



**MINUTES**  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**  
**Thursday, May 29, 2025 – 10:30 AM**  
**Warneck Pump Station**  
**James W. Wright Conference Room**  
**23557 NYS Rt. 37, Watertown, New York**

The Development Authority of the North Country Board of Directors met in regular session in person and via Zoom Videoconference at the Warneck Pump Station, 23557 NYS Rt. 37, Watertown, New York on Thursday, May 29, 2025 at 10:30 AM.

**Members Present**

Voting

Margaret Murray, Chairperson  
Mary Doheny\*  
Alex MacKinnon  
Dennis Mastascusa  
Kenneth Bibbins\*  
Mark Hall  
Thomas Hefferon  
Eric Virkler

Non-Voting

Steve Hunt  
Brian McGrath\*

\*Attended via videoconferencing.

**Members Absent**

Nancy Henry

**Staff Present:**

Carl Farone, Executive Director  
Jennifer Staples, Chief Financial Officer  
Carrie Tuttle, Chief Operating Officer  
Stephen Bohmer, Director of Information Technology  
Michelle Capone, Director of Regional Development  
Thomas Haynes, Director of Engineering  
Dawn Loudon, Comptroller  
Brian Nutting, Director of Water Quality  
David Wolf, Director of Telecommunications  
Angela Marra, Executive Assistant  
Matt Taylor, Senior Project Development Specialist

**Guests:**

Jennifer Granzow, Counsel, Wladis Law Firm  
Bruce Armstrong, North Country HOME Consortium  
Kent Burto, North Country HOME Consortium

1. Chairperson Murray called the meeting to order at 10:31 AM.

2. Chairperson Murray requested a roll call.
  - A quorum of voting and non-voting members was established.
3. Privilege of the Floor -
4. Upon a motion by M. Hall and seconded by D. Mastascusa, the minutes from the March 27, 2025 Board Meeting were unanimously approved.
5. Chairperson's Report
  - a. M. Murray expressed her appreciation for the completion and return of the Confidential Evaluation of Board Performance, Executive Director's Annual Performance Review, and the Disclosure of Outside Interests documentation.
  - b. M. Murray announced that the City of Watertown has reappointed Mary Doheny to serve another four-year term on the Development Authority's Board of Directors for the period June 6, 2025 to June 5, 2029.
  - c. Our next Board Meeting will be held on June 26<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 at the James W. Wright Conference Room. The primary purpose of this meeting is to review and accept the Fiscal Year 2025 Audit.

We are tentatively looking to schedule a meeting of the Audit Committee for the week of June 16<sup>th</sup>. Staff will contact members of the Audit Committee to schedule the meeting.
  - d. The Authority will host an Open House at the Materials Management Facility on August 28<sup>th</sup> from 4:00 – 6:00 PM. Our Board Meeting will be held the same day at the facility at 10:30 AM. A bus will be available to provide Board members a tour of the facility. Lunch will be provided.

#### 6. Staff Presentation – North Country HOME Consortium

M. Taylor, the Senior Project Development Specialist with the Authority, presented a Power Point Presentation on the North Country HOME Consortium which is celebrating its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. He explained the Consortium and its unique relationship with Jefferson and St. Lawrence Counties, and with the Development Authority working as its administrator. The original purpose of the Consortium was to maximize federal funding opportunities, and the counties partnered together to apply for this funding and support housing across the three-county service area.

M. Taylor concluded by introducing two members of the Consortium administrative board who have been strong advocates providing expertise and guidance for over 30 years, Bruce Armstrong and Kent Burto.

A. MacKinnon commented that he has heard many good things about the management of the Consortium, especially from the people who have been recipients of this funding.

M. Capone commented that over the past year a huge feat has been accomplished in bringing all of the municipalities back into the Consortium again. The allocation is now up to \$950,000 meaning more money is available to the communities for housing in their locations. She further expressed her appreciation to B. Armstrong and K. Burto, as well as the Jefferson County staff, and expressed how important the teamwork is that goes into making this program a success.

- a. Resolution No. 2025-05-30, recognizes and extends sincere appreciation to Bruce Armstrong for his 30 years of dedicated and impactful service in improving housing throughout the North Country. His steadfast commitment and leadership through the North Country HOME Consortium have contributed to the well-being of many individuals and communities across the region.

