



**Executive Board Minutes**  
**May 14, 2024**

**Location:** Remote meeting via Zoom.

**Members Present:** Gabby Ciuffreda, Chair; Steve Lembke, Bonnie North, Jack Cunningham; Jim Pinkerton, Tim Arsenault, Stephan Chait

**Absent:** Ann Golob

**Staff present:** Chris Company, Executive Director

**Public/Guests:** Peter Gregory, Executive Director Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission; Devon Neary, Executive Director Rutland Regional Planning Commission

**Presenter:** none

**Call to Order:** Commissioner Gabby Ciuffreda, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

**Additions/Changes to Agenda:** none

**Secretary's Report:** On a motion by Commissioner Lembke, seconded by Commissioner Arsenault the minutes from the March 12, 2024 meeting were **approved** with one abstention.

**Introduction of guest RPC Directors – Peter Gregory, Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee; Devon Neary, Rutland Regional Planning Commission:** Chair explained that Peter and Devon were attending as part of a peer review process organized among the state's 11 regional planning commissions, and that they were also hiring a consultant to support an external peer review.

**Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) Overview:** Vermont will be eligible for more than \$90 million in HMGP funding to support everything from buyouts and building elevations to dam removals to help mitigate hazards. The timeline is very tight, with initial proposals due June 21<sup>st</sup> and all funding to be obligated by January, 2025. Towns will need to make decisions and act quickly with WRC support. Depending upon town needs Chris may need to adjust staff priorities to assist towns with application development.

**Proposal to Discuss Non-Standing Committee Functions:** Chris requested authorization for staff to work with chairs of non-standing committees, specifically Community Development, Natural Resources, and Energy, for which the WRC has no dedicated funding. He would like to explore opportunities for greater and more meaningful Commissioner engagement, efficacious use of staff time, and the possibility of having committees become more outwardly-focused to engage with towns, stakeholder groups, and the general public. There was universal support for this request.

**Committee Appointments:** On a motion by Commissioner Arsenault, seconded by Commissioner Cunningham, the following Commissioner committee appointments were made upon a unanimous vote.

- James Bressor – Transportation & Energy
- Cathy Fales – Project Review & Planning Coordination
- Paul Spector – Emergency Planning
- Cheryl Carr-Meleh – Nominating & Community Development

It was noted that with the passing of Charlie Goodwin and Carolyn Partridge retiring from service as a Commissioner both the Finance and Nominating Committees were short on membership. It was agreed that we'd bring up the need for more Finance Committee members during the Full Commission meeting and Vice Chair Cunningham agreed to assist the Nominating Committee given his long tenure as a Commissioner.

**Executive Director's Report:** Chris provided an update on the following:

- Executive Board vacancy (Carolyn Partridge)
- Draft audit completion
- Commissioner Orientation May 16<sup>th</sup>
- In-person Full Commission May 28<sup>th</sup>
- University Engagement: UMass-Amherst Senior Capstone Studio Project Presentations; Norwich University Hydrology Class Rock River Lab
- Four-Town Housing project update
- S.213 Rivers Bill
- Act 250 Reform Bill

Chris noted that the Bylaws say that a vacancy on the Executive Board should be filled at the next Full Commission meeting. The Board felt it would be best to fill the position during the normal course of business at the Annual Business Meeting in August.

**Engagement with Visiting RPC Directors:** Peter and Devon expressed their appreciation for being able to sit in and the Board welcomed their engagement.

#### **Committee Chair Reports**

- Project Review Committee Chair Jack Cunningham noted that Mount Snow continues to operate with an expired master plan. The District Environmental Commission held a

hearing and identified issues that still needed to be addressed. The Project Review Committee had previously submitted comments noting that the Windham Regional Plan requires that an approved master plan be in place prior to issuance of further permits. The Committee is not commenting further at this time, and is awaiting the decisions of the District Environmental Commission.

- Natural Resources Committee Chair Jim Pinkerton explained that they had spent considerable time reviewing the policies of the Windham Regional Plan and that he appreciated the level and quality of committee member engagement.

#### **Review of Action Items**

- Chair Ciuffreda to follow up with Vice Chair Cunningham on possible regular Project Review Committee update as a standing item on future Full Commission agendas.
- Chris will engage with Commissioner Golob and Commissioner North on shared services.
- Additional members are needed on the Finance and Nominating Committees

**Public Comments:** None.

**Adjournment:** on a motion by Commissioner Pinkerton, seconded by Commissioner Cunningham, the meeting was adjourned at 7:11 p.m. on a unanimous vote.