



STEERING COMMITTEE MINUTES (draft)

April 19, 2010

PRESENT: Bev Major, Nancy Franklin, Cheston Newbold, Nat Tripp, Gayle Ottmann, Peter Gregory, George Watkins, John Lawe, Bill Roberts, Sharon Francis, Adair Mulligan

1. Minutes of February 22: approved with amended date on motion by Peter seconded by George.
2. Funding issues:
 - a. NH annual appropriation: CRJC is administratively attached to OEP; heretofore, the NH Attorney General has interpreted CRJC as not a sub-entity of OEP. However, the director of OEP has recommended zero funding for the NH Commission. She and Sharon are both communicating with the AG's office. Much support has been expressed for CRJC. Sharon, Adair, and George testified at a joint session of the House and Senate Finance Committees. The RPCs have indicated they will accept lower funding to allow CRJC to continue. Have provided DES and OEP with information on contractual obligations and income. There is a \$41K obligation for the Ammonoosuc project for which CRJC will need to use the state funds. Sharon has talked with Larry about it. This is the only expenditure obligation out of NH Charitable Foundation funding. Will need to continue to use the NH grant for 20% required match for NH byway projects. There will be a House Finance Committee working session on Thursday at 3pm that Sharon will attend. She expects a recommendation out of that session but cautioned that the funds must come from somewhere else if not from CRJC.
 - b. NH DOT payments: payment has been received for some items. Glenn and Sharon are waiting for confirmation of a meeting with Dean Eastman, Bill Watson at DOT and others in administration to appeal unpaid costs. DOT has disallowed all project costs for the website, including \$4K of Rebecca's time to prepare the website project. Dean had advised her in her second RFP to say "lowest qualified bid," although she used the term "price." However, CRJC selected the lowest qualified bid, and the price was reduced by Shannon-Rose. DOT does not want to pay personnel costs, such as Social Security, Medicare, and NH unemployment, despite federal regulations that these are reimbursable costs. Peter suggested that CRJC have a procurement policy in place before meeting with Dean that includes reference to state and federal guidelines. Sharon said this would help but she has not had time to prepare it. She has asked DOT for guidelines for grantees but this has not been received. Provisional approval of the indirect cost rate has been received from Vtrans that goes until the end of May. They have asked for more information from Larry Reed, and the Finance Committee will meet with Larry tomorrow. Sharon plans to wait until final approval of the indirect cost rate has gone through FHWA and will then bring it to NH DOT. She is working on an invoice to Vtrans for history itineraries now, which will help improve cash flow.

- c. Timetable for FY '11 budget: will have a proposed budget for the June meeting that will be developed in May after April financials are available. March cash summary has been received from Larry, but not accruals. This will be a policy budget, not just figures. The Steering Committee wishes to participate in developing it based on a draft from Sharon. Agreed a May Steering Committee meeting is needed: tentative date set is Monday, May 17.
 - d. New funding sources: Sharon reported that the Upper Connecticut River Partnership Act is in a Senate committee and could be reported out soon. If this moves along, CRJC may be in a good position for funding for October, 2012, but not immediately. She has become aware of a foundation in Canada that is involved with water resources, and will interview next week for a list of sources from a database of foundations. Adair reported that a proposal for \$5400 for a new laptop, projector, screen, and three riparian buffer exhibits had been sent to the Davis Conservation Foundation. Due to workload no application will be made for VT 319 funds.
 - e. Sources of support for work with local river subcommittees: Adair distributed a summary of findings about support for LACs from five other protected NH rivers. Most are soliciting small annual contributions from river towns, and RPCs assist some LACs. She pointed out that other LACs are smaller, independent groups covering 5-10 towns, and do not require coordination the way CRJC's five groups do. She spends approximately four hours for each LRS meeting to set it up, hold it, and draw up minutes, in addition to travel time. She said that commissioner participation is a big help. Gayle said that the LRS program is an important grassroots effort and asked for a plan to keep the LRS going and cover their costs. She thought towns would be receptive to funding LRS work, but that the members would need to speak up for it in their towns. She guessed Hartford might contribute \$500. Peter said the importance of the LRS program for CRJC cannot be overstated, and CRJC should discuss whether to earmark some of the state funding for it. He is concerned about the staff time required to raise funds in each town. Sharon asked for ways to reduce our costs for LRS, including more commissioner participation and more responsibility taken by those LRS ready to do so. Adair noted that Hypertherm, a Lebanon area company, is looking to greatly expand local philanthropy and could be a source of support. NH DES 604b program could be approached this summer for funding to print the LRS recreation plans, including update of them before printing.
 - f. Byway project: Sharon asked for help setting up byway conversations in the southern waypoint communities. Gayle said she will help, and that it would be good to have the DVD players to give out at the annual meeting on May 14. Documentation of Barbara Harris's research on costs was not specific enough to pass DOT requirements, so bids will be needed again. More DVDs need to be printed. Caro will look into cost; could be CRJC match.
3. Roles of Finance Committee and Steering Committee with regard to finance: Steering Committee wishes to remain involved in budget decisions and officers should continue to receive monthly financial information. Need to ask full CRJC to approve membership of Finance Committee at annual meeting. Agreed that the charge of the Finance Committee is clear in its bylaws but not its output. Sharon wants to ensure there is not a duplication of effort. Bev said it would be useful if the Finance Committee could review reports and offer recommendations to the Steering Committee. Peter wants to see financials every month, even

if the two committees do not meet each month.

4. Bylaw changes: Reviewed draft and offered edits. George recommended addressing how to replace non-participating commissioners. Took no action but will keep this in mind. Public notice, required by NH law, is now done for CRJC and Steering Committee meetings, via email, fax, and mail to each town clerk with a request to post in two places. Agreed should do this for all CRJC standing committees, including LRS. Voted unanimously on motion by Peter seconded by Bill to approve changes and recommend to the full CRJC on June 1.
5. May 3 special meeting: Will be a focused session, not a regular meeting. Notice will identify that this is an executive session. Staff need attend only if they so choose; Sharon chooses to attend; Adair does not. Nancy reviewed the NH Statute Title VI, Chapter 91-A3. This will be included in the commissioners' mailing.
6. June 1 Annual meeting: Previously, CRJC has held a luncheon, and some contributions have been accepted to help defray costs. Agreed that this year, commissioners will bring their own lunches and CRJC will provide lemonade and dessert. Program will include a powerpoint by Adair on CRJC's accomplishments and then business, including bylaw changes, elections, budget, reports.
7. Vermont State House Card Room: Michaela has reserved the Card Room for CRJC for this coming Thursday. Adair will go, and display will feature the Atlas and Proud. Sharon will urge VT Commissioners to attend and contact their representatives. Adair will alert the LRS.
8. Byway map: Gayle reported that Vtrans' map of the Lake Champlain byway received a national award, and that traffic on the state's byway website has greatly increased.
9. Nominations: Nancy is checking on potential names to submit for agricultural representative to fill Robert Ritchie's slot.