

SOUTHWEST REGION PLANNING COMMISSION

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

MINUTES

December 8, 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 indicated that all votes would be conducted by roll call.

Present: Tom Mullins, Chairman, *Peterborough*; Gus Lerandean, Vice-Chairman, *Swanzy*; Larry Robinson, Secretary, *Marlborough*; Jill Collins, Treasurer, *Hinsdale*; Brian Barden, *Dublin*; Chris Coates, *Cheshire County*; Camilla Lockwood, *Temple*; Ed Merrell, *Jaffrey*.

Staff members present include Tim Murphy, Executive Director; Rebecca Baldwin, Office Manager; Rich Clough, Office Support Specialist; Todd Horner, Planner; J. B. Mack, Principal Planner; Lisa Murphy, Senior Planner; James Weatherly, Planning Technician.

Guest: Christine Robidoux, Temple resident; Belinda Oster, *Oster & Wheeler, P.C.*

Absent: Sara Carbonneau, *Winchester*; Jay Jacobs, *Harrisville*; Cheryl Mayberry, *Walpole*; Leandra MacDonald, *Peterborough*; Butch Morin, *Richmond*; John Snowdon, *Westmoreland*; Gary Spykman, *Keene*.

I. Welcome

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

II. Advisory Committee Reports

a. Transportation Advisory Committee

J. B. Mack reported that the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) met on December 7, 2020 and received updates on various portions of SWRPC's transportation planning program including the Hinsdale/Brattleboro Bridge, rail trail and corridor planning. TAC members also discussed the schedule for making updates to *Southwest Connects: Southwest Region Transportation Plan*.

b. Energy and Natural Resources Advisory Committee

Lisa Murphy reported that the Energy and Natural Resources Advisory Committee (ENRAC) is scheduled to meet on December 15, 2020 which will feature a presentation from the NH Department of Environmental Services on best management practices for stormwater management.

Economic Development Advisory Committee

Todd Horner reported that the Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) is scheduled to meet on January 13, 2021 and that the meeting agenda is currently under development.

c. Brownfields Advisory Committee

J. B. Mack reported that the Brownfields Advisory Committee has not met since the Board was updated on their activities at the November 10, 2020 meeting.

III. Consent Agenda

- a. Minutes of November 10, 2020 Meeting**
- b. Highlights of Commission Activities - November 2020**
- c. Agreement with Cheshire County - Grant Administration Services**
- d. Agreement with Town of Jaffrey - Grant Administration Services**
- e. Agreement with Town of Winchester - Grant Administration Services**
- f. Financial Report - November 2020**

Motion: To accept the consent agenda as presented.

Motion by Director Robinson, seconded by Director Lerandau. Approved by unanimous roll call vote.

IV. Executive Director's Report

a. Agreement with U.S. EDA - Economic Development & Recovery Planning

Mr. Murphy reported that SWRPC recently received a non-binding letter of commitment from the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) in response to a proposal submitted in July. If selected for award, a next step would involve negotiations to enter into a three-year agreement with EDA to provide enhanced economic development planning. Mr. Murphy referred to the attached agenda item from the July 28th Board meeting for additional details on the proposed work program. EDA has requested additional information regarding our proposal and we are working on their request. Given the pace at which the process may unfold, Mr. Murphy suggested that the Board consider giving authorization to enter into an agreement with EDA should one be offered. Chairman Mullins indicated that his understanding of the proposal is that it would amount to an approximately one full time equivalent employee focused on economic development planning. Todd Horner noted that it is a wide-ranging proposal including an overhaul of the *Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for Southwest NH*, Covid recovery planning focusing on broadband, housing, food systems, workforce, and energy as well as economic development technical assistance.

Mr. Murphy noted that it would be premature at this point to make any announcements regarding a grant but if it were to be awarded, in its entirety it would be for three years in the amount of approximately \$350,000.

Motion: To authorize the Executive Director to enter into an agreement with the U.S. EDA and authorize the signature of the Chairman of the Board of Directors, or designee, to contract materials as may be required.

Motion by Chairman Mullins, seconded by Director Lerandau. Approved by unanimous roll call vote.

V. FY 2019/20 Audit Report

Chairman Mullins welcomed Belinda Oster from the accounting firm of Oster and Wheeler, P. C. who provided a summary overview of SWRPC's FY 2019/20 Audit Report for the year ending June 30, 2020. She reviewed the Management Discussion and Analysis report that provides an explanation as to how the financial statements are presented and summarizes the financial documents presented in their entirety later in the report. She drew attention to the list of accomplishments for fiscal year 2020 which is representative of the many things we do for our member communities. She noted that should our federal expenditures exceed \$750,000 in any given year, we would be subject to a single audit. Chairman Mullins asked how a single audit would differ from the type of audit we did this year. Ms. Oster explained that it is a more detailed audit that in addition to what is done for our current audit, a compliance audit would be required following criteria established by the Controller General for our federal programs.

Ms. Oster reviewed the Statement of Net Positions report which compares assets with liabilities and noted we are in a good financial position. She added that although the report indicates that we had some funds as of June 30, 2020 that were not insured by FDIC we were in the process of moving some of them to another banking institution and as of July all of our funds were fully insured. The Statement of Activities report shows a net change in position of \$32,374 which indicates we came out ahead for the year ending June 30th.

In reviewing the Notes to Financial Statements report, Belinda Oster reported that there are no significant changes regarding our control over financial reporting and no issues were found with compliance. She drew attention to a section that has been added for the impact of Covid-19 and noted that given this is a worldwide situation it is too soon to determine if there will be any impact on the organization. The Schedule of Expenditures of Federal Awards report indicates that as of June 30th we had \$590,526 in federal expenditures. Ms. Oster explained that this amount is below the allowed threshold of \$750,000 that would require us to conduct a single audit which was discussed earlier in the report presentation.

Ms. Oster explained that the same two findings are included in the report as in past audit reports and are required to be there. She stated that as in past years, these findings are common with similar sized organizations and it would not be a good use of resources to hire the additional staff that would be required for further segregation of duties. Chairman Mullins noted that these findings have been addressed by both staff and the Board of Directors. Ms. Oster agreed that proper steps to mitigate these findings have been taken by both the staff and Board of Directors through their review of budgets, contractual agreements and check signing policy.

Chairman Mullins expressed appreciation to Ms. Oster on behalf of the Board for assisting us with our annual audit. Mr. Murphy also recognized Director Robinson for his role in the review and sign-off SWRPC's bank statements. Ms. Oster commended staff for maintaining good records and their financial management and encouraged Board members to contact her if they have any questions regarding the audit.

Motion: To accept the FY 2019/2020 audit report.

Motion by Director Robinson, seconded by Director Lerandau Approved by unanimous roll call vote.

VI. Next Meeting

Chairman Mullins announced that the next meeting of the SWRPC Board of Directors is scheduled for January 12, 2021 at 3:00 p.m. and will be a remote meeting.

VII. Other Matters

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

VIII. Public Comments

Chairman Mullins recognized Christine Robidoux as attending several of our meetings and asked if she wanted to say anything. She noted that she is interested in the process and is currently a member of the Planning Board, Budget Advisory, Land Use, and Broadband Committees in the Town of Temple.

IX. Adjourn

Meeting Adjourned at 3:55 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rebecca I. Baldwin
Office Manager