



**Executive Board Minutes
May 13, 2025**

Location: Hybrid meeting via Zoom and WRC Conference Room.

Members Present: Gabby Ciuffreda, Chair; Jim Pinkerton, Bonnie North, Stephan Chait, Steve Lembke, Ann Golob

Absent: None

Staff present: Chris Campany, Executive Director, Sue Westa, Associate Director, Inessa Muse, Finance Manager

Public/Guests: None.

Presenter: None.

Call to Order: Commissioner Gabby Ciuffreda, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m.

Additions/Changes to Agenda: none

Secretary's Report: On a motion by Commissioner Lembke, seconded by Commissioner North the minutes from the April 8, 2025 meeting were **approved** with one abstention.

Quarterly Financial Review: Quarterly Financial Review Inessa reviewed status of accounts; noted that we purchased computers and related equipment in an effort to mitigate increased costs and potential decline in revenue over the next year. The replacements had been scheduled for next year. The total cost was approximately \$11,000.

Review & Acceptance of FY2024 Audit: Finance Manager Inessa Muse reviewed audit, noting that in addition to our regular accounts the auditors also reviewed status of payments into the Vermont Municipal Employees Retirement System. There were no findings. There was a question about the accounting procedures used by the auditors relative to accounting procedures used by staff. The Chair pointed out that there were no material deficiencies meaning our internal controls are good and we are doing a good job accurately stating our financials. Commissioner Golob made motion to accept audit, seconded by Commissioner North. The audit was unanimously **accepted**.

Brownfields Funding Approval: Chair Ciuffreda made a motion to support the recommendation of the Brownfields Committee to approve additional funding for the Bellows Falls Train Station Cleanup Project to support vapor mitigation for a total of up to \$869,674 of cleanup funds, \$732,174 as a grant and \$137,500 as a loan with a 2% interest rate and a 10-year term. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Golob. Associate Director Westa summarized progress by the town

on the project including its assumption of ownership of the building. It was clarified that Executive Board approval is necessary for the commitment of funds. The motion was **approved** by a unanimous vote.

July 29th Full Commission Poll Results: Executive Director Chris Campany presented the poll of Commissioners indicating that 33 confirmed they could attend the July 29th Full Commission meeting, where a vote on the regional plan update has been scheduled. The survey also indicated an even split between those who would prefer to attend in person versus those who would prefer to participate via remote means, with a significant number also indicating no preference. Chris suggested it would be best if a hybrid meeting was held in a venue where internet service and equipment were reliable and in the control of and the responsibility of the Commission so every possible step could be taken to conduct a smooth meeting. The Board agreed that it would be best to have the physical meeting location be the WRC conference room to be in the best position to avoid technical surprises. The Board also recognized the value and benefits of having in-person engagement where Commissioners could interact with one another face to face. The importance of Commissioners also getting to meet and know staff was also raised. It was agreed that having an in-person meeting during the autumn would be a valuable opportunity for personal engagement. Chris said he would have Office Manager Ashley Collins send a calendar hold to all Commissioners, and will also note that they should plan on attending the annual business meeting in August and that plans will be developed for an in person meeting in September or October.

Committee Appointments: None

Executive Director's Report: Chris explained that he and Inessa were developing a draft FY2026 budget now that they have a good handle on all anticipated revenues. He also explained that an outdoor recreation inventory for the region has been prepared by the Conway School, and that the UMass Amherst senior landscape architecture capstone studio had presented their designs in Saxtons River. He had made a presentation on climate adaptation to the National Academy of Sciences, had presented on the CT River Watershed Partnership and the need for municipal and regional engagement in conservation at the annual conference of the Northeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, and that the CT River Watershed Partnership Act would be introduced in Congress soon.

Committee Chair Reports: None.

Review of Action Items: Chair Ciuffreda explained that she and Nominating Committee Chair Lembke were developing a list of nominees for Executive Board vacancies.

Public Comments: None.

Adjournment: approved by a unanimous vote on a motion by Commissioner Golob, seconded by Commissioner North, the meeting was adjourned at 7:20pm.