

MINUTES
STRAFFORD REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

July 14, 2006
Conference Room
Strafford Regional Planning Commission
2 Ridge Street
Dover, NH

Members Present: Thomas Fargo, Chairman, Dover; Al Dixon, Secretary-Treasurer, Newmarket; Kenn Ortmann, Rochester; Rod Cools, Wakefield.

Members Absent: Edmund Jansen, Jr., Vice Chairman, Rollinsford; Thomas Crosby, Madbury; Bruce Woodruff, Milton

Staff Present: Cynthia Copeland, Linda Osburn.

Chairman Fargo called the meeting to order at 7:38 AM. He requested the order of presentation be amended to allow agenda item #6 be discussed first if there were no objections. Hearing none, the agenda was amended.

1. Executive Director Evaluation Committee

Chairman Fargo stated that he had met with Ortmann and Dixon on June 14, 2006 regarding the Executive Director's review. He stated that the last Executive Director's review occurred in May 2005 with a written evaluation and recommendations, and the Executive Committee voted to seal the minutes. Chairman Fargo stated that Osburn was uncomfortable with the changes as there was no signed documentation for auditors. Chairman Fargo stated, "It is the opinion of the review committee that the Executive Director's position is different from other employees of the Commission and deserves special consideration regarding the difference between promised and current sick leave benefits. The review committee also recognizes that there should be consistency amount all of the Commission's employees should they become disabled. The review committee proposes that the Executive Director be provided with a bank of 36 sick days leave, at full pay, that would carry forward from year to year. This sick leave could be used to supplement any gap between disability pay and her normal salary, should she be unable to work for an extended period of time. The review committee also proposes to reexamine this issue next year." Dixon discussed the option of crediting a disability check to a sick leave account, as the commission does not pay for benefits when an employee is on short or long-term disability.

Discussion ensued regarding the changing perception of sick leave as a benefit rather than an entitlement, and how government organizations have moved toward limiting liabilities. Osburn stated she would contact the disability carrier and auditors regarding the accounting specifics.

Chairman Fargo entertained a motion to approve a bank of 40 sick days leave for the Executive Director. Dixon made the motion and Ortmann seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion regarding contracts and employment handbooks followed. Chairman Fargo asked about a retroactive adjustment to the Executive Director's salary. Osburn stated she had emailed the

committee regarding the effective date of the salary adjustment. Chairman Fargo stated that he would meet with Ortmann and Dixon and then with Copeland regarding the executive director evaluation. Copeland stated that staff assessments had not yet been completed, and that the limits of the life insurance benefits would be reviewed.

2. Minutes

Chairman Fargo entertained a motion to approve the minutes of the June 9, 2006 Executive Committee meeting. He requested the word "focus" replace the word "work" in the sixth sentence of the third paragraph on page two. Dixon made the motion to approve the June 9, 2006 minutes with the noted change. Ortmann seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Financial Reports

Osburn stated the financial statements were not yet available due to adjustments needed for the end of the fiscal year.

4. Executive Director Report

Copeland distributed the July Executive Director report. She stated Rebecca Whitney had been hired for the part time GIS Planner position.

Copeland discussed the proposed legislation to pay for the regional planning commission to review projects having potential regional impact per RSA 36:55. Discussion regarding local reviews versus regional reviews and the planning board's determination of regional impact projects ensued. Chairman Fargo discussed the issue of cumulative impacts of projects.

Copeland discussed the Targeted Block Grant Funding memorandum from Amy Ignatius, Director of Energy and Planning, regarding the increased workload to provide direct technical planning assistance to communities while resource funding has declined in both real dollars and inflation adjusted dollars.

Copeland stated that Rockingham Planning Commission did not put forward a motion as anticipated regarding the Metropolitan Planning Organization re-designation. Ortmann stated that SRPC could still move forward with the re-designation. Copeland discussed the approval requirements by the communities affected. Ortmann cautioned to consider the required timeframes to avoid having to repeat action due to expired effective dates.

5. Indirect Rate Audit

Osburn stated that NH DOT accepted the indirect rate audit. Discussion of the findings that indirect costs were understated by \$1,778.62, that the indirect costs reported on the FHWA contract were understated by \$734.23, that \$8.90 of sick time was incorrectly charged to indirect expenses, and the recalculated indirect cost rate for 2005 was \$20.92, and that the total allocated indirect costs to the FHWA contract were determined to be \$98,425.15 ensued. Ortmann asked how much the indirect rate audit cost, and Osburn stated the cost was \$3,000.00.

6. Executive Handbook Update

Chairman Fargo stated that the attorney review of the employee handbook raised questions regarding three areas: What kind of agency Strafford Regional Planning Commission was, the employee appeal

process and accruals during leave. Dixon stated that the appeal process to the Commission should be eliminated as employees had the right to appeal decision in court or to the labor board. Dixon stated that employees who are eligible for a paycheck are eligible to accrue benefits.

Chairman Fargo entertained a motion to approve the handbook eliminating the appeal process to the Commission and the accrual of benefits for employees eligible for a paycheck. Dixon made the motion to approve. Cools seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

7. On-going and Emerging Regional Planning Issues Roundtable

8. Other Business

Chairman Fargo noted that if he were elected as a New Hampshire State Representative, he would not serve on the Executive Committee of Strafford Regional Planning Commission.

Chairman Fargo announced that Jack Pare of Newington would be making a presentation immediately following the Executive Committee meeting regarding the New Hampshire Tidal Electric Company's preliminary permit application to install up to 100 generators in the floor of the Piscataqua River and a CD of the PowerPoint presentation would be available for any who requested. No other business was discussed.

Chairman Fargo entertained a motion to adjourn. Dixon made the motion to adjourn and Ortmann seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 8:34 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Osburn
Bookkeeper

Minutes approved on September 8, _____, 2006.

By:

Edmund F. Jansen Jr.
VICE Chairman