

1 **BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING**
2 **NORTHWEST REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**
3 *April 29, 2020 Draft Meeting Minutes*
4

5 The meeting of the Board of Commissioners was a virtual meeting held on zoom.
6

7 **ATTENDANCE:**

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

9 Staff: C. Dimitruk, B. Remmers, A. Holland

10 Guests: none
11

12 K. Waite called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.
13

14 **ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA** – None.
15

16 **WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS, OPENING REMARKS**

17 K. Waite welcomed everyone and conducted roll call for all who were on the meeting.
18

19 **OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT** - None.
20

21 **MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 2020 MEETING**

22 *Y. Dandurand motioned to accept the February meeting minutes with the modification that B.*
23 *Morris was excused and not in attendance. B. Docheff seconded. The motion passed*
24 *unanimously.*
25

26 **NRPC STATUS:**

27 C. Dimitruk summarized the status of NRPC’s operations. NRPC’s office closed to the public on
28 Friday, March 13th and all staff began working remotely on March 16th. To date staff have
29 been able to continue to maintain projects during the Stay Home order with some municipal
30 projects and others involving public involvement being postponed. During this closure, the GIS
31 Coordinator has reduced to halftime and the new hire of the Administrative Coordinator has
32 been delayed. Staff have twice a week check-in and are modifying administrative processes to
33 reflect remote working. Several staff have been staffing emergency response efforts including
34 the State Emergency Operations Center, assistance to regional responders, food shelves,
35 gleaning at farms and transportation for the homeless coalition. C. Dimitruk stated that budget
36 impacts are not yet known; some projects are on hold into the next fiscal year and there are
37 opportunities to recover costs for emergency recovery staffing. The hospital will not be able to
38 fund the Healthy Roots program next fiscal year; staff are exploring sources to cover the
39 \$80,000 loss and provide match to the new EDA grant.
40

41 **COMMISSION REPORTS:** See attached written reports for additional information.
42

1 Finance/Operations – H. Garrett – Finance and profit/loss sheet in packet, noted budget was in
2 a stable state and fewer payments came in in last period.

3
4 Personnel – J. Farnham – Committee has not met; noted that there were low level immediate
5 impacts to staffing.

6
7 Executive – K. Waite. Committee met on April 13th to get a check in on status of operations.
8

9 Project Review – B. Irwin reported that the committee met prior to Board meeting and
10 reviewed a 500 kW solar project in Georgia located at 2051 Ethan Allen Highway. Committee
11 determined that the project met the NRPC's determination for a preferred energy site in
12 Franklin County. B. Remmers stated no action is needed by the Board, the Committee reviewed
13 the project based on the approved criteria. The Committee received an update on the proposed
14 Enosburgh Tractor Supply and the applicant is working to ensure the project is in compliance
15 with Regional Plan as it moves forward.

16
17 Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) – No report. B. Morris asked what impacts are to the
18 104A bridge project and Grants-In-Aid funding. B. Remmers noted the bridge will be an agenda
19 item for the May TAC meeting. C. Dimitruk stated that impacts are unknown to Grants-In-Aid
20 but staff are meeting with DEC this week. R. Noel, noted to Commissioners that a section of
21 Route 207 has slumped along a shoulder and District 8 is working to address it.

22
23 Energy Committee – No report.

24
25 Brownfields Committee – No report.

26
27 Regional Plan and Policy Committee – No Report.

28
29 Vermont Economic Progress Council – A. Voegele noted the next meeting is scheduled for
30 4/30/2020 and no applicants from the region are on the agenda.

31
32 Green Mountain Transit – B. Buermann noted GMT staff have been dealing with COVID as they
33 supply rides for necessary workers and taking necessary precautions by requiring use of masks,
34 operating fare free and using back door. The search for a new GM is on hold. Financially fixed
35 transit costs remain the same and usage is down; federal assistance for the urban side of the
36 system will aid the overall budget.

