
THE ASSOCIATION OF
PUBLIC HISTORIANS
OF NEW YORK STATE

*Draft for
Membership & Supporter Review*

Has been Reviewed by
Membership April 2011
Strategic Planning Report

February 2011

Adopted April 2011

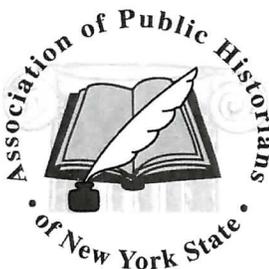


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CAPITOL HILL
MANAGEMENT
SERVICES, INC.

Prepared by:
CAPITOL HILL MANAGEMENT SERVICES, INC.
1450 Western Avenue, Suite 101
Albany, NY 12203
518-463-8644
www.caphill.com

OVERVIEW



For the last several years, the Association of Public Historians of New York State (APHNYS) has conducted a number of long-range planning sessions. The most recent one was held on April 20, 2010 as part of the 2010 Annual State Conference in Buffalo. The purpose of these sessions was to provide a forum for APHNYS leaders, members and supporters to brainstorm ideas, share concerns and plan for the future. Capitol Hill Management Services of Albany, New York, which provides association management services for APHNYS, has provided the facilitation for the long-range planning sessions.

The following report outlines the contents of the long-range planning sessions and provides the initial draft outline of a Strategic Plan. The contents were reviewed by the APHNYS Board of Trustees, Regional Coordinators and Committee Chairs during the late fall. We are now making this draft available to APHNYS members and supporters in order to gain constructive feedback before being finalized for adoption and action by the APHNYS Board of Trustees.

*Please review and provide your feedback
by Monday, February 28, 2011.*

You may e-mail comments to aphnys@caphill.com

or send to:

APHNYS

1450 Western Avenue, Suite 101

Albany, NY 12203-3539

This report is composed of the following sections:

- A Brief History of APHNYS
- “Where’s APHNYS?” What is the Current State of the Association?
- The “Challenges”
- Core Ideology & Envisioned Future
- Strategic Principles
- Focus Points, Draft Goals & Strategies
- Where Do We Go From Here?
- Strategic Plan Timeline

A BRIEF HISTORY OF APHNYS

The following brief history is offered as a context to the contents of this report.

In 1919, New York State took the lead with the passage of legislation to create a legion of officially appointed historians in every town, village, city, borough and county across the Empire State. Unique in its concept, it provided every municipality with a distinctly identifiable person whose duties would be to ensure that the history of that area was collected, preserved and used to promote the history and heritage of our communities.

For the next sixty years, these historians worked independently without the ability to network, and learn from each other. In 1979 a group of town, village and city historians banded together to form a new group called the Association of Municipal Historians of New York State. This group sought to hold conferences, have lectures and train to become better historians. Seven years later, in 1986, the County Historian Association of New York State was created to mirror that need for the sixty-two historians representing our counties.

The groups held separate conferences, workshops and direction until 1999. It was in that year that the boards of both groups met and agreed to merge the two organizations into one stronger and more effective tool for the local government historian. That new group became the Association of Public Historians of New York State. It was recognized by the New York State Board of Regents as the official group representing the needs and work of these historians.

From its inception, the Association saw as one of its priorities to raise the level of professionalism among the historian -- to create a system that would allow each historian to receive the basic training and education needed to fulfill their responsibilities as historian. This is now the registration program that works to recognize the work and achievements of each historian both on a local and statewide basis. The Association established a system of twelve regions across the state. Each regional coordinator's responsibility was to develop meetings that offered further training, education and networking to the local historian.

Today, there are over twenty regional and statewide meetings and conferences held each year, promoting local history and the work of the historian. Although there are over 1600 municipalities in New York State, APHNYS recognizes that it is the needs of each historian that must be met if we are to be diligent in our work to promote the history and heritage of our great state. For as someone once said "all history is local."

WHERE'S APHNYS?

WHAT IS THE CURRENT STATE OF THE ASSOCIATION?

The work of the long-range planning sessions began with a simple "taking of the pulse" of APHNYS leaders, members and supporters. The group was asked to share its initial thoughts regarding the current state of the association. This was a "gut reaction" exercise.

The group offered the following:

APHNYS is...

