

MINUTES
STRAFFORD REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

November 14, 2008
Conference Room
Strafford Regional Planning Commission
2 Ridge Street
Dover, NH

Members Present: Larry Brown, Chairman, Milton; Edmund Jansen, Jr., Vice Chairman, Rollinsford; C. Thomas Crosby, Secretary-Treasurer; Frank Torr, Dover; Lou Vita, Middleton; Kenn Ortmann, Rochester.

Staff Present: Cynthia Copeland, Linda Osburn.

Absent: Bruce Woodruff, Milton; Sandra Keans, Rochester.

Chairman Brown called the meeting to order at 8:00 AM.

1. Minutes

Chairman Brown entertained a motion to approve the minutes of the October 17, 2008 Executive Committee meeting as written. Ortmann made the motion to approve the minutes of the October 17, 2008 Executive Committee as written. Crosby seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Draft Financial Reports October 2008

Osburn reviewed the draft October 2008 financial reports including the income of \$30,282 and expenses totaling \$41,809 resulting in net loss of \$11,527; accounts receivables as of October 31 2008 totaling \$88,127; accounts payable as of October 31, 2008 totaling \$749. Osburn noted that Secretary-Treasurer Crosby had reviewed the balance sheet, bank statement, and payroll and pension payments on November 13, 2008. Osburn reviewed the distributed FY 2009 proforma and stated Copeland continued to revise the projected budgeted income and expenses to record any changes and make the appropriate changes to keep the budget balanced. Ortmann asked if there were concern over any receivable items. Copeland joined the meeting at 8:10 AM. Copeland responded that the Dover dues (\$18,387) were doubtful and the Northwood dues semi-annual payment was expected. Osburn stated that the receivables from the NH Department of Transportation UPWP, NH Estuaries and NH Department of Environmental Services Coastal Program were current.

3. Executive Director Report

Copeland discussed the hiring of William Proulx as a regional planner and the additional hours that Kyle Pimental will be working to complete projects including road centerline adjustments and the Farmington sidewalk inventory.

Copeland discussed the policy regarding consultant requests working for communities in the region. She stated the consultants are requesting GIS products and ordinances to use for work they are being

paid to do in the communities. Copeland described the policy that stating for a community to receive free services for a consultant, they must make the request in writing and state that the private consultant will not receive payment for the services. Vita stated that staff should have the autonomy to handle the requests appropriately. Jansen stated he would like to know what information was requested. Copeland responded that SRPC required the community's written permission before giving out parcel data layers. Chairman Brown discussed the issues of costs being paid by applicants, consultants being paid for work already completed, and having ordinances/regulations located on the website for applicants to print out. He stated that if Copeland were unclear about a future request, she would request a policy to address that request.

4. Dues and Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Membership

a. FY 2010 Dues

Copeland stated letters regarding the FY 2010 dues has been mailed to communities and she had heard from the budget committees from Wakefield, Milton, Farmington and Lee. She stated the #1 issue was the 5% Consumer Price Increase to the per capita rate. Copeland stated the #2 issue was non-payment of dues and the concern regarding the cost to other communities and the impact on the Strafford MPO membership. She stated the issue had been discussed at the Executive Directors monthly meeting and with the NH Department of Transportation (DOT). Copeland discussed the possible additional tasks with performance measures that DOT might want the MPO to complete. She discussed the potential state funding cuts due to the state budget deficit, and the possible charge to communities for assistance with municipally managed projects. Copeland stated NH DOT had formed a municipal task force to increase communication between DOT and communities. Copeland stated she had asked DOT about the issue of non-payment of dues by communities, and DOT had responded that other states withhold funding for projects for communities that do not pay dues. Copeland stated the response to communities that do not pay dues must be a collaborative statewide response and not just one MPO response.

Copeland discussed how the dues were used for local match requirements of the Unified Work Planning Program (UPWP) agreement, Coastal Program agreements, Hazard Mitigation Planning agreements, and Statewide Planning and Research (SPR) agreements. Ortmann discussed the problem of communities not paying dues but still receiving benefits. He suggested consideration of an assertive position of prioritizing projects for dues paying members or a surcharge to the non dues-paying communities for work. Ortmann asked who had the ability to make such a decision and Copeland responded that Federal Highways and NH DOT had the authority. Discussion of non-dues paying communities and the effect on other communities on a regional basis, and the possible methods to seek incentives for communities to pay dues ensued.

Vita made a motion to direct the Executive Director to investigate all methods and seek assistance from NH DOT and Federal Highways to develop a fair and proportional incentive for communities to be part of the regional participation for the benefit of the region. Ortmann seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Copeland discussed the 5% CPI increase to the per capita rate and the possibility of a community request for no increase in dues due to the economic situation. Chairman Brown stated the Milton budget committee recognized a 4.5% CPI increase. Ortmann asked why set the rate if it is not going to be used but stated he would be willing to listen to an argument.

b. FY 2011 Dues

Copeland discussed the FY 2011 issues regarding dues and membership. Ortmann asked about reports to communities on what services and membership benefits they received from their dues as well as the competition for funding. Vita stated the dues are now a discretionary item and discussed possible state funding or an obligatory payment such as a tax bill. Ortmann suggested placing the focus on the positive idea of providing services that provide value to communities. Copeland discussed the possibility of a local transportation fee to pay dues to the MPO.

5. Subcommittee Reports

a. Grievance/Appeals Policy

Vita reported that no subcommittee meeting date had been set, and the subcommittee would provide a report next month.

b. Executive Director Evaluation

Ortmann stated he would set up a meeting of the Executive Director Evaluation subcommittee and would provide a report next month.

6. Strafford Regional Planning Commission/Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting on November 20, 2008

Copeland stated that the following speakers from the NH Department of Environmental Services (DES) would discuss the following programs at the meeting: Paul Currier would discuss the regulation of water quantity; Wayne Ives would discuss the Lamprey River protected instream flow; and Steve Couture would discuss the NH Rivers Management and Protection Program. She stated the public comment period would be opened regarding the adoption of the Isinglass Rivers Management Plan. Copeland discussed the project solicitation for the Coastal Program application, and the Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) program updates.

Ortmann asked if the agenda order would be reversed as it was at the last meeting and suggested the Federal Highways Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the NH Department of Transportation (DOT) representatives should hear the concerns about the local dues used as match for transportation contracts. Chairman Brown stated he would let Vice Chairman Jansen and Copeland know if he had a conflicting meeting.

7. Other Business

Ortmann discussed the comments submitted to the NH Community Development Finance Authority (CDFA) regarding the NH Neighborhood Stabilization Program. He discussed the program's focus to try to stop neighborhoods continuing the downward spiral from the foreclosures, and provide funds to rehabilitate properties. Ortmann discussed the criteria Housing and Development (HUD) used to identify neighborhoods with the highest concentration of foreclosures, and how communities would enter into agreements/partnerships with agencies with expertise or could take their own independent actions. He stated the funds were non-competitive and if the communities identified in Tier 1 (greatest need) did not utilize the funds within 18 months, the funds would be allocated to those communities in Tier 2. Ortmann stated that HUD would be carefully watching how NH handled the NH Neighborhood Stabilization Program funds, and that the goals were to rehabilitate necessary neighborhood areas, and provide an opportunity for some to afford a home that might not otherwise be able to in the communities. Crosby discussed the demand for housing in communities and Ortmann stated the program was flexible to allow the communities to get the best program to fit their community's needs.