Upon a motion by D. Mastascusa and seconded by A. MacKinnon, Resolution No. 2025-05-30, Recognizing the Service of Bruce Armstrong to the North Country HOME Consortium, was unanimously approved.

B. Armstrong expressed his appreciation to the Board for this recognition. He particularly thanked all the Board members, past and present, for their support, and the staff and their administrative board.

- b. Resolution No. 2025-05-31, recognizes and extends sincere appreciation to Kent Burto for his 30 years of dedicated and impactful service in improving housing throughout the North Country. His steadfast commitment and leadership through the North Country HOME Consortium have contributed to the well-being of many individuals and communities across the region.

Upon a motion by T. Hefferon and seconded by E. Virkler, Resolution No. 2025-05-31, Recognizing the Service of Kent Burto to the North Country HOME Consortium, was unanimously approved.

K. Burto thanked the Authority for this recognition and stated this has been a very enjoyable 30 years, especially being able to do many nice things for people who would not have had the opportunity otherwise.

## 7. Executive Director's Report

### a. Performance Measurements –

C. Farone reviewed highlights of the Performance Measurements Report for FY 2024-2025, which is a requirement of the state. He continued with a reviewed of noted accomplishments, such as providing regional initiative services and infrastructure, entering into a contract with the state to launch Next Move NY, and the Engineering Division providing technical services for water sewer capital projects. All of the highlights are impactful and will help support existing and future economic development in the area. Following the achievements are items the Authority fell short on, listed in red. These include missing the established goals for the SDVOB and MWBE programs, receiving an administrative order on the Army Waterline, and municipal water treatment plants operated by the Authority had 34 violations. The last section of the report focused on the skilled and credentialed workforce at the Authority, where this

year 14 Water Quality staff obtained additional wastewater operator certifications, an equipment operator at Materials Management obtained a CDL-A license, one employee was licensed as a Remote Pilot for drone operation, a Telecommunications employee completed their Project Management Professional Course, eight employees completed Lean 101 coursework, 60 Authority staff completed Incident Command 100 training offered by FEMA, five Authority staff successfully obtained their Notary Public licenses, and two Human Resources professionals earned Continuing Education Credits.

Upon a motion by A. MacKinnon, and seconded by D. Mastascusa, accepting the Fiscal Year End 2025 Performance Measurements Report, April 1, 2024 – March 31, 2025, was unanimously approved.

Mary Doheny arrived 11:00am via Zoom.

- b. Armed Forces Day Breakfast -  
C. Farone reported that he was fortunate to attend the Armed Forces Day breakfast sponsored by the Greater Watertown-North Country Chamber of Commerce with seven of the eleven Authority staff members who are veterans, representing each division within the Authority.
- c. Fort Drum Day in Albany –  
M. Capone attended Fort Drum Day in Albany to help reinforce the significance of Fort Drum to New York State officials and its economic impact on our area.
- d. Lewis County Legislature & County Staff Visit MMF -  
C. Farone reported that members of the Lewis County Legislature, county staff and Board Members representing Lewis County toured the landfill on May 9 to see the operations first hand. They learned how the landfill operates, how it is financed and about upcoming capital projects.
- e. MMF DEC Inspection -  
C. Farone reported DEC staff stopped into the Solid Waste Management Facility for an unscheduled inspection, and we can happily report that the inspection resulted in a clean bill of health with no findings.
- e. Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Events –  
C. Farone reported that the first collection of 2025 was held at the St. Lawrence County Fairgrounds in Gouverneur on May 17th and was a success with 103 households participating. He reviewed the upcoming schedule for four more HHW events.
- f. Next Move NY UPDATE -  
C. Farone shared that Next Move NY has moved into the new offices at the NEST in April. He continued with a review of the Program Engagement & Employer Outreach, and reported on events attended and the numbers on Soldier and Veteran Engagement. C. Farone further shared that himself, S. Hunt, and Dr. Morris and Jim McKenna, Co-chairs of the North Country Regional Economic Development Council, presented the Next Move NY initiative to the Empire State Development senior officials, as well as all regional

councils across the state and the program was very well received. He also reported that we have had the first two transitioning soldiers placed with employment.

