



**Windham Region Brownfields Reuse Initiative
Steering Committee Special Meeting Minutes
July 12, 2023
4:00 p.m.
WRC Zoom Call**

Attendees: Gabby Ciuffreda Chair, Elizabeth Bridgewater, Cheryl Kaufman and Bonnie North

Staff: Susan Westa, WRC

Gabby Ciuffreda Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:04 pm with a quorum present. All attendees joined the meeting by Zoom.

Agenda Amendments

There were no amendments.

WRBRI Applications

- Historic Gas Station, Bellows Falls Island – Susan Westa reviewed the project. Charlie Hunter is the prospective purchaser. He would like to use this building as studio space for his artwork. Until recently the site was a gas station and auto repair shop. There are gas tanks in the ground. The owner recently passed away.

Susan said that Charlie is ready to submit to BRELLA and already talked to Sarah Bartlett but now he's waiting for his offer/option to be accepted by the owner's family. He understands that the island is going to be under construction in the coming years, for the three bridges, etc., and he wants to preserve this historic structure (1930's era) until it can be used for something else. Susan does not anticipate any eligibility issues.

Elizabeth Bridgewater made a motion to accept the project into the WRBRI program and approve Phase I ESA funding. Cheryl Kaufman seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

Qualified Environmental Professionals (QEP) Discussion

- Susan said the current QEP assessment contracts end September 30th, 2023. Susan will send out Requests For Qualifications (RFQs) by early August. She would like the Committee to consider some changes to the process:
 - QEPs are currently prequalified for three years. Consider extending to five years. Gabby noted that we use same consultants for three years and there's not lots of turnover. She said there is a mechanism to use other consultants but we have to go out to bid.

She said that we do consider minority owned businesses. Elizabeth likes the proposed efficiency and that there are options if needed, so 5 years is good. Susan said she'd also like to add language about cleanup projects, so we can use these QEPs to oversee projects if needed.

- Susan said that once QEPs are selected, we have been sending out Requests For Proposals (RFPs) to our prequalified list for each new project. We evaluate the proposals and make a selection based on the amount of work, experience with site/area and cost but we don't necessarily go with the lowest bidder. She recently learned that other RPCs do not use the RFP process with their prequalified consultants but assign work based on the same criteria that we use except they do not do a cost comparison each time. EPA was also surprised to hear that we use the RFP process each time. Susan said that most assessment cost proposals come in at a similar level. It takes quite a bit of time to do the RFP process each time.

Elizabeth asked for more information and Gabby explained the WRBRI process. Susan noted that we get a price list and hourly rates through the RFQ process. Elizabeth suggested that we use matrix to determine who's next. Bonnie asked how will we select consultants. Susan said we will use the same criteria we've always used, just not cost proposals each time. Elizabeth asked about monthly meetings and having a rolling list of who projects are assigned to in order to make sure they're equitably distributed. Susan said this is a good idea to ensure that jobs are shared across the list. Gabby suggested we attach this to every meeting agenda. Bonnie and Cheryl agree. Gabby suggested that if I have a concern I bring it to the committee. Elizabeth was a little uncomfortable with this. Gabby suggested that we ask average cost for Phase I's and a broad range of Phase II's in the RFQ and that we track this annually. Cheryl asked how do we assess if more testing needed. Susan said that the State or EPA ask for more testing if needed.

Elizabeth felt better about this after the discussion and talking through this. She would like to see price lists and hourly rates in the RFQs.

Gabby said that a motion is not necessary and the group agreed to the above changed by consensus.

Public Comment – Elizabeth said that Gabby runs a great meeting.

Adjourn – The meeting was adjourned at 4:46 with a motion by Cheryl and seconded by Elizabeth.