



MINUTES - Connecticut River Joint Commissions Meeting
(approved)
Monday, April 16, 2012
10:00 am - 12:00 pm
Norwich Public Library, 368 Main St, Norwich, VT

Present: Bob Ball, Rebecca Brown, Bob Christie, Donna Drouin, Robert Harcke, Cleve Kapala, Chris Company, Peter Gregory, Bev Major, Gary Moore, Gayle Ottmann, Michaela Stickney, Brendan Whittaker

Administrative Staff/Consultants: Rachel Ruppel and Yutian Zhang

Members of the Public: Rick Walling, Riverbend Subcommittee Chair; Bernie Folta

Cleve Kapala, Interim Vice President, called the meeting to order at 10:05 am.

Christie made a motion to accept the January 17, 2012 minutes as written, with a second by Gregory – motion passed unanimously.

Zhang presented the financial report, stating that CRJC has a positive cash flow and \$29,986 in the account at Lake Sunapee Bank. Stickney informed the CRJC that Vermont Agency of Natural Resources is requesting all FY12 invoices to be received no later than May 17th, 2012; she asked that CRJC send her Vermont invoices by May 10th. She stated that CRJC is included in the budget for level funding for FY13. Folta suggested making a comparison between the financial statements of recent fiscal years; Christie stressed the importance of reviewing FY12's budget in preparation of the FY13 budget. Gregory moved to accept the financial report, with a second by Moore – motion passed unanimously.

Kapala welcomed Rebecca Brown to the CRJC as a new Commissioner from New Hampshire; introductions were made.

Company provided a report on the Executive Committee – at their last meeting, they discussed internal control procedures for financial management (these will be presented at this meeting for adoption) and also discussed whether to have an audit done on FY12 finances. UVLSRPC will provide an estimate to have an audit completed. The Executive Committee reviewed and accepted UVLSRPC's workplan for the remainder of the year, and discussed the Local River Subcommittees' procedures on recruiting and appointing new members and meeting quorums. The goal is to have all subcommittees using one standard set of procedures.

Kapala presented the internal control procedures for adoption by the CRJC. Gregory moved to adopt the internal control procedures as presented, with a second by Stickney – motion passed unanimously.

Kapala asked that a Nominating Committee be established to nominate new CRJC officers for FY13. Gary Moore, Bob Harcke and Peter Gregory offered to serve on this committee.

Stickney reported that there are a number of open seats on the Vermont Commission and asked for recommendations for new members. Harcke asked about the number of open seats in New Hampshire;

Ruppel responded that New Hampshire has three open at-large positions and open positions for flood control, tourism, agriculture and forest products interests. CRJC members discussed possibilities for nominations, particularly including state legislators and someone representing anadromous fish, and determined Ruppel should send out the latest member directory and all Commissioners should call potential new members to see if they are interested. Commissioners should send information on potential new members to Ruppel, Company and Kapala.

Ruppel proposed three dates for the CRJC annual meeting – June 11, 18, or 25th – the CRJC members preferred June 11th, but asked that Ruppel send out a poll. CRJC members discussed ways to make the annual meeting more of a celebration than a business meeting – suggestions included to hold the meeting in the evening, invite community and Local River Subcommittee members, and engage in a service project in the afternoon. Brown suggested a clean-up of Fiddlehead Island between McIndoes Falls and Dodge Falls; Ottmann asked if Kilowatt Field in Hartford would require any post-Irene clean-up.

Ruppel presented the issue of CRJC confirming town nominations to the Local River Subcommittees – a town's Selectboard nominates representatives who are then appointed by CRJC to a three-year term. She stated that up to now, there has been no paper trail on appointments and this is an issue that has been raised by multiple Subcommittees. She asked that CRJC establish a policy on who in CRJC has the authority to confirm these nominations. Moore moved that CRJC grant the authority to the Commissions or the Executive Committee to confirm nominations to the Local River Subcommittees. Whittaker stated that he would not like to question the town's nomination and would not like to delay the nomination process. Moore withdrew his motion. Walling suggested that the State Chair could approve these nominations, and discussion ensued. Moore moved that the CRJC President be authorized to confirm nominations, with a second by Christie. Folta suggested adding the words "pro forma" to the motion. Moore amended his motion to include the words "pro forma", seconded by Christie. Drouin further recommended that CRJC would vote on the appointment at their next meeting. Moore presented the final motion as "To authorize the CRJC President to confirm nominations pro forma, with the CRJC voting on the appointment at their next meeting," with a second by Stickney – motion passed unanimously.