A. MacKinnon commented on the Next Move NY tour of the Empire State Mine and the CIVES Steel Plant, both of which are excited about attracting the transitioning military personnel to join their workforce.

g. Staff Updates -

C. Farone reported that N. Thomas has been promoted to Supervisor of Outside Plant Engineering & Construction (from Outside Plant Engineer II)

8. Financials –

a. Finance Report – Chief Financial Officer

J. Staples stated that the Authority closed its fiscal year on March 31, 2025. In April the finance team put together the necessary paperwork in preparation of turning over the trial balance to the external auditors on May 6<sup>th</sup>. The auditors worked on site at the State Office Building the week of May 12<sup>th</sup> and are currently putting together the final audit documents for the finance team review which is due on June 6<sup>th</sup>. The Audit Committee will then meet in June to review the audit results in detail with Thomas Smith from EFPR. EFPR will then present the summary review of the audit results to the full Board at the June 26<sup>th</sup> Board meeting.

J. Staples continued with a review of the highlights within the March year-to-date financials. Customer Billings came in \$2.2 million below budget with both the Regional Water Line and Engineering over budget while all other divisions were under. Materials Management was 10%, or 1.2 million, below budget mostly due to waste volumes being lower than projected in all areas except beneficial and sewage sludge. The Army Sewer Line and Army Water Line were both below budget, but these both operate at a zero profit and we perform a true-up at the end of each year by taking what we billed and netting it against expenses where the net result is either a credit owed to or a charge billed to the Army. In fiscal year 25 the Authority owes the Army credits which reduced the total revenue as these credits are reflected in the March Customer Billing numbers. Grant revenue was over budget by \$1.4 million. Telecom has federal grant income of \$4.2 million mainly associated with the NTIA Grant. This revenue put Telecom over budget by \$1.8 million. Just over half of the NTIA Grant revenue was for fiber purchased for the project. We also received grant funds from EFC for the Army Water Line pipeline replacement project that came in February and March. Total operating income came in just under \$1.1 million or 3% less than budget. Under Operating Expenses, the Authority ended up under budget by 1.4 million with the two top categories making up 62% of this shortfall. Operating and Maintenance costs were under budget by \$444,000. This is mainly due to Telecom and Materials Management. Under Telecom there were three main reasons for the underspend; the decision was made to forego a maintenance contract and use spare equipment so they did not need to purchase the maintenance contract; they budgeted for a maintenance contract for one vendor and instead used a third-party vendor whose

maintenance contract came in much less than had been budgeted; and telecom's offnet circuit lease expenses were under budget because they had cancelled several offnet circuits earlier in the fiscal year. Some of these circuits were moved to different technology and others were cancelled due to loss of business when a customer with several sites was bought and the circuits moved off our network. Under Materials Management they were mainly under budget due to fuel costs being lower because the budget assumed two working faces operating together, but they are currently only working one face at a time which reduced the amount of fuel needed to operate the equipment. The other category that was underspent was professional fees, which is under budget by \$423,000. The two largest variances were Materials Management being under budget \$183,000 because the 2023 carbon credit verification process was not completed in Fiscal Year 2025. The sale of these credits is anticipated to be completed in Fiscal Year 26. Also under Professional Services, Next Move NY is underbudget within Consulting Fees by \$189,000 as only \$20,000 of the fees has been incurred through the end of the year. Fringe Benefits was the largest item to come in over budget within Operating Expenses. This is associated with the GASB 68 pension adjustment resulting in a \$439,000 increase to the pension expense. Depreciation expense was \$11 million versus the budgeted \$12.4 million. The two main divisions under budget were Materials Management and Telecom. Materials Management was under budget due to the articulated hauler that was anticipated to be purchased in Fiscal Year 25, but there were delays in building the hauler so that piece of equipment was not received or capitalized in 2025. Telecom is under budget in depreciation due to the majority of the Fiscal Year 25 capital project spend still ongoing and therefore will be carried over into Fiscal Year 26. The Total Operating Income came in at \$1.6 million better than budget.