37
38 Clean Water Advisory Committee – The Committee did not meet. A. Holland reported that
39 staff are working on proposals for the Clean Water Service Provider in both the Missisquoi Bay
40 and Lamoille River basins due in May. Partner meetings were held in each basin with good
41 participation ranging from municipalities, watershed organizations, natural resource

1 conservation districts, regional planning commission and land conservation organizations. Staff
2 also participated in the process led by CCRPC in the Northern Lake Champlain basin.

3
4 Northwest Vermont Regional Foundation – No Report.

5
6 Office – B. Remmers is serving shifts at the State EOC, managing the Enosburgh Salt Shed design
7 process and identifying how to prepare for the upcoming field season. A. Holland noted the
8 work on the Clean Water Service Provider proposals as well as moving forward contracting for
9 five Clean Water Block Grant funded projects in the region. C. Dimitruk reviewed expected
10 reimbursement options for staff expenses during the pandemic. Staff expenses for the EOC are
11 reimbursed in full, there will be some additional funding for regional coordination in emergency
12 management. Other expenses may not be eligible as the federal guidelines reimburse for
13 overtime expenses as result of declared disaster. Staff have begun recruitment for both
14 Americorps positions (Eco and Vista). It is grant writing season and staff have been working on
15 several opportunities for brownfields, economic development, and infrastructure
16 improvements for water/sewer and bicycle/pedestrian systems.

17
18 **TRANSPORTATION CAPTIAL PROGRAM PRIORITIES**

19 B. Remmers stated that annually TAC prioritizes projects in the state capital program however
20 given the Stay Home order, the TAC did not have an opportunity to rank the bridge projects. B.
21 Remmers utilized last year’s rankings to inform the proposed rankings and solicited feedback
22 from the TAC for tonight’s meeting. The Town of Enosburgh representative requested the
23 rankings be modify for Bridge 50 to move up the rank as the bridge is in the design phase and is
24 currently closed due to an abutment concern. The bridge closed on March 14th and VTrans
25 engineers recently inspected the bridge and recommended it remain closed. H. Garrett noted
26 that since this bridge is closed it should be ranked higher in the prioritization as all other
27 bridges are operable. B. Irwin stated he is on the Bakersfield Fire Department and provides
28 mutual aid to Enosburgh; this closure will have impacts for rescue.

29
30 A. Voegele asked about the VT-104 and I-89 St Albans intersection improvement under Traffic &
31 Safety. B. Remmers noted this improvement will either consist of a traffic signal with additional
32 lanes or multi lane roundabout. Voegele stated the Town is considering taking over the SASH to
33 get a midway crossing for pedestrians and posed that this could impact the design for the
34 intersection. Remmers stated NRPC would welcome to be a part of those conversations and
35 provide feedback on which portions should remain state owned.

36
37 *R. Noel moved to bring bridge #50 up one slot in the ranking, switching with bridge #20); B.*
38 *Irwin seconded. H. Garrett offered an amendment to move Bridge 50 to #1 spot because it is*
39 *currently closed. This was accepted as a friendly amendment. The resulting motion to move the*
40 *Enosburgh Bridge #50 to the #1 ranking and shift the remaining Town Bridge Candidates down*
41 *a rank carried unanimously.*

1
2 *Motion by B. Morris to approve all the rankings as proposed with the modifications made to*
3 *Town Bridges. R. Noel seconded. The motion carried.*

4
5 **COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS**

6 B. Docheff commended staff on the support they have been providing municipalities during the
7 pandemic.

8
9 B. Buermann asked how long we will plan to hold remote meetings. B. Irwin, who has been
10 working at the State EOC daily believes we will be doing physical distancing for a significant
11 period of time. It was noted that if in-person meetings resume, Commissioners would like
12 there to continue to be a remote participation option.

13
14 C. Dimitruk noted the building repairs have begun on the roof and then siding.

15
16 Budget process will start remotely in May with Committee.

17
18 **ADJOURN**

19 *R. Noel motioned to adjourn. B. Irwin seconded. Motion carried unanimously.*
20 *Meeting adjourned at 8:05 PM.*