

**River Area Council of Governments**  
**September 25, 2025**

**Voting quorum present:** T/Champion, T/Croghan, T/Greig, T/Watson, T/Wilna, V/Carthage, V/Castorland, V/Croghan, V/Deferiet, V/Lowville and V/West Carthage

Chairman Smith called the meeting to order at 6:00pm at the T/Wilna Municipal Building and introductions were made.

Motion by T. Adsit, seconded by L. Smith-Spencer to approve the minutes of May 22, 2025 as presented. All members voted in favor.

**Presentations**

- K. Malinowski reminded members about the upcoming Tug Hill Commission dinner. The discussion topic will focus on agricultural development.
- J. Harvill reminded members that the Local Government Conference will be held in April. She discussed the possibility of holding a SuperCog meeting in November.
- Ryan Piche, Jefferson County Manager, and Tim Hunt, Lewis County Manager, highlighted aspects of change and progress in their respective counties.

Jefferson County issues of interest included:

- ~ an initiative by Economic Development to insure a coordinated and unified approach to business development, specifically renewable energy projects.
- ~working with the ASPCA to satisfy the new standards for housing dogs picked up by dog control officers.
- ~a grant opportunity known as the Visitor Investment Fund.
- ~a second round of the County Infrastructure Grant related to housing.
- ~County assessment services.
- ~final phases of the airport construction project.
- ~a County law addressing unsafe structures.
- ~bed tax on short term rentals
- ~Hartley Bonisteel Schweitzer is the new County Director of Planning.

Lewis County issues of interest included:

- ~a County podcast on the website.
- ~the Alpine Express bus service with Fort Drum.
- ~action on short term rentals.

~Towns updating zoning laws to address condensed air storage.  
~Three decommissioned elementary schools that are being repurposed for housing.  
~the development of a County Comprehensive Plan.  
~Phase 1 and 2 of brownfield assessments.  
~a Land Bank initiative to address dilapidated structures.  
~an assessment of the current 911 system.  
~an agreement for BOCES to take over the JCC Center and use it and Maple Ridge to serve area students.  
~discussions with Kraft Corporate regarding opportunities to apply for an Achieve Grant.

The presentations were followed by a discussion including the possible impacts from Micron and Amazon, Jefferson County bus service beginning in January, closing on the railroad between Lowville and Carthage, and emphasis on the importance of discussions between Jefferson County and a Supervisor/Mayor group.

### **New Business**

- M. Dietrich reviewed his report. Action was taken on the following new business.
- Motion by L. Smith-Spencer, seconded by T. Adsit to reimburse S. Colwell for mileage to attend the Tug Hill Commission dinner. All members voted in favor.
- Motion by M. Roberts, seconded by L. Smith-Spencer to appoint Rachel Vary as Secretary/Treasurer effective January 1, 2026 to replace C. Vargulick who is retiring. All members voted in favor.
- Motion by M. Roberts, seconded by S. Storms to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 7:28pm.

*Christina Vargulick*

Christina Vargulick  
RACOG Secretary