- *RELEVANT!* There is a need/role for APHNYS.
- Providing an excellent forum for collaborative efforts and networking.
- A voice of the profession.
- Affordable and offers value to members.
- Full of wonderful people and ideas, but needs to keep focus on projects.
- Led by a dedicated group of leaders; want "new blood" to help lead.
- In need of more members, volunteers and sources of funding.
- In need of further educating elected officials about the role and importance of Local Government Historians.
- Improving the quality of life in communities across New York State through the work of our members.
- Promoting educational initiatives and greater historical appreciation.

Most of these statements or descriptions illustrate an association that is taking a serious look at itself and is dealing with some serious challenges and issues. The comments also show that participants have an idea as to the areas that need to be addressed in the coming years.

THE “CHALLENGES”

Following the review of APHNYS current standing, the group reviewed and discussed a compilation of responses offered by leaders and members. These challenges include:

Top Challenges Facing APHNYS

- Vision/relevance/visibility (with both individuals & governments)
- Funding
- Credibility with governments and agencies (at local levels)
- Quality product development - what must-have products does APHNYS provide to its members? Member benefits that matter; take training to them; “What benefit does APHNYS give to members other than an annual conference?”
- Time to carry out mission; maintaining cadre of volunteers
- Regional operations - restoring vitality

Top Challenges Facing Local Government Historians

- Providing value to employers (actual & perceived)/validity
- Coping with resource constraints (budget, staffing, support); Funding!
Aging of the Profession
- Learning/applying and adapting new technologies

Top Things Historians Need from APHNYS

- Provide a robust network of peers to consult and confer with/accessible in many ways; being linked and resourced
- Resources to adapt and apply
- Inexpensive training
- “State of the State” - Being up-to-date on historical and preservation issues, best practices & legislative/legal changes; advocating
- Reaching out to government community to actively promote membership and involvement; advocacy

Respondents’ Average Years in the Profession

13.7 years

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CORE IDEOLOGY & ENVISIONED FUTURE

Core ideology describes an organization's consistent identity that transcends all changes related to its relevant environment. Core ideology consists of two notions: core purpose – the organization's reason for being; and core values – essential and enduring principles that guide an organization. Envisioned future conveys a concrete, but yet unrealized, vision for the organization. It consists of a clear and compelling catalyst that serves as a focal point for effort. Based on the long-range planning deliberations, the following is the core ideology and envisioned future for APHNYS:

CORE IDEOLOGY

Core Purpose:

To provide a common forum that fosters members' success.

Core Values:

1. Integrity and honesty
2. Credibility – knowledgeable on the issues
3. Respect
4. Open dialogue
5. Collegiality
6. Member parity – equal opportunity for input

ENVISIONED FUTURE

To become *the* influential voice of Local Government Historians and promote local history across New York State.

APHNYS

STRATEGIC PRINCIPLES

Strategic principles are concrete statements grounded in the association's core values that gives guidance about direction and provides parameters for action. They will help an association assess if an opportunity fits within its service niche.

APHNYS Strategic Principles are:

1. Ensure that the needs of our members and their communities continue to be successfully met.
2. Execute strategies required to sustain critical mass needed to be the unified voice for the profession.
3. Anticipate and respond to the evolving historical/preservation environment in New York State.
4. Develop programs that will be of interest to existing members and may be of interest to other stakeholders, and that are likely to generate revenue or demonstrate a reasonable benefit.
5. Pursue opportunities that leverage volunteer/staff capabilities and/or partnerships wherever possible, but be ready to increase resources of the organization if it is necessary to get work done.
6. Prioritization of new and existing opportunities is the responsibility of the Board and a rational basis for prioritization is shared with the membership.

FOCUS POINTS, DRAFT GOALS & STRATEGIES

Outcome-oriented statements represent what will constitute success to APHNYS in a 1-3 year timeframe in each of its major areas of focus. The achievement of each goal will allow APHNYS to realize progress toward achievement of its Envisioned Future. Goals should not be prioritized – each of them must be achieved over a 1-3 year period in order to move toward the desired Envisioned Future.

GOAL #1: MEMBERSHIP & LEADERSHIP PARTICIPATION

Expand APHNYS membership and volunteer cadre in order to support its core mission.

