

# SOUTHWEST REGION PLANNING COMMISSION

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

### MINUTES

October 13, 2020

Staff member Rich Clough announced that today's meeting will be conducted using a Zoom format and read a document entitled *Authority for Conducting a Meeting Electronically (copy attached)*. He announced that all votes would be conducted by roll call.

**Present:** Tom Mullins, Chairman, *Peterborough*; Gus Lerandean, Vice-Chairman, *Swanzey*; Brian Barden, *Dublin (joined meeting at 3:27 p.m.)*; Sara Carbonneau, *Winchester*; Camilla Lockwood, *Temple (joined meeting at 3:26 p.m.)*; Leandra MacDonald, *Peterborough*; Cheryl Mayberry, *Walpole*; Ed Merrell, *Jaffrey*; Butch Morin, *Richmond*; John Snowdon, *Westmoreland*.

Staff members present include Tim Murphy, Executive Director; Rebecca Baldwin, Office Manager; Rich Clough, Office Support Specialist.

**Guest:** Tom Giancola, Congresswoman Kuster's Office.

**Absent:** Larry Robinson, Secretary, *Marlborough*; Jill Collins, Treasurer, *Hinsdale*; Chris Coates, *Cheshire County*; Jay Jacobs, *Harrisville*; Gary Spykman, *Keene*.

#### I. Welcome

Chairman Mullins called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m. and welcomed those in attendance.

#### II. Consent Agenda

- a. Minutes of September 15, 2020 Meeting
- b. Highlights of Commission Activities - September 2020
- c. Agreements to Facilitate NBRC Awards - Grant Administration Services
- d. Agreement with Swanzey - Emergency Operations Planning
- e. Agreement with GKCC - Technical Assistance
- f. Agreement with NHHFA - Planning Support
- e. Financial Report - September 2020

Chairman Mullins noted that there are several agreements included in the consent agenda and asked if anyone wanted anything removed for further explanation. Directors Morin noted he had not yet received his agenda packet and Director Merrell noted that he had technical difficulties in downloading his. Chairman Mullins suggested Mr. Murphy take a few minutes to provide more information on agenda item II c. Mr. Murphy clarified that the grant funds are being used to facilitate Northern Borders Regional Commission (NBRC) awards to three entities in Cheshire County as part of their 2020 grant round. He noted that the Board may recall that SWRPC was a recipient of a three-year award through NBRC's 2019

grant round that is being used to provide technical assistance regarding economic development. For the 2020 round, the Town of Jaffrey has been awarded \$1 million to assist in a project which will result in additional municipal water supply and also allow for the expansion of the Millipore Corporation. Monadnock Economic Development Corporation has been awarded \$1 million to support the construction of the Keene State College Business Partnership Hub that will provide advanced training and education in collaboration with industry in the region. The Hannah Grimes Center has been awarded \$315,298 to support a three-year full-time position to assist with their small business start-up programs and their Radically Rural Summit. SWRPC has been designated by NBRC to serve as a Local Development District and thereby assist grant awardees by providing them with technical support. We are currently providing the Town of Swanzey with assistance for a grant that they were awarded in 2019. Mr. Murphy noted that the fee for providing assistance is based on the amount of the award and totals approximately \$35,000 for the 2020 awards described above over a three-year period. Director Lerandean asked if we are receiving sufficient funds for the work we will be doing. Mr. Murphy responded that this is new to us but based on staff's experience in administering federal grants such as through the CDBG program, he is confident that funds are sufficient.

No questions were asked on the other items contained in the consent agenda.

**Motion: To accept the consent agenda as presented.**

Motion by Director Lerandean, seconded by Director MacDonald. Approved by unanimous roll call vote with Director Morin abstaining.

### **III. Executive Director's Report**

#### **a. Fall 2020 Commission Meeting**

Mr. Murphy acknowledged Tom Giancola from Congresswoman Kuster's staff noting that she was instrumental in getting the Farm Bill amended to have the Northern Border Region Commission extended into Cheshire County. Tom Giancola noted that the Congresswoman appreciates the work of SWRPC and the support we are providing to NBRC grant recipients. Mr. Murphy noted that staff reported at the July meeting on our proposal to the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) under their COVID program to update the *Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for Southwest New Hampshire*. We are still awaiting word from EDA on the status of our proposal. Tom Giancola offered to follow-up with Mr. Murphy to further discuss how to best move forward to understand the status of EDA's process for reviewing proposals.

Mr. Murphy reported that we have had a good response regarding attendance at the Fall 2020 Commission Meeting which will immediately follow this meeting. The topic is broadband and challenges relative to connectivity which we have been trying to draw attention to over the last decade and has been further exposed during the pandemic regarding people needing to work from home, provide education and access medical care remotely. For our Fall Meeting we will be participating in a live meeting of the Monadnock Broadband Group that meets several times throughout the year. Today's meeting agenda includes an update on a municipal broadband implementation guide as well as recent legislation allowing for the formation of communication districts. Logistics for joining the Monadnock Broadband Meeting as part of the Fall Commission Meeting were briefly discussed.

**IV. Next Meeting**

Chairman Mullins announced that the next meeting of the SWRPC Board of Directors is scheduled for November 10, 2020 at 3:00 p.m. and will be a remote meeting.

**V. Other Matters**

No other matters were brought before the Board at this time.

**VI. Public Comments**

No public comments were offered.

**VII. Adjourn**

Meeting Adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rebecca I. Baldwin  
Office Manager