

1 **BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING**
2 **NORTHWEST REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**
3 *June 27, 2018 Unapproved Meeting Minutes*
4

5 The meeting of the Board of Commissioners was held at the Swanton Village Complex, Swanton
6 Vermont.

7
8 **ATTENDANCE:**

9 Commissioners: See attached. A quorum was present to conduct business.

10 Staff: G. Brunswick and C. Dimitruk

11
12 Chair B. Buermann called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM.

13
14 **ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA-** None.

15
16 **WELCOME-** B. Buermann welcomed everyone to the final meeting of the fiscal year.

17
18 **OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT-** None.

19
20 **MINUTES**

21 B. Buermann asked for approval of the meeting minutes from May 2018.

22
23 *A. Voegele motioned to approve the May 2018 minutes as submitted. C. Steen seconded.*

24 *Discussion: B. Irwin noted grammar corrections and asked for a friendly amendment to the motion to*
25 *include the corrections. A. Voegele and C. Steen accepted the amendment. Motion carried.*

26
27 **REPORTS**

28 Finance: H. Garrett referred the Committee to the balance sheet in the packet showing profit/loss
29 versus actual. He reported that it is not completely finished because there are still numbers that need
30 to come in, but there should be a small carryover. He referred the Commission to the page reporting
31 balances on all loans. The payment plan will be reported on as part of the budget. C. Dimitruk
32 addressed a question on the repayment structure of the loans relating to the 5-year balloon payout.

33
34 Personnel: R. Devine reported that the Personnel Committee met in May to conduct annual salary and
35 performance reviews, which were submitted to the Executive Committee. A. Voegele asked whether
36 the salaries of these staff are equal to or greater than state or municipal levels. C. Dimitruk reported
37 that they are lower than most similar municipal employees, but relative to state employees. A. Voegele
38 recommended reviewing salary levels in light of keeping people on staff for longevity. C. Dimitruk noted
39 that the Commission does do a comparison with other regional planning commissions and staff are at or
40 very close to the median of other regional planning commissions.

41
42 Executive: B. Buermann reported that the Executive Committee met prior to this meeting. One of the
43 items reviewed was the Personnel Committee's report on performance review and salary. He also
44 reported that conversations are continuing on the non-profit investigation, which was discussed at the
45 last meeting. Updates will be brought to the board as they develop. The Committee will not implement
46 a full non-profit until there is full board approval. The Committee also discussed the potential WIB and
47 FCCC merger. Those discussions will continue and more will be known as it develops.

1 Policy/Project: B. Irwin asked the Committee to refer to the PPR report in the packet. He reported that
2 two applications came before the Committee. He noted that they were somewhat preliminary because
3 they will come before the Committee again. They are both 500kW net metered solar projects in St.
4 Albans Town – one by Encore Redevelopment and one by Solar Sense. The purpose of the applications
5 is to identify whether they should be provided preferred site status. The Committee found that each
6 project had already met preferred site status either due to its location in a secondary solar preferred
7 siting area in the Regional Enhanced Energy Plan (for the Encore site) or because it is providing power to
8 a specific municipal user, the St. Albans City Sewage Treatment Plant (for the Solar Sense site).

9 *A. Voegele motioned to approve the Committee’s report recommending that these sites receive*
10 *approved site status. B. Morris seconded.*

11 *Discussion: A. LaRocque clarified that the Encore site is seeking preferred site status, while the Solar*
12 *Sense site meets the requirements to be considered pre-designated based on providing power to a specific*
13 *municipal user. K. Waite clarified that Board action is needed for the Encore project’s renewable status,*
14 *not Solar Sense which already has pre-designated status. K. Waite asked whether St. Albans Town is in*
15 *agreement that it meets preferred site status? A. Voegele replied yes. L. Scangas asked is the site in a*
16 *preferred area in the Town’s energy plan? C. Dimitruk clarified that the Town votes on the singular*
17 *question of preferred site status, which is required in addition to a letter from the Regional Planning*
18 *Commission related to its location in a mapped preferred solar area.*

19 *B. Irwin asked for a friendly amendment to recommend preferred status for solely the Encore site. A.*
20 *Voegele and B. Morris accepted. Motion carried.*

21 Transportation: D. Leslie referred the Commission to the TAC update in the packet. He reported on the
22 importance of the Exit 17 interchange design. At the last meeting, they also reviewed an update to the
23 work program and signed a letter of support for the Franklin County Airport in the State’s Aviation Plan.

24 Energy: No meeting.

25 Brownfields: No meeting.

26 VAPDA: D. Tanner was not able to make the VAPDA meeting. C. Dimitruk reported that they heard from
27 Secretary Moore on updates in ANR, mostly about the impact of and monitoring of the Emerald Ash
28 Borer.

29 Regional Plan: L. Douglas described the purchase of Clear Impact software service, which is also used at
30 CCRPC to track indicators. NRPC will be getting it through the United Way for a reduced price. We will
31 be able to see our progress on indicators identified in the Regional Plan instantaneously through this
32 software. Alyssa will do a presentation on it next month. It will make the plan more implementable and
33 also help with data access and grant writing.

34 VEPC: A. Voegele reported that the Committee is meeting tomorrow, but no projects from the region
35 are on the agenda.

36 GMT: C. Dimitruk reported that the board elected a new chair, Tom Chittenden, from South Burlington.
37 She also noted that last Thursday was ride free day.