Objectives

1. Increase active paid membership to include Local Government Historians from every region and municipality in the state
2. Expand the number of volunteer leaders at all levels (Board of Directors, committees and geographic areas)
3. Create consistent levels of activity in all twelve APHNYS Regions
4. Create effective action plans and increase follow-through on all APHNYS projects and initiatives

Possible Strategies

1. Begin in Year One by establishing a membership recruitment and retention program that identifies all possible members, sends out timely and attractive electronic and hard copy literature, and has human follow-up
2. Identify all lapsed members and immediately follow-up on involvement/membership
3. Identify other potential stakeholders for membership, i.e. historical societies, etc.

4. Convene a future leaders committee that will review and identify all possible candidates who could bring their talents to APHNYS; create leadership "hit list" and begin reaching out/recruiting these possible future leaders and involve in committee/project work
5. Conduct a full association committee review, identifying all standing and *ad hoc* committees, their current status (chair, identifiable members, mission, projects, etc.)
6. Identify critical and time-sensitive needs and place on "timed project/work group track." These should be the building block items that need to be accomplished and put in place to ensure success of other long-term goals and projects.
7. Create leadership guide/manual that will provide useful information to all current and potential leaders (Board, Regional Coordinators, Committee and Project Chairs)

GOAL #2: FORUM/COMMUNICATION/KNOWLEDGE/INFORMATION

APHNYS will be the authority and clearinghouse for information that members will need to make strategic decisions for their community history operations.

Objectives

1. Become a leading source of information on the issues. Educate members on the particulars of the issues, pros/cons, etc. before they solidify their individual positions
2. Increase available resources (volunteers/staff, financial, technological) to manage information flow and make it available to members
3. Increase the amount of focused information available to members
4. Increase opportunities to share knowledge
5. Increase the association's ability to anticipate emerging issues

Possible Strategies

1. Identify and assemble the resources (i.e. job descriptions, policies, etc.) needed by Local Government Historians; this information will serve as the "APHNYS Toolkit"
2. Educate members on value and need for basic computer and technology skills
3. Continue to expand and further create a robust web presence that will serve as the first-line clearinghouse of information
4. Continue to expand recognizable and regular e-communications program with members; create target blasts for specific constituencies
5. Continue dialogue and planning with State Historian

GOAL #3: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT/TRAINING

APHNYS will be recognized as the preeminent facilitator of Local Government Historian training in New York State.

Objectives

1. Increase the amount of opportunities for professional training in and around the state
2. Increase participation in training programs by both members and non-members
3. Expand the curriculum/offerings through partnerships with organizations with similar interests/focus
4. Continue building effective partnership with NYS Office of Cultural Education
5. Promote Registered Historians Program for its prestige and method for chronicling career and value of historian's work to his/her community

Possible Strategies

1. Think beyond the opportunities provided at Annual Conference. Plan localized training programs utilizing the expertise of APHNYS members
2. Plan dates and themes for annual meeting and localized training several years in advance in order to promote events and ensure greater awareness and participation
3. Identify cadre of qualified speakers/programs and develop long-range topics list for programming; programs should reflect best practices/timely issues; programs can "circuit ride" throughout the state
4. Develop plan for creation of online educational offerings. This can begin with the recording and posting of sessions held at annual conference or in future localized training, and later include planned webinars.
5. Stress technology training for Local Government Historians

GOAL #4: ADVOCACY & IMAGE

APHNYS will successfully advocate and/or educate Local Government Historians, elected leaders and legislative bodies, and other stakeholders to meet the changing needs of the membership and the profession.

Objectives

1. Increase visibility and become increasingly known as the forum for debate and information on emerging state and local history and preservation policy issues
2. Increase the level of association and member communication/outreach to government leaders on the local, state and federal levels
3. Increase perception of APHNYS and its members by policy makers as the preeminent voice of the profession in New York State

Possible Strategies

1. Further promote APHNYS website and publications for immediate access to information for all stakeholders
2. Establish and utilize existing and new programs and processes to support the association's role as the facilitator of dialogue
3. Develop grassroots education/outreach program for APHNYS in order for members to advocate and influence decision-makers at all levels of government. The purpose of the program is to: a) inform officials of existence, benefits and value of APHNYS, b) their role/responsibilities in supporting Local Government Historians, and c) encouragement of supporting their appointed Historians in joining the association. Cite results of 2009 APHNYS Member Survey.
4. Empower Legislative Committee to foster greater understanding and planning between multiple agencies.

