

Ulster County Traffic Safety Board

November 1, 2021 Draft Meeting Summary

In Attendance:

In Person:

David Staas, UCTC

Brendan Masterson, Ulster County DPW

Brian Slack, UCTC

Eric Kight, NYC DEP

Diane Bietl, Ulster County Safety

Remote:

Rose Quinn, SUNY Ulster/GTSB

Giovanna Russo, Mid Hudson Transportation Supervisors Association

Agenda & Meeting Summary

1. County Executive's Statement on Recent Fatalities: Open Discussion (6:00pm)

Mr Kight welcomed members to meeting after taking a pause due to the Covid pandemic. He referred to the County Executive's statement issued 9/21/2021 regarding the need to ramp up bicycle and pedestrian safety efforts throughout the County:

<https://ulstercountyny.gov/news/executive/ulster-county-executive-pat-ryan-calls-ulster-county-traffic-safety-board-ramp>

In response, the Board has reconvened.

2. Organization of TSB going forward

Mr. Kight asked for an update of the organization of the TSB going forward; Brian Slack volunteered to provide that update. Slack noted that the Planning Department met with Diane's office in March 2020 to discuss how Planning and UCTC staff could assist her office with TSB support and organization. Diane was receptive to receiving this administrative assistance and further discussed possibilities as to how participation on the TSB could be improved. The Covid lockdown occurred shortly after that discussion and no further action had taken place until recently. As part of the effort to restore the TSB, the County Executive's Office had requested a member of the UCTC serve as TSB Coordinator going forward; Brian

volunteered to fulfill that role. Slack presented the appointment letter from the County Executive issued October 29th. The appointment must be confirmed by the Ulster County Legislature.

Slack indicated that he looks forward to offering the support of the UCTC to the TSB. He indicated that he has some suggestions to improve the TSB's operation going forward, such as clearer agendas, developing some general rules for the TSB's function, and working with the TSB to develop a work plan to guide its efforts. Possible among those efforts would include the development of education and outreach programs, including using UCAT buses for safety ads. Slack also noted that all member appointments have lapsed. Members are appointed by the County Executive and will therefore need to be reappointed.

Slack briefly discussed how a work plan could be developed next year, incl. utilizing the assistance of the Governor's TSB for grant opportunities and guidance. He also noted that UCTC's data analysis ability will be very helpful in identifying safety focus areas that the TSB could address.

3. Appointments and Membership

Dennis Doyle provided clarification regarding the appointment process going forward and that the Coordinator position would likely be confirmed by December. He also indicated that under NYS Uniform Procedures Law, all current members that are currently appointed can continue to serve until reappointments are made.

Doyle suggested that all members of the TSB should be solicited and asked if they wish to serve going forward. The Ulster County Charter indicated that the TSB shall consist of 12 members; If there are any absences on the TSB after current members are solicited, the TSB or the County Executive can open a search for new members to fill those absences and would likely consider recommendations from the TSB. He suggested some possible stakeholder groups that would likely be good to include, including First Responders, NYSDOT and other highway maintenance staff, bicycle and pedestrian advocates, representatives from diverse neighborhoods, and many others.

B. Masterson inquired as to who is leading the City of Kingston's recently-approved traffic safety campaign, as it presented an opportunity for partnership; Slack was not aware but would seek further information.

Action Item: Slack will submit along with a meeting summary and inquiry to the existing roster to indicate their interest in continuing to serve on the TSB. Diane volunteered to conduct the mailing until Slack's appointment is confirmed.

4. Updates from Members

The following updates were provided by TSB members:

D. Staas spoke about the completion of the Ulster County Road Safety Plan; final report is available here <https://ulstercountyny.gov/transportation-council/road-safety-plan>. Plan ranks the top 10 locations in Ulster County that experience the highest number of crashes; it also provides recommended counter measures. 50 locations total are prioritized. Road safety assessments at these locations can then be conducted partnering with emergency service and engineering personnel to identify low-cost solutions

at these locations. E. Kight requested that Dave provide a summary of the hot spots and the report at a future TSB meeting; Staas agreed.

Rose Quinn provided updates from the Ulster County Health and Safety Institute; she indicated that her grant was approved for this year. She also took the opportunity to stress the need to name the recent bicyclists who were killed on Ulster County roadways; those individuals are Dayle Savage, John Lynch, and Devin Griffiths. She stressed the importance of understanding the names and faces behind tragic roadway statistics and the need to include more emphasis on individual community members and their experiences with traffic safety going forward.

Giovanna Russo indicated that the Mid Hudson Transportation Supervisors Association has not been meeting regularly since the pandemic began. She also stressed that there have been more school bus crashes during the pandemic than in years prior, which is an alarming trend that presently hasn't a clear explanation. D. Doyle inquired as to whether the MV-104s could be examined to identify what trends if any are occurring.

B. Masterson provided updates regarding DPW paving, guide rail and other maintenance activities of Ulster County DPW. 60 miles of paving overlay and 30 of reconstruction occurred; 4 bridges redone and numerous culverts replaced. He indicated a record number of speed reduction requests being received. Hurley Mountain and Glasco have been reduced in response. Other requests were denied or are pending. Other maintenance and construction activities were detailed.

B. Slack indicated that the UCTC is bringing a corridor management plan scope of work to completion; the project will address traffic conditions on the 9W corridor in the Town of Ulster. He provided brief updates on the pending federal transportation infrastructure bill.

E. Kight indicated that DEP has been replacing roadway signs with new retroreflective signs, which have been noticeable. The Ashokan Rail Trail has been busy; DEP receives a lot of complaints about dog residue but otherwise the trail is being very well used and it appears that cyclists are opting to use the trail as opposed to 28A. Boiceville bridge replacement contract is moving forward; the project will include intersection realignment at 28A and 28 as well as a pedestrian path into the hamlet to connect to the crosswalk to the school. Guiderail continues to get dinged-up; deer population seems to be in decline due to the EHD disease, which may have a beneficial reduction in car/deer collisions. Masterson indicated the same observation on county roads.

Masterson indicated that Leg. Parete submitted a letter to DPW inquiring about the safety of left hand turns into the eastern most Ashokan RT entrance; Doyle indicated that the ingress was studied extensively during the design and through the SEQR process and ultimately approved by NYSDOT; no increases in crashes have been observed at the site.

D. Bietl provided a brief update from the safety office; the concern of snow plows clearing driveways was raised; other concerns raised about Broadway project completion were mentioned. Doyle and Slack provide brief updates regarding those projects.

5. Other Business

E. Kight indicated the need to conduct public safety announcements; Slack indicated that quarterly press releases can be conducted and pushed by the County Executive's office for greater reach. No further comments.

Masterson made motion to adjourn; Slack second; meeting adjourned around 7:25.

Next meeting will be December 6th.

~bcs