Interest Income was \$568,000 over budget as we continue to see decent interest rates. The Market Adjustment was a positive \$1.2 million; however, this is not a realized gain but a necessary accounting entry to bring the investments up to the current market value. Pension expense paid to New York State came in at \$45,000 under budget, however, we are required to make an adjusting entry to comply with GASB 68. This is strictly an accounting entry made as part of our participation in the New York State Retirement Pension Plan. We are required to report our proportionate share of the state's overall pension liability and pension expense. This year the adjusting entry was \$439,000, as mentioned previously. We do not pay this amount to the state, and we do not receive funds in years this is a credit as this is strictly an accounting entry required by GASB.

Under Waste Volumes within Materials Management, we see that projected tons were off from actual tons by 7% or 16,672 tons. This shortfall was in all categories except for beneficial sludge and sewage sludge. Host Community Benefits for Materials Management came in under budget by \$20,000, directly associated with actual tonnage being lower than projected.

Upon a motion by T. Hefferon, and seconded by D. Mastascusa, financials ending March 31, 2025, were unanimously approved.

9. Governance

- a. Resolution No. 2025-05-32, authorizes the Authority's Executive Director to enter into an agreement with St. Lawrence-Lewis BOCES to lease office space suitable to the Authority's needs and said office will be housed in St. Lawrence-Lewis BOCES facilities located in Canton, New York.

Upon a motion by A. MacKinnon and seconded by D. Mastascusa, Resolution No. 2025-05-32, Office Space Lease, St. Lawrence County, Development Authority of the North Country, was unanimously approved.

10. Technical Services Summary Report –

a. Non-Lewis County Contracts –

- I. Town of Clifton, O&M Agreement, Operations & Maintenance Agreement Amendment 1, Total Agreement Amount of \$167,248, 1/1/26 – 12/31/27, St. Lawrence County
- II. Town of Parishville, O&M Agreement, Operations & Maintenance Agreement Amendment 1, Total Agreement Amount of \$134,135.25, 1/1/26 – 12/31/27, St. Lawrence County
- III. Town of Wilna, Herrings Sewer District, O&M Agreement, Operations & Maintenance Agreement Amendment 1, Total Agreement Amount of \$68,276.50, 1/1/26 – 12/31/27, Jefferson County  
  
C. Tuttle explained that the Authority has been evaluating the fixed fee costs within the O&M Agreements with Clifton, Parishville and Wilna, and we realized that our expenses have increased more than originally anticipated. We have given the communities six months' notice of these increases and these contracts will not go into effect until January 1, 2026. Additionally, the duration of these contracts have been changed to align with their fiscal year. We have met with each of these communities to discuss the increases and evaluate their options.
- IV. Town of Gouverneur, O&M Agreement, Operations & Maintenance Agreement (5 Year Renewal), Total Agreement Amount of \$271,000, 1/1/26 – 12/31/30, St. Lawrence County
- V. Town of Champion, Technical Services Agreement, I&I Study Amendment 1, Total Agreement Amount of \$7,450.00, 5/1/25 – 12/31/25, Jefferson County
- VI. Town of LeRay, Technical Services Agreement, I&I Study Amendment 1, Total Agreement Amount of \$7,450.00, 5/1/25 – 12/31/25, Jefferson County
- VII. Town of Rutland, Technical Services Agreement, I&I Study Amendment 1, Total Agreement Amount of \$7,450.00, 5/1/25 – 12/31/25, Jefferson County
- VIII. Adirondack Medical Center, Technical Services Agreement, NBRC Grant Administration (AP-NBRC-138) Upgrades to telehealth equipment, Total Agreement Amount of \$9,600.00, 5/1/25 – 12/31/26, Franklin County