GOAL #5: BUILDING FINANCIAL STRENGTH

Expand APHNYS' financial resources in order to further support its mission

Objectives

1. Ensure the association's financial future through sound financial management, growth and increased revenue

Possible Strategies

1. Increase membership across the state by ensuring regular members continue to participate and through active recruitment and solicitation of Local Government Historians who have not joined or may be unaware of the association and its work
2. Further advocate to local governments and appointing officials the value of membership in APHNYS—the value to the community
3. Build additional revenue streams through increased marketing and sponsorship efforts; publish marketing packet that showcases both annual and event-specific sponsorship opportunities
4. Promote greater participation in APHNYS events through greater publicity and active “grassroots” marketing
5. Research and pursue additional grant opportunities at both the statewide and regional levels
6. Begin an endowment fund which can be grown and later utilized for grants to Local Government Historians
7. Actively promote association's 501 (c) 3 public charity designation by the IRS and NYS public charity/tax exempt status to solicit donations and other sources of funding

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

The information and ideas discussed at the long-range planning sessions have been synthesized and will serve as a reference in helping the association's leaders in setting APHNYS' specific strategies for the upcoming year and beyond.

APHNYS members and supporters will review this draft of the report and provide feedback to the APHNYS Office. Based on this feedback, a final draft report will then be finalized and adopted by the APHNYS Board of Trustees.

It is important to remember that in the future, APHNYS' Strategic Plan will evolve to meet the needs of a constantly changing profession. Therefore, underlying this plan is the adoption of an ongoing process of planning and thinking strategically, designed to ensure relevance of direction and action over time.

The APHNYS Strategic Plan should be a "living document." Its framework should serve as the basis of every Board of Trustees and committee meeting. It is a "roadmap" for the future.

APHNYS

STRATEGIC PLANNING TIMELINE

The following timeline/objectives are offered based on this preliminary draft. These may be adjusted following feedback from APHNYS members and supporters.

Also, after receiving feedback and finalizing schedule, we will include a Gantt chart laying out the timeline for action, etc. This will offer a helpful visual for all those using the report. Example:

Task #	Description	Duration (months)											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1a	Business Plan Development												
	Market research												
	Draft plan												
1b	Strategic Research Plan												
	Evaluate existing work												
	Draft plan												
2	NY-BEST Testing Capabilities												
	Identify need & opportunities												
	Testing Capabilities plan												
	Fund plan												
	Appropriations request												
	Government proposals												
3	Company market development												
	Networking, referrals and contacts												
	Initial meetings with all members												
	Market research on target apps.												
	Cultivate relationships												
	Conference & Symposia												
4	Outreach and Marketing												
	Market research												
	Market development												
5	Website upgrade												
	Outreach												
	Policies and Agreements												
6	Testing agreement												
	cooperative research model												
	Measuring Success												
	Draft metrics												
	Final metrics												

By February 28, 2011 (First 2 Weeks)

- Reviewed Strategic Plan draft will be posted on APHNYS website for member and supporter feedback; deadline for receipt of comments will be Monday, February 28, 2011; followed by Board's formal acceptance and implementation of plan.

By March 31, 2011 (First 60 Days)

- Complete census procedure to non-active and vacant appointments
- Complete 2nd notice of renewals for 2011 membership year
- President will initiate a full association Regional and committee review, fill any open/vacant Regional Coordinator and committee chair assignments, and request goals for 2011 and beyond from all Regional Coordinators and committee chairs
- APHNYS Board will identify time-sensitive needs and ongoing projects and place on "timed project/work group track." These work groups will be given specific task and deadline for completion.
- President will appoint new Future Leaders Committee (this may be the Nominating Committee augmented with several other people)
- President and Administrator will review all association documentation and files (paper and electronic), so there is a Master Copy of each
- Organization's 2011 activity schedule will be solidified; further Annual Conference details for 2012 and 2013 to be posted and shared with membership

Timeline continues→

From February 1 - July 31, 2011 (Six Months)

