



MINUTES

Connecticut River Joint Commissions

Executive Committee Meeting

Wednesday August 24, 2011

CRJC Office, 10 Water Street, Suite 225, Lebanon, NH

Members Present: Chris Company, Mary Sloat, Tom Kennedy, Glenn English, Robert Christie
Staff: Yutian Zhang, Christine Walker, Rachel Ruppel

President Company called the meeting to order at 2:03 pm.

Kennedy moved to approve minutes of 5/10/11 Executive Committee meeting, with a second by Sloat. Motion passed unanimously.

The Committee reviewed the year-end compilation of financial records (FY 2011) from Larry Reed. Zhang stated that there is approximately \$15,000 carry-over from FY11, with a current cash balance of \$7-8,000. Zhang has an outstanding question with Larry Reed regarding \$9,042 for the “advances refundable” line item, as he does not know what transaction/activity that line item represents. Larry Reed should respond soon with an answer. Kennedy moved to accept the year-end compilation, with a second by Sloat. Motion passed unanimously.

The Committee reviewed the NH contract with NH Department of Environmental Services (NHDES); NHDES staff have suggested making the contract for two years, as the state budget covers 2 years. The contract is retroactive to July 1, 2011 and includes an up-front payment of \$7,500. English moved to approve the 2-year contract, with a second by Sloat. Motion passed unanimously.

Company reported on the progress of the Vermont contract. CRJC has been moved from a high-risk to a low-risk category, and is eligible for 25% up-front funding. The contract is at VT Agency of Natural Resources and has been delayed due to staff vacation.

The Committee discussed the approval of payments for a \$975 RSG invoice for Scenic Byway Signs grant work prior to reimbursement from VTrans. Ruppel reported that Peter Gregory is managing the administration of this grant for CRJC and recommended that CRJC pay this invoice now instead of waiting for reimbursement first, as the payment from VTrans will be delayed until the end of the project, expected a few months from now. RSG has been working with towns to encourage them to install their waypoint center signs in order to complete the project and meet the match requirements for the grant.

English moved to authorize payment of the RSG invoice for \$975, with a second by Kennedy. Motion passed unanimously.

Ruppel reported on the status of open contracts. NHDES Ammonoosuc is expected to finish this fall, with a final report to be completed by John Field. The latest invoice has been delayed at NHDES, as NHDES would like to see additional match documentation. This project did not have any of the match from NH Charitable Foundation rescinded, and should be fully completed – John Field is the only contractor still working on the project. The Committee discussed that a CRJC board member needs to take leadership in negotiating the successful closure of this project. Company offered to follow up on this with Peter Gregory and NHDES staff Steve Landry.

NHDES Lower Mohawk River/Colebrook Business Park is not closed out; it appears that a final report or other close-out documentation is needed to finish this grant. The match funding was rescinded for this project, and many of the deliverables in the scope of work cannot be completed. Pat Garvin at North Country Council may be a good contact about this project. Company offered to follow up on this with Peter Gregory and NHDES staff Steve Landry.

VTrans Connecticut River Byway Signs project is slowly moving towards completion. Towns have been slow to install their waypoint center signs. Sloat noted that CRJC Commissioners can encourage the towns to install the signs, if needed. Kennedy noted that Two Rivers Ottauquechee Regional Commission and RSG are working with the towns to get the signs installed.

Company asked for assistance with completing Part VI of Form 990. English noted that the form would be the same as the previous year. English offered to help, asking Ruppel to fax him the 2009 Form 990. Walker recommended that CRJC do a financial audit this fiscal year, if they can afford it. Walker will get an estimate for an audit. It was also noted that Larry Reed has not yet billed CRJC for his year-end compilation.

The Committee discussed storage options for the materials stored by Bob Harcke in Westmoreland. There are some files in his barn and other files in a storage facility; the Committee prioritized moving the files from the barn to a more secure and accessible location. Company will visit the barn and take stock of the files, noting in particular what publications may be stored there.

Sloat noted that Vermont Public Radio's Vermont Edition show featured the history of the Connecticut River in their one-hour show today.

Ruppel reported that NHDOT would like to create website content on historic bridges of the Connecticut River to be published on the CRJC website. NHDOT's consultant would create and format all the content, but CRJC would need to review and approve the content and upload the files to the website. Ruppel reported that uploading the files is a quick, mundane task. Nat Tripp was suggested as a good person to be involved in the review process. Sloat moved to approve NHDOT's proposal to develop historic bridge pages for the CRJC website, with a second by Kennedy. Motion passed unanimously.

Company reported on the 8/23 conference call with regional planning staff and Local River Subcommittee (LRS) chairs. He summarized that the chairs feel positive about CRJC and the staff support that will be provided, and that member recruitment/replacement was a topic of discussion. English recommended that CRJC/LRS members attend Selectmen's meetings to inform local leaders about CRJC and ask for LRS appointments. Ruppel added that the chairs noted that there are no terms for member

appointments and asked that a 3-year term be set in the CRJC bylaws at the next CRJC meeting. There was general discussion about the NH and VT permit review process; English noted that there is an established permit review procedure for NH permits and he will fax it to Ruppel.

Ruppel relayed two phone messages she received this week. The first from a concerned citizen regarding the reconstruction of River Road in Lyme that eroded away in spring floods. The Committee agreed to refer this matter to the Upper Valley LRS for their review. The second message was from a writer asking for permission to use graphics from CRJC publication "Where the Great River Rises." The Committee recommended contacting the editor Rebecca Brown for more information.

The Committee reviewed the CRJC bylaws with the goal of defining the role of the Executive Committee. It was emphasized that the full Board needs to be engaged in CRJC's work, not just the Executive Committee, and that members should be matched by their interests to serve on different committees. The Executive Committee's main responsibilities are to control the finances, grants, contractors and personnel, and the CRJC should be setting policy.

Company presented a proposal to remove Section 7.6 and add the following wording to Section 8.1 of the bylaws:

- Carry out the decisions and instructions of the CRJC.
- Oversee the month-to-month administration of the CRJC work program and budget.
- Authorize the execution of contracts, memoranda of understanding, and other agreements necessary to implement the CRJC work program within the constraints of the approved CRJC budget.
- Authorize the receipt of grants and other funding necessary to implement the CRJC work program within the constraints of the approved CRJC budget.
- Evaluate the performance of CRJC employees and/or contracted employees and/or services.
- Review and approve formal correspondence to be sent on behalf of the CRJC.

The Committee agreed that the CRJC should vote on granting the above-described authority for the Executive Committee at the next meeting.

The Committee agreed that the next CRJC meeting, the CRJC should begin working on a strategic plan, specifically a succinct mission statement. The following CRJC meeting would address how to execute the mission statement. Sloat recommended a regional subcommittee to work with LRS's on strategic planning. The Committee agreed it would be helpful to have presentations at the next CRJC meeting from the Vermont and New Hampshire's state environmental agencies about their plans and programs that affect the Connecticut River.

The meeting adjourned at 3:56 pm.