in investments, while the entirety of 2024 had \$11,900 of investments. On the RPB income and expense report, members can see the amount from each investment, including RLF 5 and RLF 6 monies. Mr. Nolette noted that the financials at the July meeting don't give the most accurate information due to the second quarter reimbursements not being fully booked yet. Mr. Nolette commended the RPB for their attention to the financial landscape of the organization.

Chairman O'Brien asked for a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report.

Motion made by Ms. Wood.

Seconded by Mr. Taflan.

Hearing no further discussion and no opposed, motion carried.

April and May Abstracts

Chairman O'Brien asked for a motion to approve the abstracts for April and May 2025.

Motion made by Mr. Kretser

Seconded by Mr. Strough

Hearing no further discussion and no opposed, motion carried.

Approval of 2024 Audit

Mr. Nolette strongly complimented the audit team and the work they're doing. Mr. Nolette shared that a few years ago, the RPB Board of Directors partnered with EFPR Group based in Buffalo. Throughout the auditing process, they've helped tremendously with the pre-audit work and keeping costs down. Ms. Gilles noted that page 5 showed a net position change as positive from \$73,000 for the agency.



Chairman O'Brien asked for a motion to adopt the 2024 Audit.

Motion made by Mr. Hunt

Seconded by Mr. Thomas

Hearing no further discussion and no opposed, motion carried.

Salary Schedule for 2026

Ms. Gilles noted that there was a 3.5% cost of living raise for each position, 2 longevity bonuses hit this year, one by the Principal Planner and one by the Junior Planner. Additionally, the Junior Planner position has been upgraded to a Planner Position due to the great work that Sam Blake does and this will be his 4th year with the RPB. The Admin Assistant position has been eliminated due to hiring an Operations Coordinator; Kiersten McCane has been hired for the full-time position. The RPB is fully staffed for the first time in many years.

Chairman O'Brien asked for a motion to approve the 2026 Salary Schedule.

Motion made by Mr. Hughes

Seconded by Mr. Tyler

Hearing no further discussion and no opposed, motion carried.

2026 Budget and County Allocation Requests

Ms. Gilles noted that fringe decreased from 40% to 35% due to the normalcy of hitting more in the high 20%, so it was determined to be an unnecessary over budget. The Strategic Plan is concluding at the end of 2025, so it doesn't need to be budgeted for 2026. Within the Contract line item, there's an increase of the loan officer contract due to eliminating the Business Coordinator position. There is a new partnership with the Development Authority of the North Country to contract with them by utilizing their full-time loan officer to underwrite our loans. This partnership is an hourly, as needed contract, and we have about \$2 million to lend, so the amount was increased from \$25,000 to \$50,000 in anticipation of having to ramp up loan underwriting. An Admin Assistant is budgeted at \$10,000 just in case additional financial assistance is needed, which isn't anticipated, but thought necessary to include. The



budget for RPB is \$1.97 million, and an increase for AGFTC and their projected budget brings the final budget total to \$2.77 million.

The Revenue line item includes county allocations for 2026, which is the 1st of the 4-year County Allocation Increase Plan that the RPB Board adopted last year, and the increases requested from each county can be seen in the budget. RPB was notified recently to apply for the EDA Planning Grant, which is now available. The sustainability of EDA funding is unknown, but we're moving forward under the assumption the RPB will receive \$70,000. If funding is cut, we're able to pivot if need be. Additionally, RPB was notified that they will receive year 3 of the NYS DEC contract, which is federal money coming to the state to be used for water quality programs. NYS has confirmed they have the monies but have not yet given the RPB their Year 3 allocation, so it's budgeted for \$100,000. A new budgeted line item is the LDD's within the NBRC Region are now receiving technical assistance funding, so there is a contract for \$137,000 between 6/1/25 and 9/30/26.

Chairman O'Brien asked for a motion to approve the 2026 Budget and County Allocation Requests.

Motion made by Mr. Taflan

Seconded by Ms. Wood

Hearing no further discussion and no opposed, motion carried.