Ruppel presented three nominations to Local River Subcommittees – Kelly Stettney of Springfield, VT to the Mount Ascutney Subcommittee and Sue Mackenzie and John Mudge (alternate) of Lyme, NH to the Upper Valley Subcommittee. Gregory moved to appoint these individuals to the Subcommittees, with a second by Moore – motion passed unanimously.

Several Commissioners provided comments – Gregory asked about the fate of CRJC's copier and Harcke responded that he had put Tom Kennedy in touch with his building manager; Ruppel will follow up with Kennedy. Company proposed a date in May to go through CRJC's storage and archive pertinent information; Ruppel will send out more information on this. Whittaker noted that the EPA is taking significant action against Columbia Sand and Gravel, which has been years in the making.

Company reported that the Wantastiquet Subcommittee is reviewing its active vs. inactive membership and seeking new members. Walling reported that Riverbend has been struggling with inactive members and asked whether it is possible to seek a new appointment for members who are no longer active. Ruppel suggested that CRJC consider a 50% participation rate; Ottmann suggested that missing 3 meetings in a row would be sufficient. Drouin noted that Wantastiquet has been making phone calls to members to try to connect. Brown suggested that the lack of participation issue be addressed at the next Executive Committee meeting. Walling also reported that the Ammonoosuc River Committee has a policy of 3 unexcused absences. He also reported that the Town of Bath has budgeted \$50 to help

support the work of the Riverbend Subcommittee, and that the Ammonoosuc Volunteer River Assessment Program is entering its seventh year of water quality sampling. Whittaker thanked Ruppel for sending out email updates and stated that these are very useful for keeping in touch; Kapala noted that CRJC will start sending these emails to external partners as well as CRJC members. Ruppel reported that the Upper Valley Subcommittee is meeting monthly to review some significant permit applications and work on outreach and Mount Ascutney Subcommittee is recruiting new members and will meet tomorrow night.

For public comment, Folta encouraged the CRJC to consider incentives for its members to attend meetings and that he had spoken at the Claremont City Council regarding Claremont's nominations to the Mount Ascutney Subcommittee. Folta also noted that it is so good to see CRJC in its rebuilding of the organization and addressing organizational procedures.

Kapala presented the draft Strategic Plan, stating that this document is designed to identify where we are today as an organization and what we can do right now. Gregory stated that this should be used for budgeting purposes and also adopted at the June annual meeting. Brown recommended that Ruppel assign responsibilities and timeframes to each task; she also stated that she will follow up on the status of the Recreation Plans, which may already be formatted for printing. Walling asked that Task 1.b include the Water Resources Plans and stated that printing and distributing the regional Plans will be good for Subcommittee morale. Walling also recommended that CRJC pick the next section of the 1997 River Corridor Management Plan to update. Brown recommended to make a public presentation on the contents of the River Plans regionally. Harcke stated that CRJC needs to consider the adequacy of funding to provide sufficient staff support to the Local River Subcommittees. Kapala stated that a next step is to identify funding resources; Stickney noted that there will be no Section 319 EPA grants in Vermont this year. Drouin asked about the distribution of CRJC's boating guide and how best to avoid redundancy with the Connecticut River Watershed Council's guidebook. Company noted that with CRJC's website re-vamp, it will be possible to track statistics and see how high the demand is for CRJC's online boating guide. Walling suggested that placing signs at boat ramps may be a highly visible way to promote CRJC's work. Ottmann noted that the Connecticut River Birding Guide is now out of print as well, and recommended that Ruppel work on developing links and cross-links to and from CRJC's new website. Brown noted that there are likely tourism center rack cards for CRJC's online boating guide still in storage. Folta commented that CRJC's mission statement does not include all the language from NH RSA 227:E and questioned why that is. Kapala responded that the mission statement distills the enabling legislation while shortening it to a reasonable length. Ruppel stated that she will incorporate these suggestions and send out the revised draft to all Commissioners, Subcommittees and state partners for their review.

Drouin asked whether there would be a meeting in May; Ruppel replied that the CRJC will return to its bi-monthly schedule and meet again in June at the annual meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 12:10 pm.