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MINUTES
STRAFFORD REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
July 17, 2015
Community Center Conference Room #1
Strafford Regional Planning Commission
150 Wakefield Street, Suite 12
Rochester, NH

Members Present: Chairman Brian Tapscott, Somersworth; Vice Chair Victoria Parmele, Northwood; Bill Connor, Somersworth; Kenn Ortmann, Rochester; Sandra Keans, Rochester; Bob Jaffin, Rochester; Judy Nelson, Rollinsford

Staff Present: Cynthia Copeland, Executive Director; Shayna Sylvia, Communications & Outreach Specialist

Members Absent: Secretary/Treasurer Tom Crosby, Madbury; Alternate Wayne Burton, Durham

1. **Welcome/Introductions**

Chairman Brian Tapscott welcomed the group. The meeting began at 8:00 AM.

2. **Actions Items**

a. **Approval of Minutes of June 19, 2015**

B. Tapscott asked for a motion to approve the minutes of June 19, 2015. B. Connor **MOVED** to approve the minutes. B. Jaffin **SECONDED** this motion, of which all were **IN FAVOR.**

b. **Acceptance of Draft June Financials**

C. Copeland reviewed the financials. She explained that Kathy Foster has been preparing for the auditors to review the organization's financials. C. Copeland elaborated on each of the financial statements and made a comparison between the end of this fiscal year, and the end of the previous fiscal year. Many of the elements remained stable between FY2015 and FY2014. Any elements with substantial differences were explained.

B. Connor asked about legal fees paid toward the law firm reviewing the employee handbook and if the firm reviewing the document was specifically focused on employee relations, which they are. C. Copeland explained that the handbook was reviewed by staff of the firm, and Deborah Weiss Ford, the office managing shareholder.

C. Copeland stated that for the Regional Housing Needs Assessment Targeted Block Grant state funds were used for a portion of the consultant costs for the document in the past, but with the lower amount of TBG funding the organization had to absorb that cost.

S. Keans asked for clarification on the draft aging summary concerning the dues for the cities in the region. C. Copeland explained that these dues are not past due as they are billed in June. J. Nelson asked what 'payroll expenses-other' refers to on the profit and loss statement. C. Copeland shared that this is for processing additional checks.

B. Connor shared that K. Foster's comments on the financials were extremely helpful. C. Copeland shared that K. Foster was having some difficulty with QuickBooks matching with our financial reporting needs. A discussion ensued concerning the use of complicated software

K. Ortmann **MOVED** to accept the June Financials. B. Jaffin **SECONDED** the motion, of which all were **IN FAVOR.**

c. **FY2016 Billing Rate Structure**

C. Copeland shared that the proposed billing rate structure looks different than in the past as there are many staff who are planners, but at different levels due to experience and education. C. Copeland reviewed the billing rates.

K. Ortmann **MOVED** to adopt the billing rate structure. V. Parmele **SECONDED** the motion. K. Ortmann asked where these billing rate are used. They are used with our communities and other organizations. NHDOT and other state agencies use actual staff rates for billing purposes.

B. Jaffin opined that C. Copeland was undercharging for her billing rate. C. Copeland does not believe that this is the case. B. Connor asked about the billing rates of the other Executive Directors. This information is not currently known. C. Copeland shared that she developed different rates and that she believes those currently presented are the most accurate and fair. C. Copeland shared that the average billing rate for SRPC is lower than other RPCs. A discussion ensued concerning the billing rates for the Executive Director and staff as a way to increase revenue in a significant and meaningful way.

B. Jaffin opined that a higher Executive Director's rate would influence the organization to be more selective in applying for grants. B. Connor suggested a trial period with higher rates. C. Copeland explained that she does not bill that much to contracts, but instead bills to indirect. K. Ortmann suggested different billing rates for non-member and member communities.

Discussion continued concerning billing rates and their effect on contract hours. The Committee decided to increase the hourly billing rates by $5, except for the Executive Director, and create a separate rate with a 10% surcharge for non-dues paying communities.

B. Jaffin **MOVED** to recommend an amendment to the FY2016 Billing Rate. B. Connor **SECONDED** the motion, of which all were **IN FAVOR**. The motion to approve the amendment to the FY2016 Billing Rate **CARRIED.**

The motion to approve the FY2016 Billing Rates **CARRIED**.

d. **Concurrence with July Monthly Minors**

C. Copeland reviewed the July Monthly Minors. Funding changes are for culvert replacement and drainage repairs. K. Ortmann asked about the change in COAST funding. K. Ortmann shared that state funds that were going to lapse were reprogrammed to upgrade aging infrastructure. B. Jaffin shared that this is a good thing for COAST. K. Ortmann **MOVED** to concur with the Executive Director's approval of the May Monthly Minors. B. Jaffin **SECONDED** the motion, of which all were **IN FAVOR**.

e. **Employee Handbook**

C. Copeland reviewed the changes made to the Employee Handbook after the Executive Committee review in June, including adding staff positions to the organizational chart. She explained other minor changes. C. Copeland reviewed the annual leave/vacation section to included leave being forfeited per pay period if the individual is over the allotted vacation time. A discussion ensued concerning the logistics of this policy. B. Connor asked how contract timelines affect whether or not staff can go on vacation. This was discussed.