- Board and Membership Committee will review membership roster, identify areas of strength and areas that need improvement; also identify who is missing, and from here a "hit list" will be established
- All sections of Public Historians Handbook will be reviewed, updated, given editorial review and posted
- "APHNYS Toolkit" list created, resources gathered, and begin posting and publicizing this resource
- Editorial/outreach schedule created for APHNYS website, e-blasts and publication for 2011 and 2012; schedule can also look beyond next two years for general themes, etc.
- Full training/professional development schedule finalized for second half of 2011 and save-the-dates set for 2012; publicize
- All APHNYS Regions to plan a meeting/conference to be held before December 31, 2011
- Full leadership review conducted (nominations, elections, etc.)
- Venues for 2012 and 2013 Annual State Conferences selected and publicized
- All solicitations sent out for corporate support

Timeline continues→

By December 31, 2011

- Conduct a thorough review of the association's marketing effort, making sure that APHNYS is tapping into all possible revenue streams.
- Develop a fresh marketing approach, including a new membership brochure or recruitment piece for distribution, table top exhibit and elected officials piece.
- Develop a volunteer recruitment and retention plan.
- First anniversary review of Strategic Plan conducted; adjusting plan to conditions and setting new goals.
- Full 2012 schedule of events solidified and distributed to members and potential members.

Into 2012 & Beyond

Starting with the Annual Membership Meeting being held on April 4, 2011 at the Holiday Inn – Riverside in Elmira, APHNYS and its leadership will further identify and set long-term goals that will be incorporated into the Strategic Plan for 2012 and 2013.

FINAL NOTE

Thank you to all who participated in the long-range planning sessions. The focus and energy shared during these sessions are a testament to your desire and hope to make the Association of Public Historians of New York State a stronger and meaningful organization advocating for, protecting, and advancing your profession and the work of Local Government Historians across the Empire State.

*Please review and provide your feedback
by Monday, February 28, 2011.*

You may e-mail comments to aphnys@caphill.com

or send to:

APHNYS

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Albany, NY 12203-3539

APPENDIX/SUPPORTING MATERIAL

The following resources are included to assist in understanding the mission, structure and governance of the Association of Public Historians of New York State. These resources should be used as reference material for future planning:

APHNYS Leadership Job Descriptions

APHNYS Regional Map

APHNYS Code of Ethics & Professional Conduct

APHNYS By-Laws

APHNYS Leadership Job Descriptions

The Association of Public Historians of New York State

JOB DESCRIPTION

PRESIDENT

The President provides strong leadership to the Association of Public Historians of New York State (APHNYS), which serves 1650 appointed public historians.

1. Is an appointed municipal historian and a member of APHNYS.
2. Appoints the Nominating Committee of five members.
3. Presides at all meetings of the Board of Trustees.
4. Presides at annual meetings of the membership of APHNYS in the spring.
5. Presides at the meetings of the Executive Board.
6. Serves as a member of the Officer Team
7. Calls meetings upon request of 50 members of APHNYS or in case of emergency and presides at any such meetings.
8. Supervises the First and Second Vice Presidents, Secretary, and Treasurer, each of whom reports to the President.
9. Supervises work of staff at APHNYS Office.
10. Appoints an Archivist who manages and preserves the records of the organization.
11. Appoints Finance, Membership, Program, Audit and Legislation Committees per specifications of the Bylaws.
12. Appoints any committees, standing or special, which may be deemed necessary to carry out the work of the Association.
13. Serves as ex-officio member of all committees except the Nominating Committee.
14. President is accountable to the Board of Trustees.

The Association of Public Historians of New York State

JOB DESCRIPTION

FIRST VICE PRESIDENT

The First Vice President serves as an advocate of the Association of Public Historians of New York State (APHNYS), which serves 1650 appointed public historians.

1. Is an appointed municipal historian and a member of APHNYS.
2. Serves as a member of the Officer Team.
3. Chairs the Nominating Committee.
4. Chairs meetings of the Board of Trustees or APHNYS in the absence of the President.
5. Works with committee chairs as assigned by the President.
6. Assumes Presidential tasks per order of the Board of Trustees if the President is unable to perform his/her duties.
7. First Vice President is accountable to the President.

The Association of Public Historians of New York State

JOB DESCRIPTION

SECOND VICE PRESIDENT

The Second Vice President serves as an advocate of the Association of Public Historians of New York State (APHNYS), which serves 1650 appointed public historians.

