



Connecticut River Joint Commissions Meeting
Full Commissions Meeting Minutes
September 21, 2015 10 Water Street, Lebanon, NH

Commissioners Present: Marion Allen, David Deen, Jim Doing, Jennifer Griffin, Mary Sloat, Peter Blodgett, Tara Bamford, Steven Lembke, Elaine Levlocke, Kurt Staudter, Chris Campany, Rick Walling, Ken Niemczyk, Jim McClammer, Dick Sanders, Jason Rasmussen, Michaela Stickney, Madeline Cotter– ECO AmeriCorps ANR staff.

Commissioners Absent: Chris Thayer, Brendan Prusik, Rebecca Brown, Robert Harcke, Peter Gregory, Alison Low, Samuel Swope.

Others: Patricia Rodrigues, Westmoreland, NH; Patricia Crocker, Staff.

Comm. Walling called the meeting to order at 1:10 PM.

Review July Financial Statement: Financials for July 2015 were reviewed. Commissioner Lembke inquired about the two revenue line items, Byway Signs line item which is a pass-through expenditure with 10% match and book sales which is open with a -0-, balance because an estimate of sales is unpredictable from year to year and is a very minor item. In FY 2015 a few copies of Proud to Live Here and the Connecticut River Atlas were sold. Comm. Levlocke moved to accept the financials as presented; Comm. Campany seconded the motion. Vote Unanimous.

Minutes of August Comm. Levlocke moved to accept the minutes as amended noting Comm. should be added to names in several of the motions. Comm. Sloat seconded the motion. Vote: Minutes adopted with abstention by Comm. Allen and Niemczyk who were not present at that meeting.

Discussion began on the financial side of the budget. Staff explained the contractual responsibilities included in each of the contracts and the administrative requirements that each necessitate a significant staff time commitment to accomplish.

Comm. Campany stated that although funding is one of the fundamental challenges for CRJC, but beyond that the issue he sees as critical to determine revolves around what is

expected of commissioners and what do commissioners expect of themselves? Volunteer Commissioners are not reimbursed for travel or their time for participating in CRJC events. The Commissioner's roles are also influenced by their professional workload as well as expectations by CRJC. And the time requirements that are imposed in order to comply with open meetings laws in both states can make the commitments burdensome.

Jason Rasmussen arrived to the meeting at 1:30 pm.

Discussion followed on the importance of the primary responsibilities of the CRJC Comm. Bamford expressed concern about education and outreach that also should be enhanced along with implementing the strategic plan. She cited these as taking priority rather than looking for new things to do. She talked about the efforts of the local river subcommittees and their success in various locations working with partner organizations. Comm. Deen explained that the resources of the Watershed Council, Trans Canada and the Regional Planning Commission play a role as a partner with the local river subcommittee.

Comm. Stickney reported on the availability of Ecosystem Restoration Program grants that might be of interest to CRJC. The closing date for applications is October 14. Comm. Campany stated that there are many that are going out for the same funding and felt that the funding was in great demand by many communities.

Comm. Bamford suggested that the CRJC meetings that focused on Conte or FERC or Northern Pass would have been a better way to use time than discussing what the Commission is going to do before completing work that is already a part of the mission. Commissioner Sanders asked what the Commission would do the work product would be if for instance they worked on Conte.

Jim Doig agreed they could focus on the top three issues Conte Northern Pass and Agricultural runoff. Comm. Bamford said she felt the subcommittees were important to focus on the important issues.

Jason Rasmussen makes an effort to start doing work on issues rather than agonizing over what CRJC should be doing. Dick Sanders talked about his observations about lack of signage on boat ramps about the laws of the states about proper use of the river. The consensus was that CRJC can bring together both states to support request for enforcement.

Citizen Report: Westmoreland resident Patricia Rodrigues has been signed up for the newsletters and follows the communications from the Commission. She wanted to talk to

the Commissions about water quality and wildlife corridor issues related to development activities along Aldrich Brook in Westmoreland, NH. She has complained about dumping into the Aldrich Brook and a delta is being formed and no one is doing anything. She was unable to get anyone to come up with a plan to address the problems. Ms. Rodrigues stated that NH DOT has been told through the offices of Rep Kuster that this private quarry using the Cheshire rail trail in Westmoreland with motorized vehicles. Commissioners requested that she send all the documents to staff so that they may be reviewed and what assistance CRJC might lend.

It was suggested that the subcommittees consider issues and they come up with recommendations and bring them to the full commissions for a motion. The work plan calls for Commissioners to be on sub committees.

