

MINUTES
STRAFFORD REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

November 18, 2011
Conference Room
Strafford Regional Planning Commission
150 Wakefield Street
Rochester, NH

Members Present: Vice Chairman Lou Vita, Middleton; C. Thomas Crosby, Secretary-Treasurer, Madbury; Sandra Keans, Rochester; Kenn Ortmann, Rochester; Brian Tapscott, Somersworth

Members Absent: Chairman Ed Jansen, Jr., Rollinsford.

Staff Present: Cynthia Copeland, Linda Osburn.

Vice Chairman Vita noted a quorum and called the meeting to order at 8:16 AM.

1. Minutes of October 21, 2011 Executive Committee Meeting

Vice Chairman Vita entertained a motion to approve the minutes of the October 21, 2011 Executive Committee meeting. Ortmann made the motion to approve the minutes as written and Tapscott seconded the motion. The motion passed.

2. Draft Financial Reports for October 2011

Copeland reviewed the draft revenue of \$36,475.61, draft receivables of \$68,814.72, and draft expenses of \$51,324.32. She stated that expenses were all standard with the exception of the office furniture expense. Copeland stated that there were 520 hours coded to the Unified Work Planning Program (UPWP) in October and her trip to the annual meeting of the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO) in Dallas was not allowed as a direct expense to the current UPWP contract. She asked for a motion to set up a savings account for checks received from the New Hampshire Charitable Fund and for the indirect cost rate adjustment from the FY 2010 UPWP contract, stating it was challenging if all funds were in the checking account. Keans suggested a reserve account instead of a savings account.

Ortmann made a motion to set up a reserve account with the same signers as the checking account and Tapscott seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Ortmann discussed Copeland's trip to the AMPO meeting and asked if reclassification should be pursued. Copeland stated Cliff Sinnott, Rockingham Planning Executive Director, has discussed the issue with the NH Department of Transportation and the department wanted all the hours for the year in order to make a decision. Copeland stated that pushing the issue would restrict the commission further and stated that the rural planning commissions would not support the action.

Copeland stated she met with Secretary/Treasurer Crosby and they need a report every pay period of sick and annual leave. Ortmann asked why the report was needed and Copeland responded that the

report was needed for audit function as she and Crosby talk about concerns. Keans asked why the leave was not already tracked. Discussion ensued on annual sick and leave policies and Copeland stated she wanted a report on sick and annual leave every pay period.

Tapscott made a motion to provide a sick and annual leave report every pay period. Keans seconded the motion and the motion passed.

3. FY 2013 Adjusted Dues

Vice Chairman Vita stated that the adjusted dues sheet reflected the use of the FY 2009 per capita rate. Copeland stated that the question some communities were asking was what would happen if they did not pay dues. She stated she had a conversation with the Northwood Town Planner and that the Newmarket Town Planner was happy to see the reduction in dues. Vice Chairman Vita discussed the importance of dues for leveraging federal funds.

Tapscott made the motion to recommend the adjusted FY 2013 dues to the Commissioners for approval and Keans seconded the motion. The motion passed.

4. Possible November Monthly Minor Administrative/Informational Revisions

Osburn stated that she was informed that the November Monthly Minor Administrative/Informational Revisions were not ready for consideration due to the lack of information needed.

5. Adoption of RSA 31:104 and RSA 31:106 Liability for Damages Limited, Indemnification, Insurance in SRPC Bylaws

Vice Chairman Vita read the email from Attorney Schulte stating that in his view "Sections 101 and 106 apply to the SPRC, its commissioners, employees and administrators without requiring that the commission adopt those provisions." Attorney Schulte noted that RSA 31:105 did require a vote of the Commission and Ortmann noted that this had previously been adopted by the Commission.

6. Personnel Policies for Out of State Travel

Copeland asked Osburn to provide an update. Osburn stated the issue of developing an out of state travel policy for different contracts had been discussed with the auditors on October 31, 2011 and would be discussed with the FY 2011 audit.

7. Updates

a. NH Rail Authority

Keans stated that the NH Rail Authority was working with the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) to get a train in Salem and to the airport. Copeland stated that the Governor's Advisory Commission on Intermodal Transportation (GACIT) would not support any expansion to passenger rail and had committed to bus transit and park and rides. Keans discussed the Plaistow project where the MBTA train would sit overnight in Plaistow. Discussion ensued regarding noise and quality of life issues.

b. NHARPC Legislative Committee

Ortmann stated that the committee met last week to review Legislative Service Requests (LSRs) and stated that the subcommittee would evaluate bills when they are out and determine priorities

for the bills to watch, support and oppose. He stated that he would email the information when he received it. A discussion on the bill process and deadlines followed.

c. FEMA Mitigation Grants for Community Mitigation Planning

There was no report available at the meeting.

Crosby left the meeting at 9:00 AM.

8. Executive Director Report

Copeland stated that health benefits premiums would not be increasing in July. A discussion on health insurance rates ensued and a discussion on the legality of towns arbitrarily backing out of contracts.