1. Is an appointed municipal historian and a member of APHNYS.
2. Serves as a member of the Officer Team.
3. Chairs meetings of the Board of Trustees or APHNYS in the absence of the President and First Vice President.
4. Works with committee chairs as assigned by the President.
5. Second Vice President is accountable to the President.

The Association of Public Historians of New York State

JOB DESCRIPTION

SECRETARY

The Secretary handles all the correspondence and keeps the legal records of the Association of Public Historians of New York State (APHNYS), which serves 1650 appointed public historians.

1. Is an appointed municipal historian and a member of APHNYS.
2. Serves as a member of the Officer Team.
3. Works with the President and APHNYS Office Staff to handle all official correspondence of APHNYS.
4. Keeps copies of the organization's correspondence in files per year.
5. Reads correspondence at Board and Member meetings as appropriate.
6. Responds and directs requests for information or advice as received by APHNYS.
7. Keeps all records of resignations.
8. Prepares and records all minutes of the Board of Trustees.
9. Prepares and records all minutes of the APHNYS membership meetings.
10. Keeps the legal minute records of APHNYS.
11. Provides all correspondence, minutes, and records at the end of each year to the archivist to be archived and stored in a safe place.
12. Secretary is accountable to the President.

The Association of Public Historians of New York State

JOB DESCRIPTION

TREASURER

The Treasurer is the chief financial officer for the Association of Public Historians of New York State (APHNYS), which serves 1650 appointed public historians.

1. Is an appointed municipal historian and a member of APHNYS.
2. Serves as a member of the Officer Team.
3. Works with the APHNYS Office Administrator to oversee the receipt of monies, bank deposit process, bank accounts and investments of APHNYS.
4. Works with the APHNYS Office Administrator to oversee and process the financial records of the organization and provides them to the appointed archivist at the end of each year for archiving and stored in a safe place.
5. Signs checks on behalf of APHNYS to process payments.
6. Provides reports regularly to APHNYS Board and membership at the annual membership meeting.
7. Treasurer is accountable to the President and membership of APHNYS.

The Association of Public Historians of New York State

JOB DESCRIPTION

TRUSTEE

The Trustee serves as an advocate of the Association of Public Historians of New York State (APHNY) and provides guidance in the overall governance of the association.

1. Is an appointed municipal historian and a member of APHNYS.
2. Serves as a member of the Board of Trustees.
3. Attends bi-annual and special meetings and/or conference calls of the Board of Trustees.
4. Provides counsel to the Officer Team.
5. May be assigned specific projects or duties by the President.
8. Trustee is accountable to the President and membership of APHNYS.

The Association of Public Historians of New York State

JOB DESCRIPTION

REGIONAL COORDINATOR

The Regional Coordinator serves as a liaison between the Association of Public Historians of New York State (APHNYS) and the public historians in designated region of APHNYS.

1. Is an appointed municipal historian and a member of APHNYS.
2. Arranges and conducts regional meetings, which provide educational opportunities and support to the public historian.
3. Keeps historians informed of regional meetings.
4. Relays notices of regional meetings to webmaster and editor of APHNYS newsletter, *The Historian's Exchange*.
5. Advocates for membership in APHNYS.
6. Encourages attendance to APHNYS conferences.
7. Works with County Historians in his/her designated region to keep mailing lists, emails lists, and other contact information up-to-date.
8. Appoints a Deputy Coordinator within the region to assist in responsibilities as listed in job description.
9. Regional Coordinator is accountable to the President of APHNYS.

The Association of Public Historians of New York State

JOB DESCRIPTION

COMMITTEE CHAIR

The Committee Chair oversees the work and activity of a specific committee of the Association of Public Historians of New York State (APHNYS).

1. Is an appointed municipal historian and a member of APHNYS.
2. Arranges and conducts conference calls and meetings of the committee in order to conduct its mission.
3. Relays committee information to webmaster and editor of APHNYS newsletter, *The Historian's Exchange* in order to inform members and garner input.
4. Recommends potential committee members to President of APHNYS for appointment to the committee.
5. Forwards committee recommendations to the President and Secretary of APHNYS for presentation and consideration by the Board of Trustees.
6. Committee Chair is accountable to the President of APHNYS.