If subcommittees meet before the regular meetings, Comm. Levlocke requested that Commissioners have lead time to review committee documents that will require an action.

Comm. Lembke briefed the members on the Work Groups as defined in the work plan:

“To begin implementing the updated strategic plan, CRJC will work on increasing the capacity to carry out its mission by forming various work groups to take the lead on certain topics. These are Development, Planning, and Communications Work Groups. In brief:

- *Development Work Group would focus on increasing the resources available - financial, human and organizational partners for implementation of the corridor plan and other activities to further the mission of the organization, including priorities identified by the Local River Subcommittees.*
- *Planning Work Group would be the “shepherds” of the corridor management plan, working with Local River Subcommittees to identify and work on needed updates, and drafting letters regarding consistency with the plan, e.g., letters of support for partner organization grant applications.*
- *Communications Work Group would focus on raising the visibility of the organization to the public and potential funders through outreach, and education of landowners and local decision-makers. This would include providing guidance and content for Commission material, e.g., compiling information on BMPs for Local River Subcommittees to distribute in their communities, and participating in outreach activities of the Commission and its Subcommittees, e.g., arranging education programs for the public.”*

Ad hoc committees were established in accordance with the bylaws with the following membership:

Planning / Implementation of Plans – Mary Sloat, Jim Doig, Jim McClammer, David Deen, Ken Niemczyk (Jim Doig & Dick Sanders – Boating Rules Signage)

Communications and Outreach – Elaine Levlocke, Steve Lembke, Tara Bamford, Peter Blodgett, Michaela Stickney

Development – Kurt Staudter, Dick Sanders, Rick Walling, Jennifer Griffin, Chris Campany

Comm. Stickney stated that she would help arrange for an opportunity for a CRJC presentation before the VT Governor. In terms of communications it was suggested that the Commissioners decide on a limited number of items to bring to his attention.

Commissioners not present at this meeting will be contacted to identify in which Committee they wish to participate.

Matters of Concern Identified: Comm. Sloat noted erosion on Route 135. The Riverbend subcommittee cannot comment because it is an emergency permit where road is caving in. The best wisdom in the 1930s was to use cars to stabilize the river banks and cars may now be down in the river due to the erosion.

- TMDL: Comm. Deen suggested CRJC also take a look at the Long Island Sound TMDL requirements that will be important for all the New England states along the Connecticut and be prepared to participate in that process.
- NH Minimum in stream flow rules: NH State DES in conjunction with rivers using the data that Trans Canada is producing data on in stream flows. Depending on first in time, first in water–rights, laws as they are implemented in the West. CRJC should be involved in making sure the flows are adequate for various species to survive. A clear prioritization of these processes is needed.
- FERC Relicensing: October 1 Fairfield Inn in WRJ and October 2 at TC office in Wilder will have final results of several studies. The studies have eco nodes so can know the different flows that they 9–4:30 on 10/1 and 9– Noon.

Comm. Donna Drouin was thanked for her many years of dedication and valuable service to CRJC.

Replacement of former Comm. Bob Ball on the mitigation and enhancement fund board was discussed. Comm. Deen once a year 2 days of meetings two days of reading Rick Walling has volunteered to serve. Comm. Sloat moved to appoint Rick Walling to represent CRJC on the Upper Connecticut River Mitigation and Enhancement Fund and Comm. McClammer seconded. Vote – Unanimous.

Also discussed was the RMAC information for comment and info from Peter Bergstrom about naming waterfalls and streams and getting towns to recognize them. Invite Peter Bergstrom to come to a meeting to talk about the falls to talk about Northeast corner of Windham County.

McClammer expressed concern about the new VT riverbank buffer zones and fluvial erosion and related buffers. There is a lot of confusion in towns over new legislation and rules in Vermont, such as shoreland protection rules, river corridors, State-issued flood hazard permits, riparian buffers, and incentivized local bylaws under the Emergency Relief and Assistance Funds (ERAF) rules. Michaela said she would check in with the flood plain managers regarding shoreland regulations and buffers.

Right now Comerford and Moore are covered under the shoreland protection act but other reservoirs are not.

Commissioners requested staff send a sympathy card to Nicole Cormen's family as Nicole's advocacy on behalf of the Connecticut River will be greatly missed. Comm. Deen moved seconded by Comm. Walling.

Comm. Niemczyk moved to adjourn seconded by Comm. Walling.

Subcommittees will convene briefly prior to the next meeting on October 19, 2015.

Approved at the meeting of October 19, 2015