B. Connor asked if the organization allowed staff to have tattoos and body piercings. This is covered in the employee handbook under the 'Attire and Grooming' section. A discussion ensued concerning professional dress and appearance.

K. Ortmann **MOVED** to approve the Employee Handbook with the changes as proposed. B. Jaffin **SECONDED** the motion, of which all were **IN FAVOR**.

K. Ortmann **MOVED** to recess. B. Jaffin **SECONDED** the motion, of which all were **IN FAVOR**.

The meeting recessed at 10:05 am.

K. Ortmann **MOVED** to reconvene the meeting. S. Keans **SECONDED** the motion, of which all were **IN FAVOR**.

The meeting reconvened at 10:05 am.

f. **Executive Director Review Calendar**

C. Copeland explained that she and S. Sylvia organized the calendar to lay out the timeline of events related to the Executive Director's review. C. Copeland reviewed the calendar including when goals must be completed by, when evaluations should be done and presented, and the schedule for a mid-year report.

J. Nelson asked when compensation is reviewed. This is part of the review process. K. Ortmann opined that this is a good plan, but that the Committee needs to make sure that this plan is followed through with. A discussion ensued about who is on the Executive Director Review Committee. B. Connor expressed interest in being on the Review Committee. B. Jaffin opined that this is an ad-hoc committee and that individuals do not need to be voted on. The Executive Director Review Committee will be an agenda item at next month's E.C. meeting. The group can then figure out who will be on the Committee.

B. Connor brought up a discussion point from the last meeting concerning the Executive Director's presence at some point during her review. J. Nelson suggested adding where the Executive Director should be included on the timeline. The group discussed how municipalities review town and city officials.

C. Copeland shared that she would modify the Executive Director Review Calendar to reflect when she should be present. This will be addressed under the 'Executive Director Review Committee' item at the next meeting.

g. **Code of Conduct**

C. Copeland shared that the *Code of Conduct*, *Rules of Procedure*, and the *Executive Committee and Commissioner Position Description* were modified based on input from the June E.C. meeting.

K. Ortmann **MOVED** to accept the *Code of Conduct* as a first version. S. Keans **SECONDED** the motion. B. Jaffin asked if the group wanted to address the use of email amongst E.C. members as it has been an issue. C. Copeland shared that something could be added. S. Keans suggested that RSA 91-A be put in the bylaws versus the code of conduct. K. Ortmann **CHANGED THE MOTION** to include the following statement in the *Code of Conduct*: as an Executive Committee member I agree to conduct all correspondence including email consistent with RSA 91-A. A discussion ensued concerning RSA 91-A and meeting compliance with 91-A. S. Keans' **SECOND** to the motion still stands. All were **IN FAVOR.** The motion **CARRIED.**

C. Copeland shared that rules established under RSA 91-A apply for sub-committees of the Executive Committee as well.

h. **Rules of Procedure**

C. Copeland reviewed the *Rules of Procedure* document. She shared that a correction could be made to included Strafford MPO and Strafford EDD in addition to Strafford RPC. This document explains behavior expectations at a meeting.

K. Ortmann shared that this document makes sense as it would be helpful to the individual running the meeting. He opined that this may not need to be adopted. C. Copeland shared that these rules might be helpful for someone who does not have experience at Commission meetings. A discussion ensued concerning how this document could be used and shared. B. Connor asked about protocol for removing individuals from meetings for dangerous or unruly behavior. C. Copeland shared that the Commission follows Robert's Rules. A discussion ensued concerning removing meeting guests, Commission members and Executive Committee members from the Commission/ Commission meetings.

The discussion returned to the *Rules of Procedure.* B. Jaffin opined that this document should be part of the Commissioner's Handbook, and uploaded on the SRPC website. The Committee discussed where this document should be posted, and if it needs to be adopted. J. Nelson suggested that the rules could be posted on the back of the agenda. The group agreed to post this document on the back of every agenda going forward to include MPO,EDD, and RPC meetings.

i. **Executive Committee and Commissioner Position Description**

C. Copeland shared that the position descriptions are based on the Bylaws. She outlined the two descriptions. S. Keans asked if there should be a penalty for breaking confidentiality related to Commission business. B. Jaffin opined that a second offense could be reason for removal. K. Ortmann asked if removal for cause was mentioned in the SRPC Bylaws, which it is. B. Jaffin suggested using breaking confidentiality as an example of "for cause" in the SRPC bylaws.