- IX. Village of Gouverneur, GIS Agreement, GIS Web-Based Hosting Services Agreement (renewed 5 year contract of services), Total Agreement Amount \$8,800.00, 6/1/25 – 5/31/30, St. Lawrence County
- X. Village of Rensselaer Falls, GIS Agreement, GIS Web-Based Hosting Services Agreement (renewed 5 year contract of services), Total Agreement Amount \$4,650.00, 6/1/25 – 5/31/30, St. Lawrence County
- XI. Village of Massena, GIS Agreement, GIS Web-Based Hosting Services Agreement (renewed 5 year contract of services), Total Agreement Amount \$8,800.00, 6/1/25 – 5/31/30, St. Lawrence County
- XII. Village of Philadelphia, GIS Agreement, GIS Web-Based Hosting Services Agreement (renewed 5 year contract of services), Total Agreement Amount \$4,650.00, 6/1/25 – 5/31/30, Jefferson County
- XIII. Town of Tupper Lake, Regional Development, NYS AHC Grant Administration and Program Delivery, Total Agreement Amount \$26,400.00, 5/29/25 – 12/31/27, Franklin County

Upon a motion by E. Virkler, and seconded by M. Hall, Board Contract Summary Table items numbered I through XIII for the month of May were unanimously approved.

b. Lewis County Contracts –

- XIV. Lewis County, Technical Services Agreement, Former Lyons Falls School Redevelopment Amendment No. 2, Total Agreement Amount of \$28,000, 5/1/25 – 12/31/25, Lewis County

Upon a motion by D. Mastascusa, and seconded by M. Hall, Board Contract Summary Table item numbered XIV for the month of May was approved and E. Virkler abstained.

11. Engineering –

- a. Resolution No. 2025-05-33, authorizes the Executive Director to negotiate and enter into a Memorandum of Agreement annually with the Northern Border Regional Commission and the State of New York to provide Technical Services and staff support for the administration of the Authority’s duties as a Local Development District in Jefferson, Lewis, St. Lawrence and Franklin counties as identified within the resolution.

C. Tuttle stated that the initial criteria was for a population of 3,000, but has since been changed to 5,000 based upon feedback from some of the LDD’s. The projected resolution for the meeting read 3,000, however this resolution will be amended to read 5,000 when the resolution is certified, as per the NBRC. This change is in an effort to encourage additional applications for these small communities.

E. Virkler asked if this was the item that was in the news not too long ago stating that this program or entity was going to be cut. C. Tuttle responded that we had also heard that the NBRC was one of the entities that the federal government was looking at, but these funds that the NBRC has been appropriated are in prior fiscal years. She further stated that we have been told by the NBRC that funding is in place for this year and next at a minimum, and they will see what happens from there. She thinks the NBRC funding is tied to the Ag Bill and linked with other funding where it is not easily separated out from the other appropriations that may be a higher priority for the federal government.

E. Virkler also asked if we have to attempt to spend \$110,000 before September. C. Tuttle replied that T. Haynes' group will be the ones administering these for the Authority and will be a capacity situation based on what makes sense and what we can realistically do. She further stated that there are activities that his group is doing already that they are not being reimbursed for and this would be a way for us to help cover our costs.

Upon a motion by E. Virkler and seconded by D. Mastascusa, Resolution No. 2025-05-33, Memorandum of Agreement, State of New York, The Northern Border Regional Commission, and The Development Authority of the North Country, was unanimously approved.

## 12. Materials Management –

- a. Resolution No. 2025-05-34, determines that the Leachate Pre-treatment Study project is a Type II Action, and will not have a significant adverse impact in the environment, and therefore no Environmental Impact Statement needs to be prepared and no further action with regard to the SEQRA is required.

Upon a motion by D. Mastascusa and seconded by E. Virkler, Resolution No. 2025-05-34, Materials Management Facility, State Environmental Quality Review Act Determination, Leachate Pre-Treatment Study, was unanimously approved.

- b. Resolution No. 2025-05-35, amends the Material Management Division Capital Budget for the FYE 2026 Stage V Closure (Project 20205) to increase the budget from \$10,450,000 to \$13,625,000, with such increase being funded from the Closure Reserve.

Upon a motion by T. Hefferon and seconded by M. Hall, Resolution No. 2025-05-35, Capital Project Budget Amendment, Materials Management Division, Stage V Closure, was unanimously approved.

- c. Resolution No. 2025-05-36, authorizes the Executive Director to negotiate and enter into Amendment No. 1 to the Memorandum of Understanding detailing the partnership between Fort Drum and the Authority to increase waste diversion for the Planning Unit.

