



## **Minutes**

### **Connecticut River Joint Commissions**

#### **Executive Committee Meeting**

**CRJC Office, Lebanon, NH**

**Monday, January 7, 2013**

#### **Attendance:**

Commissioners: Rebecca Brown, Chris Company, Bob Christie, Tom Kennedy, Mary Sloat, Brendan Whittaker, Cleve Kapala Staff: Rachel Ruppel

Chair Board called the meeting to order at 2:10 pm.

**Consent Agenda** - Company moved and Sloat seconded a motion to move and approve the entire consent agenda. *Vote: Unanimous.*

#### **November Financial Report**

Ruppel presented the November financial report, noting that NH and VT are being billed evenly and that CRJC is on target for drawing down its state funds. Mary Sloat asked about the status of the Byway signs project; Company and Ruppel stated that TRORC and RSG have been working diligently on wrapping up and closing out the project; Company expects the project to be fully closed out this spring.

Company moved and Sloat seconded a motion to approve the financial report as presented. *Vote: Unanimous, with Tom Kennedy abstaining.*

#### **Commissioner Town Visits**

The Committee reviewed progress on town visits and Subcommittee member recruitment. Due to town budget season, the Committee recommended waiting until spring to schedule Commissioner visits. Brown asked for a status list of towns that have been visited.

#### **NH/VT Permit Review**

The Committee discussed the current permits that Subcommittees typically receive for comment, and noted that Subcommittees have not typically been involved with Act 250 permits, as they are not statutory parties. The Committee recommended asking Vermont



RPCs to let CRJC know about Act 250 permits, and for the Subcommittees to contact to the RPC and request that they integrate the Subcommittee's comments into their review. Ruppel will post the permit summary online and share with the Subcommittees.

### **CRJC Involvement in FERC Dam Relicensing**

CRJC involvement in the FERC relicensing process was discussed, including the need for a dedicated spokesperson either paid or unpaid. Cleve noted that Nat Tripp, on behalf of CRJC, was able to bridge single-issue concerns and perspectives, bringing a watershed-wide view to the negotiations during Fifteen Mile Falls. The Executive Committee felt the CRJC should be better informed about the details of the process, and the next step would be to convene VTANR, NHDES, TransCanada, FirstLight, and David Deen to meet with the Executive Committee. Cleve also suggested that a Vermont Law School or Antioch grad student might be able to create Executive Summaries of the relicensing reports/documents, so that it's easier to keep CRJC Commissioners, RPCs, municipalities and other stakeholders informed. The question was raised as to whether CRJC's role is to promote the implementation of the Connecticut River Plan as applied to the dam relicensing, or to act as a bi-state coordinator to help bring in the watershed-wide perspective.

### **Financing Implementation of CRJC's Strategic Plan**

The Executive Committee discussed their priorities for CRJC's current and future work. Being involved in the FERC dam relicensing was a top priority, as well as working to fulfill the priorities of the Subcommittees. Company also added that CRJC should be responsive to plans and reports developed by each state, for example, looking at similarities and differences between the VT and NH outdoor recreation plans and encouraging the two states to align their policies.

Brown suggested that CRJC touch base with partners and river stakeholders to get feedback on the role that CRJC would like to play in the watershed, particularly the potential role of disseminating information on the dam relicensing and serving in a bi-state coordinating role. Company suggested that CRJC look at the relicensing through the lens of the CT River Management Plan. Ruppel was asked to develop a preliminary scope of what CRJC's work would be to act as a bi-state coordinator in dam relicensing and to identify possible sources of funding and/or interns.



## **New Business**

Brown reported that she has filed her bill to amend the open meeting law with regard to a quorum being physically present, and will meet with the Attorney General's office shortly.

Campany noted that VTANR has recently published an Act 138 report on the costs for improving water quality. Ruppel will ask Michaela Stickney if she can present for 10 minutes on this report at the upcoming CRJC meeting. Also requested for the CRJC meeting were an update on Northern Pass and the tar sands pipeline in the North Country. The Executive Committee recommended that the bulk of the CRJC meeting be directed toward CRJC's strategic direction and the FERC dam relicensing.

Meeting ended at 3:40 pm.

The next meeting of the Executive Committee is scheduled for February 11 at CRJC offices in Lebanon, NH.