9. Request for Non-Public Session in accordance with RSA 91: A: 3: II. A to discuss the dismissal, promotion or compensation of any public employee

Copeland stated that she had requested the non-public session to discuss her evaluation, but due to the absence of Chairman Jansen and Crosby, she requested that the Executive Director evaluation be postponed until the December meeting. The group did not enter non-public session. She distributed a goals and status report. Ortmann stated that evaluation should be placed at the beginning of the December meeting and be completed regardless of those in attendance.

10. Legislative

a. State Legislative/Commissioner Peer Group

Copeland stated that she was still trying to obtain a list of Commissioners who were also NH State Representatives from five regional planning commissions. She stated that she would try to have the complete list for all planning commissions by January.

b. Federal Legislation on MPO and RPC Status

Copeland discussed the transportation reauthorization bill, the funding levels and funding sources including fees to finance transportation. Copeland discussed the status of the Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and the definition change from an urbanized population of 50,000 to 200,000. She discussed the options to consolidate, return the funds and set up a 6 month plan for NH DOT to take over the MPO, and to petition the Governor and the Secretary of Transportation for permission to continue Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization (SMPO). Copeland stated that the petition process would be what the SMPO would do. She stated that eight states would lose all MPOs, and that is clear to her that MPOs run as a county function. Ortmann discussed the possibility of a joint application. Copeland discussed the Tier 1 status with an urbanized population of one million where federal funds do not go through the Department of Transportation. She discussed the Tier II status with an urbanized population of 200,000 – 1,000,000. Keans asked about the status of Vermont and Maine MPOs and what worked in New England. Copeland stated that the Census recognized New England as different.

Copeland stated that she had talked to the Executive Committee officers about goals. She discussed the proposed bill to dissolve regional planning commissions as political subdivisions of the state and the legislative request for each commission to furnish job title, job function and salaries. She discussed what could legally be done to make the MPOs legal to take in and disburse funds. Copeland stated that she looked at non-profit status and asked if

the group was comfortable with her exploring a nonprofit status and reporting back with the good and the bad. Copeland stated that she had met with Davis Preece of Southern NHPC and obtained copies of the bylaws and articles of incorporation of the nonprofit Sustainable SNHPC Foundation. She stated that Terry Knowles was a board member of Southern NHPC and processed nonprofit applications. Keans asked if the federal government was allowed to give funds to nonprofit groups and asked if the bill could be enforced if passed. Copeland discussed the state functions and the MPO functions. Copeland stated that the nonprofit foundation was able to obtain funds from foundations that MPOs might not be eligible for. She stated that North County Council was a nonprofit, and Vice Chairman Vita asked Copeland to find out what drove the commissions to form nonprofit organizations. Copeland stated she would conduct focus interviews.

Tapscott asked why the bill wanted to eliminate regional planning commissions. Vice Chairman Vita stated that Representative Kingsbury wanted to eliminate another level of government that duplicated local or state government, and wanted to streamline things. Discussion of county government's current attempts to push regionalization services ensued. Ortmann stated that every challenge had an opportunity and may provide a public forum to educate those that do not know what regional planning commissions do. Copeland discussed the Agenda 21: Myths and Facts handout and stated that she was a member of the American Planning Association. She stated that large MPOs were being directly attacked by people disrupting meetings and the planning process. Ortmann stated that newspapers will report on what others are reporting on such as conspiracies and politics. Keans stated that Republicans will not discuss issues and see simple solutions rather than functions.

11. Communication with Communities

Ortmann suggested being proactive with communities rather than waiting until budget times. He discussed the video of the last quarterly SRPC Commission meeting that he missed and that he wanted a copy of the video to make available to the local government channel if it met the local government channel standards. Copeland stated that Commissioner Comeau set up a private business to videotape meetings. Keans asked if the Commission would have to purchase the video or if Commissioner Comeau would give the video to the Commission. Vice Chairman Vita stated that Commissioner Comeau was not selling the video and that his website was subsidized by advertisers. Copeland stated that she would talk to Commissioner Comeau, and stated that Commissioner Comeau posted videos on the www.governmentoversite.com website and then to the YouTube website. Ortmann asked if Brookfield was paying dues, and Copeland stated the Commissioner Comeau convinced Brookfield they would receive everything free from federal funds. Ortmann stated that the Commission should be proactive rather than reactive, and Keans stated that some people do not know what the Commission does. Ortmann discussed the use of videos on the local government channel and the restriction on advertising other businesses.

12. Other Business

No other business was discussed.

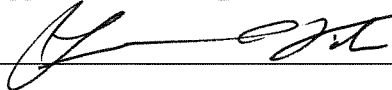
13. Adjournment

Vice Chairman Vita entertained a motion to adjourn. Tapscott made the motion to adjourn and Ortmann seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 9:50 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Osburn
Bookkeeper

Minutes approved on December 16, _____, 2011.

By:  _____