Upon a motion by M. Hall and seconded by E. Virkler, Resolution No. 2025-05-36, Memorandum of Understanding Amendment No. 1, The United States Army

Garrison, Fort Drum, New York, The Development Authority of the North Country, Management of Solid Waste, Recyclables, and Scrap Materials, was unanimously approved.

### 13. Water Quality –

- a. Resolution No. 2025-05-37, approves the Technical Services Agreement by and between the Authority and the Village. The Executive Director is hereby authorized and directed to negotiate an agreeable start date to commence such services and execute said agreement.

Upon a motion by D. Mastascusa and seconded by M. Hall, Resolution No. 2025-05-37, Technical Services Agreement, Village of Malone, Leachate Pretreatment Project Pilot, was unanimously approved.

### 14. Regional Development –

- a. Loan Report –

M. Capone reported that a couple loans are two months past due. The North Country Rural Preservation typically runs a few months past due with their cash flow loan and she will review their financial statements to see if they owe us a cash payment at this time, otherwise the interest will accrue to the outstanding balance. Clifton Fine Hospital also tends to run a couple months past due and they will get current. Windwater Enterprises is a tourism loan and runs a couple months past due and then comes current. Woods Inn 1894, also a tourism loan, is going through bank foreclosure. We had worked through an arrangement with an investment group to acquire the Woods Inn 1894 and assume the outstanding loan, but that deal fell through with the bank so they are trying to work out other options. All other loans are being paid as agreed at this time.

B. McGrath asked if this statement includes the zoo. M. Capone responded yes; the zoo is current. We gave them the option of continuing with moratoriums on payments and they chose to go back to making regular payments in October and they are in fact current.

- b. Resolution No. 2025-05-38, accepts the Annual Report with the Authority as the sole member of the Creek Wood Housing Development Fund Company (HDFC), and waives by written consent the Annual Meeting of the HDFC. Furthermore, effective May 29, 2025 the existing directors of the HDFC will continue in office until the next Annual Meeting. These directors are as follows, Thomas H. Hefferon (Chair), Dennis Mastascusa (Vice Chair), Carl E. Farone, Jr. (Treasurer), and Michelle L. Capone (Secretary).

M. Capone stated that this project occupancy is at 93.75%.

Upon a motion by T. Hefferon and seconded by D. Mastascusa, Resolution No. 2025-05-38, Annual Report, Creek Wood Housing Development Fund Company, Inc., Waiving the Annual Meeting, Appointing Directors, was unanimously approved.

- c. Resolution No. 2025-05-39, accepts the Annual Report with the Authority as the sole member of the Creek Wood II Housing Development Fund Company (HDFC), and waives by written consent the Annual Meeting of the HDFC. Furthermore, effective May 29, 2025 the existing directors of the HDFC will continue in office until the next Annual Meeting. The directors are as follows, Thomas H. Hefferon (Chair), Dennis Mastascusa (Vice Chair), Carl E. Farone, Jr. (Treasurer), and Michelle L. Capone (Secretary).

M. Capone stated that this project occupancy is at 94.23%.

Upon a motion by E. Virkler and seconded by M. Hall, Resolution No. 2025-05-39, Annual Report, Creek Wood II Housing Development Fund Company, Inc., Waiving the Annual Meeting, Appointing Directors, was unanimously approved.

- d. Resolution No. 2025-05-40, extends the term of the Jefferson County Historical Society loan for an additional 9 months subject to the Term Sheet as attached to the resolution.

Upon a motion by M. Hall and seconded by D. Mastascusa, Resolution No. 2025-05-40, Economic Development Fund, Jefferson County Historical Society, Loan Extension, was unanimously approved.

- 15. Executive Session – for the purpose of discussion regarding the employment history of a particular person or matters leading to the appointment or employment of a particular person.

Upon a motion by A. MacKinnon and seconded by M. Hall, the Board moved into Executive Session at 11:48 AM.

Upon a motion by D. Mastascusa and seconded A. MacKinnon, the Board moved out of Executive Session at 12:05 PM.

No action was taken.

- 16. Next Board Meeting Date – June 26, 2025 (Required for Audit Approval)

- 17. Adjourn -

- a. Upon a motion by M. Hall and seconded by E. Virkler, the meeting was adjourned at 12:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Dennis Mastascusa  
Board Secretary