38 Clean Water: Meeting tomorrow.

1 Staff: G. Brunswick reported on progress on several brownfields sites. She also noted that the
2 Commission is looking at making 2 loans to projects outside the region. She explained that the reason
3 for this is that there is a need to spend down the EPA Revolving Loan Fund grant, which has been
4 extended several times since its period of performance was initially up in 2015. There is no demand for
5 a brownfield cleanup loan in our region at the moment. In order to extend the grant another year, EPA
6 is requiring NRPC to make a loan. If EPA does not approve an extension, the remainder of funds would
7 need to be returned to EPA and would be unavailable for the region.

8 G. Brunswick also reported that she is working on visioning for the Missisquoi Overlook and Rail Trail
9 extension area in Richford and was at the Richford Riverfest and Northern Forest Canoe Trail
10 Paddle/Peddle over the weekend advertising the project. It was great to get out and see this event.

11 C. Dimitruk reported that over 200 municipalities have signed up for grants in aid and she is really
12 pleased at the participation rate. C. Dimitruk reported that they are currently trying to hire a new VISTA
13 to replace Alyssa when her term is done. C. Dimitruk reported that NRPC was just approved for year 3
14 of the EDA grant. It is a small planning grant for \$70,000 per year that makes the region eligible for
15 infrastructure grants, such as the one Fairfax is applying for to extent water lines to Runamok Maple. C.
16 Dimitruk reported that the Commission is participating in a Route 7 Corridor planning project with RISE
17 VT, St. Albans City and St. Albans Town to make pedestrian and bicycle accessibility improvements. C.
18 Dimitruk reported that we have funding to complete local enhanced energy plans. She asked
19 Commissioners to be in touch if their municipality is interested. C. Dimitruk noted that if Commissioners
20 haven't been out of the Rail Trail, they should get out. She noted that A. Adams rides the trail to check
21 on the condition and provide updates to VTrans. A. Adams helps NRPC support the Rail Trail Council, a
22 great partner in keeping the trail updated and maintained. C. Dimitruk noted that the front porch
23 repair on the building is fantastic and the roof repair will begin the week after the 4th of July.

24 It was suggested that the water quality/driveway workshop meeting that will be rescheduled from
25 tonight should perhaps also happen in Grand Isle County later in the summer.

26 R. Noel reported that a Northern Forest Canoe Trail portage in Highgate is overgrown. The Town should
27 contact the NFCT. C. Dimitruk will follow up with Heidi.

28 G. Brunswick and C. Dimitruk clarified some questions on the structure of the RLF grant and why funding
29 projects outside of the region is necessary in order to maintain the remaining funding.

30 **ELECTIONS**

31 Y. Dandurand reported that the nominating committee is putting forth the following slate of officers:

32 Chair – K. Waite

33 Vice Chair – B. Irwin

34 Secretary – R. Brown

35 Treasurer – H. Garrett

36 Chair Personnel – J. Farnham

37 Chair Project Review – A. LaRocque

38 Chair Regional Plan and Policy Committee – L. Douglass

39 At Large Member on Executive Committee – L. Scangas

40 Youth Member to the Board of Commissioners – J. Thatcher C. Roy

41

1 C. Steen motioned to direct the Secretary to cast a single ballot for the slate. B. Irwin seconded.
2 A. LaRocque asked for a friendly amendment to correct the spelling of her name. C. Dimitruk noted that
3 J. Thatcher is her son. C. Steen and B. Irwin accepted the amendment. Motion carried.

4
5 Y. Dandurand reported to the Commission the nominations for board representatives.

6
7 VAPDA – D. Tanner
8 VEPC – A. Voegele
9 GMT – C. Dimitruk, B. Buermann and A. Holland as alternate

10
11 C. Steen motioned to direct the Secretary to cast a single ballot for the slate. B. Irwin seconded. Motion
12 carried.

13
14 **FY19 WORK PROGRAM AND BUDGET**

15 C. Dimitruk reviewed the work program and budget as provided in commissioner packets. She reported
16 on the increase in personnel due to the addition of 1.5 full time temporary staff. One full time position
17 will cover technical work related to the grants in aid project. One half time position is for Alyssa to
18 continue the caring communities project. The other increases relate mostly to the staff doing a lot more
19 work in the same program areas. Of note, there is more municipal project management, no brownfields
20 assessment funds, and new staff.

21
22 K. Waite motioned to approve the FY19 workplan and budget. L. Scangas seconded.

23
24 Discussion: A. Voegele asked about revenue related to emergency planning and noted it is a mighty
25 small profit margin. He believes that non-profits and municipalities should be thinking about a 5% profit.
26 C. Dimitruk agreed that a bottom line of \$26,000 isn't much of a swing one way or another in
27 comparison to the total budget. She noted that 4.2 million dollars of the budget is related to grants in
28 aid and is therefore a net zero. It is not part of NRPC's operating budget that has to be maintained.
29 It was asked how much reserve the Commission has if it were to come into trouble tomorrow.
30 Commissioners were referred to the long-term reserve plan where it was confirmed that in total NRPC
31 has funds to last 3 months.

32
33 Motion carried.

34 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

35 Y. Dandurand updated the board on Act 46 School mergers and the importance of this discussion in
36 communities that do not want their districts to be merged. He urged board members to talk to their
37 school board members. Franklin Elementary School is in danger of being merged or closed. There is a
38 public meeting on July 18 about school mergers in Newark, Vermont at 9:00 am.

39 B. Morris extended a big thank you to all the outgoing officers, this was seconded by commissioners and
40 staff.

41 The meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.