K. Ortmann **MOVED** to adopt the *Executive Committee Position Description* as the first version for the purpose of discussion. B. Jaffin asked if K. Ortmann would change his motion to include breaking confidentiality in the SRPC Bylaws and position description. B. Jaffin **SECONDED** K. Ortmann's original motion. B. Connor opined that the alternates should be included in the *Executive Committee Position Description* in the 'Committee Configuration' section. A discussion ensued concerning the inclusion of alternates. K. Ortmann suggested that the position description could refer to the SRPC Bylaws, which address alternates. B. Jaffin asked that the **MOTION** be modified to include approval with a change to the description to include a reference to the Bylaws concerning 'Committee Configuration. S. Keans suggested adding the phrase "per the bylaws" to the position description. The **MOTION CARRIED.**

S. Sylvia shared that the Committee still needs to address the *Commissioner Position Description* B. Jaffin **MOVED** to approve the *Commissioner Position Description* with the proposed changes. S. Keans **SECONDED** the motion, of which all were **IN FAVOR.**

3. **Discussion**

a. **FY2016 Executive Director Organizational Goals**

C. Copeland asked the Executive Committee if they had specific goals they would like to address. She added that the E.C. has previously asked her to work on a succession plan and look into non-profit status. C. Copeland shared that another important goal is to look for new funding sources. B. Connor asked C. Copeland about her plans of action for each goal. A discussion ensued concerning the planning steps for each goal.

C. Copeland shared that she and the Financial Consultant Kathy Foster also need to become familiar with the super circular from the Office of Management and Budget and changes in compliance and regulations for grant administration. A discussion ensued concerning these changes.

S. Keans suggested looking at the provision of services to commercial businesses. She used the example of working with Eastern Propane K. Ortmann expressed concern with conflicts with projects and their regional impact and working with commercial business and our municipalities. B. Jaffin used an example of L.L. Bean requesting demographic data. C. Copeland shared that this becomes complicated with UPWP funding as NHDOT equipment must be subtracted from the incoming amount going towards a project. A discussion ensued concerning UPWP funding and the limitations it creates on projects with outside partners.

K. Ortmann suggested goals looking at creating a new business model, or creating a non-profit. K. Ortmann asked if the idea is not having to rely on declining federal and state dollars. J. Nelson opined that there should be timelines and measures for each of the goals, and that it is the E.C. Committee's duty to help the E.D. be successful with her goals.

4. **Updates**

a. **Contract Updates**

C. Copeland shared that she and Regional Planner Liz Durfee will be meeting with Farmington to discuss a potential contract with the town. She updated the group on the available state funding situation. B. Connor asked if TIGER grant funding might be going away. B. Jaffin opined that individuals should only plan on one more TIGER grant round.

b. **NH Rail Transit Authority**

B. Jaffin asked that the agenda item name for the NH Rail and Transit Authority be corrected. He explained that due to the passing of certain Sentate bills the NHRTA will be reorganized to a nine member board, and 30 advisory member board. B. Jaffin shared he is interested in a spot

on the board but that there will probably be only one spot for all nine regional planning commissions. A discussion ensued about representation on the NHRTA. The Commission decided to write a letter supporting B. Jaffin's nomination to the committee. B. Connor **MOVED** to write a letter endorsing an SRPC representative to Mike Izbicki. It was suggested that the group look up the legislation for the Authority. The consensus was to write a letter (there was no second on record.)

C. Copeland shared that the Rail Working Group is taking the summer off and is looking to invite rail companies to speak to the group in the fall.

c. **NHARPC Committee Update**

K. Ortmann did not have any business to report.

5. **Other Business**

B. Connor shared that last fall the Commission recognized veterans at one of the Commission meetings. He shared that the Committee that organized this event was interested in recognizing veterans once a year at a Commission meeting. A discussion ensued concerning a veteran event and how the Commission could be involved in this type of event. B. Jaffin opined that veterans could be recognized on the agenda at one Commission meeting every year. B. Connor suggested a brief two minute recognition at a Commission meeting. C. Copeland shared that we could also be recognizing planners and other public service members. She shared that SRPC would be recognizing planner and public service members beginning with Kenn Ortmann, the speaker at the SRPC September Executive Committee meeting.

6. **Adjournment**

B. Jaffin **MOVED** to adjourn. B. Connor **SECONDED** the motion, of which all were **IN FAVOR.**

The meeting adjourned at 11:22 pm.

Minutes Respectfully Submitted by,

Shayna Sylvia
Communications and Outreach Specialist

Minutes approved on August 21, 2015,

By: _____
Brian Tapscott, Chairman – SRPC Executive Committee