Adoption of Adirondack Gateway Safety Action Plan and North Country Safety Action Plan

Ms. Gaddy explained that this is a Vision Zero Commitment Resolution, which is committing to doing everything possible to ensure there are zero traffic fatalities in our region. Originally, there wasn't a need for the RPB Board to adopt a resolution, but passing a resolution will strengthen those safety action plans that were created for our region. It's necessary to adopt the resolution in order for the safety action plans to be accepted by the Federal Government and for any future SS4A funding for the region. Ms. Gaddy confirmed the resolution adoption doesn't commit the RPB to anything.

Chairman O'Brien asked for a motion to adopt the Adirondack Gateway and North Country Safety Action Plans resolutions.

Motion made by Mr. Tyler.

Seconded by Mr. Kretser.



Hearing no further discussion and no opposed, motion carried.

Mr. Chairman noted that the next RPB Board meeting has a date conflict, so the newly proposed date is October 7, 2025. Advised members to share the date with their County Clerk's.

Strategic Plan Update

Ms. Gilles spoke about the Strategic Plan Survey that was conducted by Lauren and Meredith, contracted consultants. The 6 focus groups took place in late June and included economic development, community development, local government, and state and federal agencies. They were attended by some ex officio members as well as some Supervisors not on the RPB Board. The focus groups went well, and they were happy with the content received from conversations. There were 65 responses to the survey that was released. One question asked what the RPB is doing well and there were many positive reviews, along with what the RPB can do better, and those responses will be discussed at the upcoming Board Retreat. Ms. Gilles emphasized the importance of Board Members RSVPing and attending this retreat to discuss the relationship between the Board and the RPB, along with roles and responsibilities for the board and staff. Chairman O'Brien encourages Ms. Gilles to talk to members in the counties that the RPB serves and encourage them to come, especially ex officio members who provide invaluable knowledge to the board and the RPB.

EPA Brownfield Assessment Coalition Grant Award

Ms. Gilles shared that the RPB has been awarded \$1.155 million to develop inventories of brownfield sites to prioritize the sites, conduct community involvement activities, and conduct site assessments, site-specific cleanup plans and reuse plans. The 4 priority sites highlighted in the application are the Towns of Champlain, Plattsburgh, Essex and Lake Pleasant, but the RPB is able to identify 15 additional sites to conduct this work in. Ms. Gilles encouraged the Board Members to make a note of potential brownfield sites in their community or surrounding areas and share it with the RPB when they reach out.

Cellular Availability Mapping Project

Ms. Gilles shared that the RPB was awarded a grant from NBRC to conduct cell availability testing and site engineering within the 5 counties the RPB serves. The hired company, GTA, has been driving the routes, which are about 8,000 miles to determine signal quality distribution, service availability, call drops, call fails, data drops, data fails, and a breakdown narrative on various carriers service options (AT&T, Boost, T-Mobile & Verizon). Ms. Gilles asked the consultants to organize a zoom meeting with



relevant county personnel, to which they obliged, and will then share the data with each of the 5 counties.

Loan Committee Report

Ms. Wilt shared that the Loan Committee hasn't met since the last RPB board meeting, but they'll be meeting on Friday, July 11, 2025, to review a loan application for 4 Corners, LLC in Speculator, Hamilton County.

Principal Planner Report

Ms. Gaddy shared that the Town of Johnsbury's Comprehensive Plan was completed last quarter and was adopted in May 2025. The result of that planning process was 13 goals, 87 strategies, and 100 recommendations, which were all identified by community members. RPB finalized their Safety Action Plans, and are available on the RPB website. The RPB is currently working on community planning and outreach for comprehensive plans in the Village of Speculator, Town/Village of Argyle, Town of Horicon, Town of Chester, Town of Willsboro, Town of Salem, and the Brant Lake Watershed Management Plan. This summer, RPB staff can be seen at farmers markets and community workshops talking to the public for input.

