**SOUTHWEST REGION PLANNING COMMISSION**

***BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING***

**MINUTES**

**May 11, 2021**

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* (attached).He indicated that all votes would be conducted by roll call.

**Present:** Tom Mullins, Chairman, *Peterborough;* Gus Lerandeau, Vice-Chairman, *Swanzey;* Larry Robinson, Secretary, *Marlborough;* Jill Collins, Treasurer, *Hinsdale;* Sara Carbonneau, *Winchester;* Brian Barden, *Dublin;* 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; J. B. Mack, Principal Planner*;* Lisa Murphy, Senior Planner; Todd Horner, Senior Planner; Terry Johnson, Senior Project Manager; Henry Underwood, GIS Technician/Planner; James Weatherly, Planning Technician.

**Absent:** Chris Coates*, Cheshire County;* Jay Jacobs, *Harrisville;* Camilla Lockwood, *Temple;* Gary Spykman, *Keene.*

**I. Welcome**

Chairman Mullins called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. and welcomed those in attendance.

**II. Advisory Committee Reports**

**a. Transportation Advisory Committee**

**b. Energy & Natural resources Advisory Committee**

**c. Economic Development Advisory Committee**

**d. Brownfields Advisory Committee**

1. **Transportation Advisory Committee**

J. B. Mack reported that the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) has not met since the Board was updated on their activities at the April 13, 2021 meeting. The next meeting of TAC is scheduled for June 7, 2021.

1. **Energy and Natural Resources Advisory Committee**

Lisa Murphy reported that the Energy and Natural Resources Advisory Committee (EDAC) has not met since the Board was updated on their activities at the April 13, 2021 meeting. The next meeting of ENRAC is scheduled for June 22, 2021.

**Economic Development Advisory Committee**

Todd Horner reported that the Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) met on April 14, 2021. The meeting agenda focused on economic recovery resources and efforts in the region that include both federal and local initiatives. The next meeting of EDAC is scheduled for July 14, 2021.

1. **Brownfields Advisory Committee**

J. B. Mack reported that the Brownfields Advisory Committee (BrAC) met on May 7, 2021. The BrAC received a presentation from our Environmental Consultant on the results of a Supplemental Phase II Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) at the former Greenfield Auto property located in Greenfield which has been redeveloped as a blacksmith business including blacksmithing classes. The BrAC also approved a Phase I ESA for the former Tom’s Auto property located in Keene for which a local nonprofit organization is considering a homeless shelter and resource center.

**III. Consent Agenda**

**a. Minutes of April 13, 2021 Meeting**

**b. Highlights of Commission Activities - April 2021**

**c. Agreement with Town of Antrim - Emergency Operations Planning**

**d.** **Financial Report - April 2021**

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

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

**IV. Executive Director’s Report**

**a. Advisory Committees - Roster Adjustments**

Mr. Murphy reported that since the Advisory Committee rosters were confirmed by the Board at their January 12, 2021 meeting we have received a couple of resignations as well as nominations for their replacements. After serving on TAC for many years, Gus Lerandeau has stepped down and the Town of Swanzey has nominated Bruce Tatro to replace him. Keene State College has nominated Veronica Rosa to replace Bob Baker who has stepped down from the Economic Development Advisory Committee after many years of service. Mr. Murphy suggested that the Board consider the nominations so that both entities can maintain representation on TAC and EDAC.

**Motion: To appoint Bruce Tatro to serve on TAC and Veronica Rosa to serve on EDAC.**

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

Chairman Mullins recognized the years of dedicated service provided by both Director Lerandeau and Bob Baker.

**b. Public Involvement Plan Update**

Mr. Murphy explained that staff is in the process of updating the SWRPC Public Involvement Plan which guides the public process as it relates to the agency work program. The Plan was put into effect in June of 2016 and is to be updated every five years according to requirements of the Federal Highway Administration. Lisa Murphy provided a presentation that highlighted specific updates to the Plan. The draft Plan, which is available on the SWRPC website was released for public comment on April 30, 2021. The public comment period will conclude on June 14, 2021 and the Plan will be brought to the Board for consideration and adoption at their June 15th meeting. Mr. Murphy noted that with the launch of the updated SWRPC website more options will be provided regarding public involvement. He further noted that pending legislation may have an effect on remote and hybrid meeting guidelines.

**c. FY 21/22 Work Program Budget**

Mr. Murphy referred to the proposed FY 21/22 work program budget for the year beginning July 1, 2021 that was shared with the Board prior to today’s meeting. He noted that both the current and proposed budget are depicted and he is proposing a balanced budget for the coming year. Mr. Murphy drew attention to the complete streets implementation line item noting that this is a pass-through item and drawdown is dependent on when individual projects are completed, the cost of materials and availability of contractors. He also noted that the proposed Brownfields income line does not assume the award of funds for the next FY. It is hoped that both of these can be further defined prior to the Annual Meeting. Director Carbonneau questioned the substantial increase in the Travel and Training line item and Mr. Murphy explained this is the usual amount requested and the current budget represents a significant decrease that was caused by Covid-19 travel restrictions. Chairman Mullins inquired what comprises the Supplies line item and Becky Baldwin explained that approximately half of the anticipated expenditures are for actual office supplies and the remainder represents items that are purchased and reimbursed by various other cost centers such as traffic counting supplies. Mr. Murphy explained that any modifications to the proposed budget will be presented to the Board for consideration at their June 15th meeting which will be held immediately prior to the Annual Meeting.

