



MINUTES – Executive Committee Meeting

Monday April 15, 2013

2:00 pm - 4:00 pm

CRJC Office, Lebanon, NH

Members Present: Chris Campany, Tom Kennedy, Bren Whittaker, Bob Christie, Mary Sloat, Rebecca Brown (via phone)

Others Present: Jim McClammer, NH Commissioner; Tim Walsh and Elizabeth Blaug of FERC via conference call

Administrative Staff/Consultants: Rachel Ruppel

Vice President Campany called the meeting to order at 2:05 pm.

The Executive Committee participated in a conference call with Tim Walsh and Elizabeth Blaug of FERC to discuss CRJC's request for cooperating agency status. FERC staff described their past experiences with cooperating agencies – they are usually other federal or state agencies that have permitting authority for another permit that is needed for the hydropower project and usually have some technical expertise that FERC does not have. Obligations for cooperating agencies are: 1) develop an MOU with FERC outlining roles, 2) the cooperating agency cannot seek re-hearing, and 3) comply with ex parte rules (cannot share internal FERC information).

Whittaker explained that CRJC recognizes that this is the most influential project on the river in decades and wants to be involved in the greatest capacity possible. McClammer added that as a cooperating agency, CRJC could be at the table earlier and be involved in the alternatives analysis. Blaug responded that cooperating agencies do not “have a leg up” and furthermore are limited in the information that they can share and would be precluded from being a party. Walsh added that all parties will be able to comment on alternatives.

McClammer stated that CRJC, through NH statute, have authority to look out for local interests. Campany stated that CRJC is advisory only and does not appear to meet the permitting criteria. Whittaker asked if any other agencies have requested to act as cooperating agencies; Walsh replied no and opined that other agencies likely don't want to give up party status. Sloat added that CRJC has Local River Subcommittees have a lot of local knowledge. Blaug added that FERC values input from all stakeholders. Ruppel asked what the next step would be if CRJC would like to withdraw its request to act as a cooperating agency; Blaug responded that sending a letter to FERC would be appropriate.

The conference call ended and Walsh and Blaug left the meeting.

Kennedy moved to withdraw letter seeking cooperating agency status, seconded by Sloat – all in favor.

Christie moved to approve the consent agenda (minutes of last meeting and March progress report), seconded by Whittaker – all in favor.

Kennedy moved to approve the financial report, seconded by Sloat – all in favor.

Ruppel presented options for a revised Quarter 4 workplan. She was asked to re-direct UVLSRPC's effort to support the dam relicensing as much as possible this year, which amounts to ~50 hours of work in Quarter 4. The options are to focus on fundraising to raise money for future involvement, to focus on providing comments on the study plan and engaging partners, and to split focus between fundraising and relicensing involvement. Company raised concern over the likelihood of success with fundraising; Sloat added that CRJC needs a workplan in order to be successful with fundraising. Christie added that CRJC has no business plan which hinders fundraising and also noted that CRJC is seen as a weak organization. Christie also stated that his opinion is that CRJC's mission is protecting the environment, not participating in relicensing and that this seemed to be the tail wagging the dog. Kennedy stated that CRJC needs to rethink what the organization does and his opinion is that CRJC needs to think about what can be done under the current budget. Whittaker stated that CRJC has agreed that Local River Subcommittees are the top priority; Company agreed but stated that CRJC needs to look to Subcommittee members and Commissioners to take a more active role, not just staff.

There was more discussion about developing a business plan, with the conclusion that Ruppel should prepare a draft business plan and send it to the Executive Committee to review by email. Whittaker moved to amend the workplan so that UVLSRPC would split its effort 50/50 between fundraising (i.e. developing a business plan) and relicensing involvement, seconded by Kennedy – all in favor.

Ruppel recommended that Agenda Items 5 and 6 be tabled to the next meeting, and that the Executive Committee meet again in May, with the CRJC Annual Meeting to be moved to June. The Committee agreed.

FY14 Officers – Whittaker volunteered to serve as Vermont Chair next year. Tom and Mary volunteered to contact Commissioners with their interest in serving as FY14 officers and Executive Committee at-large members.

FERC dam relicensing – Ruppel asked what would be the best way for her to receive feedback on her evaluation of the study plans and proposed comments. The Committee advised that she

should email to Executive Committee and all Commissioners for feedback; Mary and Jim stated that they were interested in helping in an additional capacity.

Brown joined the meeting via phone.

Issues tracking – Ruppel stated that she wanted to keep several issues (Northern Pass, tar sands pipeline, Shoreland legislation, LCHiP) on CRJC’s agenda, in order to keep them on the radar. The Committee discussed that several letters be written – letter of support for LCHiP, letter of support to Senate Committee on HB513 revising the Shoreland law, and letter to Appalachian Mountain Club regarding their feature article on the Connecticut River. Kennedy was asked to report back on the status of the Vermont bill that would require Act 250 review for pipelines; CRJC will send in a letter of support if needed.

Campany left the meeting.

Ruppel stated that New Hampshire Rivers Council has asked if CRJC would like to sponsor an invasive species monitor training in southwestern New Hampshire. This would not involve money, but would involve helping to schedule and publicize the event. The Committee agreed to sponsor this event.

Brown proposed that CRJC have a speaker on the tar sands pipeline at a future meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 4:00 pm.