Ms. Gaddy congratulated Sam Blake (RPB Staff) on receiving his first grant award for the New York State Pollution Prevention Institute for education outreach of storm water management throughout the region. RPB submitted 3 Municipal Parks and Recreation grants for the Town of Lake Pleasant (\$979,865), Village of Speculator (\$927,058), and Village of Granville (\$918,000). Additionally, CFA Grants will be submitted for the Village of Speculator, Essex and Hamilton Counties SWCD, the Towns of Chester, Essex, Jay, Champlain, Peru, Salem and Moriah, and the Upper Hudson River Watershed Coalition. Ms. Gaddy acknowledged that the RPB is happy to assist with the multi-step process of the Pro-Housing Communities Designation, which include submitting a letter of intent, the Municipal Board passes a resolution, review of building permits from 2019 – 2025, zoning review and zoning map (if applicable).

Economic Development Coordinator Report

Ms. Leerkes spoke about the RPB's 16 active grants (4 in close-out) and 5 new grants that include a variety of project types such as traditional infrastructure, development, theater renovation, trail upgrades, and brownfield assessment. The RPB is an LDD (Local Development District) for NBRC (Northern Border Regional Commission) because they provide technical assistance to applicants, assist NBRC in their outreach activities, and generally administer NBRC investments for grantees. RPB currently



has 14 LDD Contracts with the Towns of Schroon, Johnsburg, Essex, Inlet, Elizabethtown, Villages of Granville and Rouses Point, Warren County, Clinton County NYSARC, Fort Ticonderoga Association, Adirondack Land Trust, Essex Food Hub, Ticonderoga Revitalization Alliance, and the Adirondack Mountain Club.

Executive Director Report

Ms. Gilles shared the State and Federal Outreach that the RPB has been participating in. Ms. Gilles and RPB staff presented at the Adirondack Association of Towns and Villages, participated in Adirondack Day in Albany, spoke at the Rockefeller Institute of Local Government, and hosted the Adirondack Community Foundation Board. RPB has submitted grant/contracts for \$750,000 (LCLGRP Workforce Housing Site Feasibility), \$500,000 (Washington County Infrastructure Grant Program for Whitehall – Awarded), \$100,000 (City of Plattsburgh WW Feasibility Study – Awarded), \$240,000 (Workforce Housing Buildout Analysis for Essex County – Awarded), and \$200,000 (LCPB Grant for Economic Value of Clean Water in the Lake Champlain Basin – Awarded).

RPB Highlights included hiring an Operations Coordinator, an RFP was released for on-call marketing services, contracted with DANC for loan underwriting services, closed the loans of Adirondack Mountain Outfitters in Indian Lake (\$61,500) and Tamilia Peppercorn, Schroon Lake (\$61,500), and underwriting a new loan for Four Corners Café and Eatery in Speculator (\$155,000).

The RPB was invited to apply for the EDA Partnership Planning Grant for the next 3 years, which will provide \$70,000 per year. Other federal funding liabilities were USDA RD, FWHA and NBRC and they've all been paid as of today.

Chairman O'Brien asked Ms. Gilles what her thoughts are about the future of some federally funded programs for 2027. Ms. Gilles replied that others across the country are concerned about the potential elimination of the EDA. Previously, EDA's funding has been zeroed out multiple times in budgets, but they've most recently been reauthorized for the 1st time in 20 years, and had bipartisan support. Ms. Gilles believes we'll see a change in how the program funding is administered, and when that time comes, RPB can pivot if need be and is leaning into contracting specifically with towns and counties for finite projects in the meantime.



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Mr. Nolette mentioned the approximate \$50,000 increase in interest in the ICS account in the first quarter, so if need be, that could be used to replace EDA money as a last resort. Ms. Gilles confirmed that the RPB didn't include any of the ICS income in the final budget being discussed at this meeting.

Other

Ms. Gaddy mentioned that the RPB is hosting their annual Forward Together Conference on October 1, 2025 at The Lodge at Schroon Lake and members are encouraged to register for the conference.

Hearing no other business to come before the Board, Chairman O'Brien adjourned the meeting at 1:50.

Respectfully submitted by Kiersten McCane, Operations Coordinator