**d. 2021 Annual Meeting**

Mr. Murphy noted that as we transition to post-pandemic situation there have been a lot of questions about what will be allowable for communities and other organizations relative to public meetings and if remote or hybrid meetings will be able to continue. He contacted the New Hampshire Municipal Association and extended an invitation to join us at our Annual Meeting to discuss this topic. They accepted the offer and we expect to learn about the current status of SB 95 as well as innovative ideas that municipalities and others have explored or instituted regarding public meetings. Board members agreed that this is a timely topic for the Annual Meeting and encouraged staff to proceed. Announcements for the meeting will be distributed this week.

**V. Discussion Topic - Mobility Manager for Southwest New Hampshire: Potential Role for SWRPC**

J. B. Mack provided an overview of the efforts of transportation and human service agencies regarding the coordination of transportation services offered that address community transit needs. This includes the general population but focuses on seniors, persons with disabilities and individuals of lower income that find mobility and access to be a challenge. The most common community transportation challenges faced by these groups include the lack of a vehicle, driver’s license and information on transportation services. A State Coordinating Council and Regional Coordinating Councils were formed to oversee and implement coordinated services among providers through a Regional Transportation Coordinator which over time has been redefined as a Regional Mobility Manager. In Southwest NH, the Community Volunteer Transportation Company (CVTC) has served in this capacity. However, CVTC has come to a decision to no longer serve in this capacity. SWRPC is in the process of considering this role due to the overlap in the services we currently provide.

Terry Johnson provided background on the specific services that the Monadnock Region Coordinating Council (MRCC) currently provides to the elderly and disabled by utilizing funding provided by the Federal Transit Administration. MRCC has expressed interest in providing assistance to additional populations such as youth. There are currently three transit providers that participate in MRCC activities throughout the region. The newly formed statewide mobility management network will seek to provide complete trips for all residents utilizing various modes of transportation. Mobility Managers will be expected to develop a customer-centered approach to transportation access, create a transportation service directory, provide technical assistance to the MRCC, and assist with advanced technology integration. MRCC is currently exploring options regarding bringing a new Mobility Manager on board when CVTC steps down on June 30, 2021. Terry Johnson noted that SWRPC might be a good candidate for the position because it requires a strong planning perspective. An amount of up to $50,000 annually will be available for the position through funding provided by NHDOT. Cheshire County serves as the lead agency and a contract for the position would be entered into and administered by them. Director Carbonneau asked if SWRPC were to be chosen for this position would it require an additional staff position. Terry Johnson explained that NHDOT is going to require that the position be held by one person rather than several but they are still determining if the position will be part- or full-time which would be the determining factor regarding needing to hire additional staff. Mr. Murphy explained that it is always a challenge to align the activities of the agency work program with the staffing we have at any given time. He noted that the increase in anticipated economic development activity in conjunction with taking on the role of Mobility Manager, if we were chosen to fulfill the role, would likely result in bringing on additional staff.

Chairman Mullins asked for clarification as to what MRCC is and who comprises its membership. J. B. Mack explained that Regional Coordinating Councils are a network of transportation providers, social service organizations, clients, and funders all of which have a stake in community transportation. Chairman Mullins asked if we were to enter into a contract to be the MRCC Mobility Manager who would the contract be with and J. B. Mack responded that it would be with Cheshire County who serves as lead agency and fiscal agent for MRCC.

Terry Johnson noted that MRCC has the authority to either fill the Mobility Manager role from within or through an advertised RfP. This will be determined at an upcoming meeting. Mr. Murphy noted there are factors beyond our control involving actions on behalf of the State Coordinating Council and NHDOT that could cause delays. Our concern would be that July 1st come and go without a Mobility Manager being hired to replace CVTC creating a lapse in coverage. He explained that this presentation is for information only at this time but that it represents good background and an opportunity for the Board to ask questions.

**VI. Next Meeting June 15, 2021**

Chairman Mullins announced that the SWRPC Annual Meeting is scheduled to take place on June 15, 2021. Mr. Murphy noted that it is anticipated that a meeting of the SWRPC Board of Directors will take place immediately prior to the Annual Meeting and depending on the number of items to be covered will most likely take place at 3:00 p.m.

**VII. Other Matters**

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

**VIII. Public Comments**

No public comments were offered.

**IX. Adjourn**

Meeting Adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rebecca I. Baldwin

Office Manager